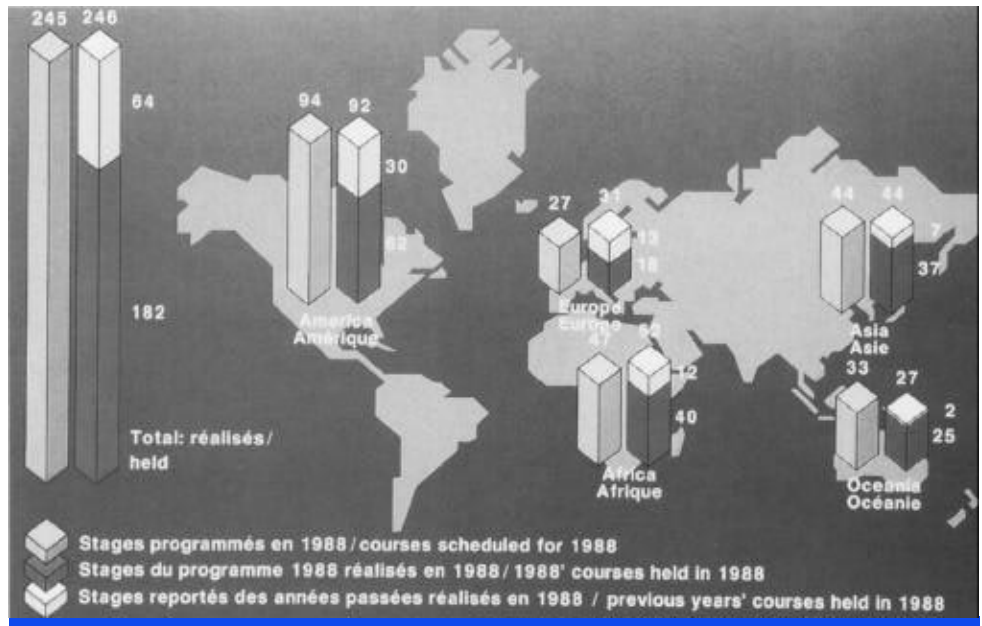


SUCCESSFULLY SQUARING THE CIRCLES

'Olympism at the beginning and end of the XXth Century'. This was the theme of last year's session of the International Olympic Academy, one of the many organizations Solidarity supports. Going by Solidarity's latest annual report, the run-up to the 21st century is looking promising : Financial aid came to 13.28 million U.S. dollars between 1985 and 1988 and is set to rise to 24.42 million for the 1988 to 1992 Olympiad. Good news for everyone.

SOLIDARITY'S REPORT FOR 1988



The courses organized throughout the world by Solidarity.

1988 was an extraordinary year, a record Olympiad, whose sporting success brought further financial security for the Olympic Movement. The NOCs stand to gain by the increased profits ploughed back into the Solidarity fund. One of the things which pleases Mr. Anselmo Lopez, Director of Olympic Solidarity, is that his department is no longer thought of as a closed-door banking institution but more as a window on sport aid

opportunity for NOCs. Nearly a thousand courses were held during the last Olympiad, with most going to the Americas and Africa, where need is greatest. For the more mature NOCs, such as those in Europe, with individual and specialized needs, Solidarity has not been slow to adopt a varied and a flexible approach. It has also responded rapidly to the increased demand for Sports Medicine courses, eighteen of which were held throughout the

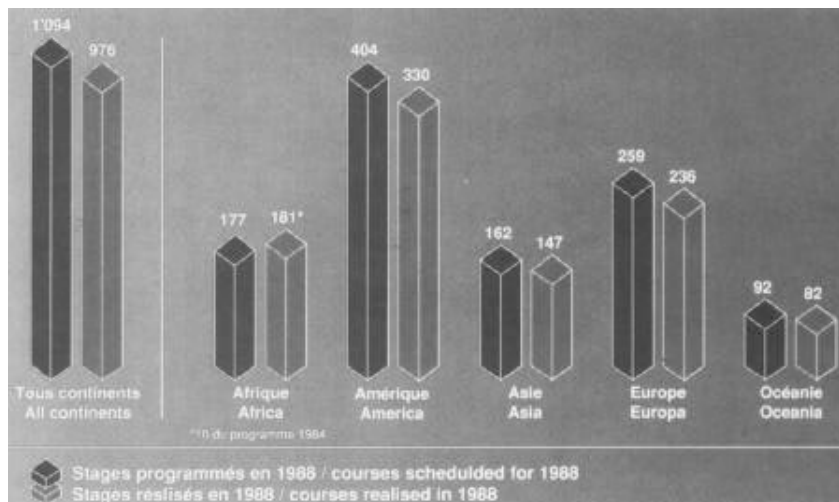
SOLIDARITY

five continents in 1988. A sports medicine manual in English, French and Spanish is scheduled to appear by the end of the year.

Communication remains the key to a successful course, both before and after. Lack of it makes arrangements incredibly complicated : the instructor falls ill because he didn't get his jabs in time, his replacement doesn't speak the language, the national federations have not been consulted by the NOC and beginners and advanced turn up together, the course is stuck in customs and practice makes way for imperfect theory as the equipment has arrived at the wrong pick-up point...

Happily, this is just a fictional scenario made up of real but isolated problems, which the increasing provision of fax and telex machines is doing much to prevent. On the evidence of the 1988 course summaries and the many successful reports, such muddles are becoming less and less common each year as NOCs learn from past mistakes and regional associations take initiatives to maximize the return on courses. The Association of National Olympic Committees in Africa (ANOCA), for example, now provides model files of courses to give committees a sound idea of the choice available within a sport and within a course. The clear improvement in satisfaction levels from previous years shows that the Itinerant School for Sports Leaders is bearing its first fruits.

The number of people attending the Games has been boosted by Solidarity's paying the flight, board and lodging of several athletes per NOC and a further US \$500 per athlete. This was very much welcomed. The International Weightlifting Federation noted that sixty-two countries participated in the Olympic weightlifting tournament : "We can be sure that Olympic Solidarity courses helped the sportsmen a lot to prepare for the greatest event of world sport... The courses gave them the self-confidence to be present at the Games". However, the International Amateur Boxing Federation complained in its own bulletin this generous policy led to an "Eddie the Eagle" syndrome, with too



many unsuitably qualified competitors from the most commonly practised sports, of which boxing is one, overloading the Olympic tournament. In other words, the demands on Solidarity are increasing all the time : more tickets to the Games imply more training, and vice versa. Determining priorities for different sports is difficult. The ANOCA notes there is often too much chopping and changing of course and sport with no continuity or, conversely, one sport is favoured to the exclusion of others. Long-term priorities need to be clearly worked out if courses are to produce a snowball effect in a particular country.

Turning away from elite sport to Sport for All, one initiative that has caught on rapidly, and for which NOCs provide no lack of information, is the Olympic Day Run. Financed by Solidarity and with the help of the World Federation of Sporting Goods Industries which regularly provides the now famous T-shirts, it shows how much of the globe the movement can reach and how extensive the work of Solidarity's six-person department.

L.D.

Figures for the first four-year plan, 1985 1988.