Harmonious
Education of the
Whole Person

An education of the body, mind and spirit that fosters development of the whole person and contributes to a fulfilled and balanced life.

Main Aim: To enable each club member to develop as a whole person, acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes that ensures he/she lives a fulfilled and balanced life – in body, mind and spirit.

Specific Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Participate in different activities organized in the club for the benefits of physical education
- Participate in activities and carry out research on specific topics such as health education and its relationship to sport, and present their findings to other club members for discussion of their significance in today’s society
- Actively take part in physical games on the field or in the gym organized to develop connections between the mind, body and spirit
- Demonstrate an understanding of a connection between mind, body and spirit and the benefit of sport on all three

Harmonious Education is a process of learning whereby a human being develops as a whole person, acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes which will allow him or her to live a fulfilled and balanced life. Harmonious education of the whole person is fundamental to the Olympic Movement, and should be viewed as a vital concept in every child’s development. In this unit - Harmonious Education of the Whole Person, we shall see how club members and people in general, can acquire a harmonious education through sports and more specifically through Olympism, and why it is so important.

Often when we think of sport, we consider the physical - running, training, sweating, aching after a hard workout, muscles straining to perform a task, etc. We often neglect the effect that sport and physical activity can and does have on the mind and spirit as well. Sport has proven to not only increase the physical well being of those who partake in it but also their moral and mental state. In fact,
HARMONIOUS EDUCATION OF THE WHOLE PERSON

it is practically impossible to participate in sport and NOT benefit in these three ways harmoniously, so long as the activity is practiced in a fair and safe manner. This is what Pierre de Coubertin had in mind when he reinstated the Olympic Games and the philosophy of Olympism.

The concept of Olympism when applied in one’s life, according to de Coubertin can enhance total human development and make the world a better place. It can promote a global understanding of culture, belief, religion and race. By doing so it teaches each individual to be tolerant of others and respect each other’s beliefs. Such an understanding leads to harmonious existence among and within people. It also produces a happier, healthier well-rounded individual.

“Olympism is a state of mind, a philosophy even, encompassing a particular concept of modern sport, according to which sport can, through an extension of its practice, play a part in the development of the individual, and of humankind in general.”

Pierre de Coubertin

Harmonious Education promotes a fusion of healthy body, mind and spirit as a vehicle for life. It strives to nurture ethical principles such as fair play, excellence, respect, living in harmony and creativity. In short it makes the person a better human being. It provides him and her with an opportunity to develop and live as a happy and whole person.

The concept of Harmonious Education was part of life in ancient Greece as well. The gymnasium’s role, besides being the location for physical activity and training, was to promote a holistic education and to bring people together to educate themselves. The relevance of the ancient gymnasium’s role today in relation to the concept of harmonious education of the whole person is that:

- it is prevalent in school.
- it is in learning by example.
- it is seen in businesses which strive to improve their whole force and combat the stress of the modern working environment.
- it is seen in schools where grades improve when fitness is included.
- fitness has been mandated in the national curriculum.

But how does participation in sport actually provide individuals with a harmonious education and development as a whole? Participation and competing in sports have the following effects on youth:

- It provides fun for children while developing various skills (social, cognitive, psychomotor, and affective).
- Children learn more about the body and how it works e.g. coordination and nutrition.
- It promotes cultural and geographical understanding.
- It develops and facilitates communication skills.
- It develops healthy life-management skills.
• It develops and enhances motor-skills.
• It promotes team work.
• It provides avenues for long lasting friendship.
• It overcomes challenges and builds self-esteem and self-confidence.
• It helps children cope with winning and losing.
• It helps reduce deviant behaviour e.g. gangs, drugs.
• It aids growth and development in children physically, mentally and socially.

Olympism transcends sports and can be used as a blueprint for daily living. As an element of Olympism, harmonious education provides us with the exposure and opportunity to develop ourselves through knowledge, acquired skills and positive attitudes into well-balanced and fulfilled human beings.

Not unlike the guardians of the ancient Olympic Games, the founding fathers of the modern Olympic Games, and Pierre de Coubertin in particular, believed that the great social, cultural, and sporting activities of the Olympic Games should promote the harmonious development of individuals. The Olympic Clubs in Seychelles have considered this ideal closely, and seek to fulfil the aim of harmonious development of the mind, body and spirit – by teaching club members not only to enjoy and regularly participate in sport and physical activity, but to consider its effects on their minds and spirits and to recognize its potential. The Olympic Movement and the teachings of Olympic education and physical activity is favourable for the all-round development of young people and through active participation in the Olympic Club program, they can strive to achieve this!