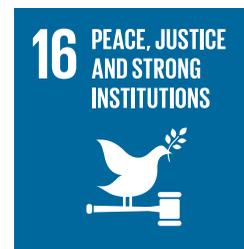
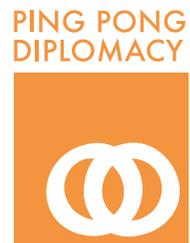


# Grassroots

## Ping Pong Diplomacy:

**A tool for you and me**

*Working together to bring peace on the table*



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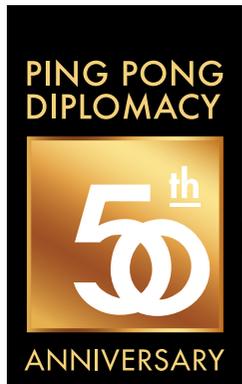
# INTRODUCTION



## **How it all began...**

In 1971 table tennis played an essential role in reopening the relationship between China and the USA. After China's Cultural Revolution and the accompanying 6-year absence of China in the worldwide table tennis community, China set a clear signal promoting the 31st World Table Tennis Championships in Nagoya, Japan under the slogan "Friendship first, competition second". To go on, a US athlete only had to miss his team bus and was forced to take the Chinese one, a gift was exchanged and a journalist was able to capture the perfect picture of a Chinese and US athlete walking side by side. China followed this up by inviting the US Team to a training camp, and in 1972 President Nixon met with Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong, a starting point for normalising the diplomatic relations between the countries in 1979.

# 50 Years of Ping Pong Diplomacy



The concept of Ping Pong Diplomacy is born. Table tennis played an essential role in reopening the relationship between China and the USA.

Ping Pong Diplomacy 2.0: Qatar Peace and Sport Cup.

United Nations Global Refugee Forum. The ITTF Foundation commits making the world a peaceful and better place for refugees through sport.

1971

1991

2011

2018

2019

2021

First Unified Korea team formed during the World Table Tennis Championships in Chiba, Japan.

Ping Pong Diplomacy 3.0: with the Unified Korea team winning silver at the ITTF World Tour Grand Finals after having refused to play against each other at the World Team Table Tennis Championships in Halmstad, Sweden.

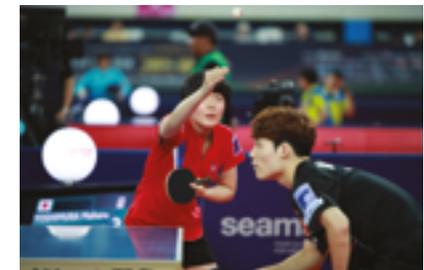
USA and China paired up during the World Table Tennis Championships Finals in Houston, USA.



Korea as one team in the World Table Tennis Championships in Chiba. *Il Bun-hui* (DPR Korea) and *HYUN Jung-hwa* (KOR)



Unified Korea at the 2011 Qatar Peace and Sport Table Tennis Cup



Unified Korea at the Seamaster 2018 ITTF World Tour

# why



## **grassroots Ping Pong Diplomacy?**

**Because...**

**...it shines the spotlight on individuals and civic society**

**...conflicts affect everyone**

# What

---

## is grassroots Ping Pong Diplomacy?

- A key mechanism through which nations and communities foster mutual trust and productive relationships
- A gathering of people without discrimination thanks to playing table tennis
- The development of a lasting dialogue between communities and of cultural understanding
- The sharing and transfer of information, knowledge and good practices between the grassroots table tennis community and other relevant actors (other grassroots sports organisations, governments, NGOs, civil society, individuals, etc.)
- The contribution to societal and individual development in the health, cultural, educational, sports or social fields

## does grassroots Ping Pong Diplomacy offer?

- The competencies for individuals to resolve conflicts non-violently
- Place individuals as key players in ensuring humanity lives together

## are the main aims of grassroots Ping Pong Diplomacy?

- Strengthen intercultural relations between actors through table tennis
- Promote, advocate and encourage open, non-violent dialogue through table tennis



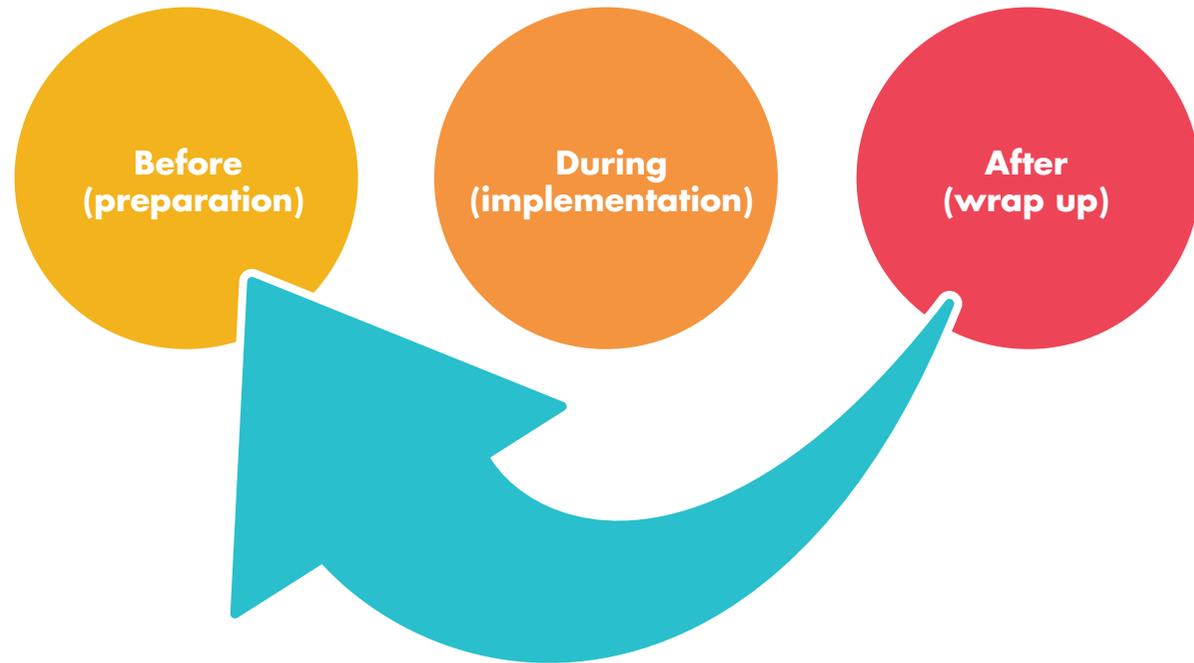
# **KEY PRINCIPLES FOR A PING PONG DIPLOMACY EVENT**

Before | During | After

# KEY PRINCIPLES FOR A PING PONG DIPLOMACY EVENT

A Ping Pong Diplomacy event seeks to intentionally develop life competencies/skills to give individuals the capacity to resolve conflicts non-violently.

**Three components of a Ping Pong Diplomacy event cycle**



# Before your event

## 1. Preparation of your activity

**Identify** the adequate activity or tool you wish to use to transmit this learning outcome.  
Reflect, Connect, Apply.

**Tailor** a diverse group of individuals, each with different requirements that need to be aligned with the target user and local environment.

You are now ready to **implement**: planning and preparing the previous points will help you in leading your activity without losing sight of your learning objective, and therefore will help you adapt to situations to guide the group through the learning you plan for them.



**Define** this session learning outcome. Which information do you wish to transmit, why are you leading this session, what learning/reflection/question do you concretely wish to transmit/raise? Understand the root of the conflict or support them in finding a win-win or acknowledging each other etc. Where are you with the involved parties? What do they need from you or what is the logical step to success? Mediate, reconcile, unite?

**Adapt** the practical reality to the learning outcome: logistics and communication, a wide range of possible variations on the basic elements making up the activity. Practice area, equipment, rules, instructions.

**Prepare** a shared and inclusive set of rules, how to prepare for and structure an activity to guarantee participants' safety and efficient use of resources to reach the needed outcome. Plan clearly the basic elements, the flow of the session and concrete steps to get to the learning outcome (including debrief).



## 2. Create a safe space

To get anywhere on the topic of diplomacy, one needs to establish the feeling of trust, create a safe space with no judgment that allows everyone to be who they are.

### Creating a safe space:

- Clear ground rules or expectations of behaviour that everyone should follow. A few simple rules are better than many complex ones and it can be printed and used as a poster/aide-mémoire.
- A level of trust between the participants. If you follow the approach established in these activities, your students will have the chance to practise their dialogue skills 'neutrally' – talking about non-contentious issues – and they both will have had the chance to get used to engaging in this kind of activity and to develop trust in one another.
- Don't judge. Working through these activities will allow your students to explore one another's points of view. Dialogue is a space where we can challenge one another's deeply held beliefs and values in a positive way, saying "I'm uncomfortable with x, because of y", rather than saying "You're wrong!"

- Inclusivity. Ensuring that everyone takes part. It is important that everyone's voice is heard in dialogue (or at least that everyone has the opportunity to take part – choosing to 'pass' is fine too). Many of our students are strong, confident speakers, but it is equally important to remember that some of our students lack confidence, have low self-esteem, and may feel excluded by their peers for various reasons. Giving space for their voices is critical for genuine inclusion.
- Trusted facilitation. The facilitator should be honest, neutral, and encouraging.

**TIP: One of the easiest ways to start this is to agree on common rules with your group in the early stages of the group formation, such as:**

- **Be on time**
- **Don't speak when someone else is speaking**
- **Switch off mobile phones**
- **Don't bounce or play with the ball when we are discussing**

**Rules can be added on an ongoing basis, they just have to be agreed by the group. To make it even more impactful and get everyone involved, you can also agree on the consequences of this, e.g.: The person who doesn't respect**

- **Has to dance in the middle**
- **Sing a song**



# During your event

Table tennis for peace is about integrating peaceful life skills into our activities. Observe the following guidelines for the sustainable success of your activities.

The development of competencies and the integration of peaceful life skills should be part of every phase of implementation.

## 1. Being a good facilitator – Focus on dialogue

Dialogue is an open conversation with no losers, but only winners.

I learn from you and you learn from me.

We meet each other halfway or agree to differ.

### Tips for facilitators:

- **Facilitators are fair, impartial and encourage the discussion**
- **Ensure that one individual or group does not dominate**
- **Try to be neutral**
- **Ensure that many views are heard and encouraged**
- **Ensure that the group members develop their curiosity and ask good questions**
- **Check clarity when people express complex views (“I heard you saying...”)**
- **Ensure that the agreed expectations are observed by everyone**



## 2. Event components

### Beginning

Take a look at where we are: What are the conflicts we are experiencing?

Take a look ahead: What will happen in this event?  
(Introduction of learning objectives, sensitisation)

### Main part

Find a balance between Ping Pong Diplomacy activities and reflection.

Watch out for the teachable moments! Observe closely and pay attention to the behaviour of your participants.

A teachable moment can be a positive or negative event, such as

- + Unexpected help of another participant
- Unfair behaviour of an opponent

▶ Stop your activities in the middle of play to ask some questions to help the participants get the most out of the experience.

▶ Alternatively, you may want to wait until the end of the session before discussing this issue

### End

Applying the following methodology to your activities will help you reach your goal of using table tennis for peace.

#### 1. Reflect

What have I experienced? What's something exceptional that happened during the session? How did it make you feel?

#### 2. Connect

How does this experience relate to earlier ones? How is it relevant to what I already know, believe or feel? Does it reinforce or expand my view? What similar accomplishments have you experienced? How did you reach those achievements?

#### 3. Apply

How can I use what I have learned from this experience? How can I use it in similar situations? How can I use this learning to benefit myself, and my community? What can you do to encourage similar successes in your life?



# Wrap up your event

## Step 1

### Reflect on your Ping Pong Diplomacy event

- What went well, what didn't?
- During which activity/activities did the participants have (no) problems?
- Which learning objectives were achieved and which ones were not?

## Step 2

### Critically review and assess the situation

- What could you have done differently?
- What could you improve?

## Step 3

Share your learning outcomes with the ITTF Foundation to help others integrate diplomacy into their table tennis activities!



**More information on:**  
<https://ittffoundation.org/programmes/tt4all/world-table-tennis-day>

[april6@foundation.ittf.com](mailto:april6@foundation.ittf.com)

[f](#) [📷](#) [🐦](#) [📺](#) [@ittffoundation](#)





## **USEFUL RESOURCES**

# Checklists

## Checklist for a safe space

- How welcoming is the location for all participants?
- Do displays reflect the diversity of your group?
- What is the positioning arrangement (sitting, standing, options, together, apart etc.)?
- Does it encourage dialogue or are participants in rows where they cannot see one another easily?
- Where does the teacher stand, sit or move?
- How do students show they want to speak?
- How do the students relate to one another?

- What activities are built into lessons that encourage collaboration rather than competition?
- How does the teacher deal with instances of disrespect and intolerance?
- Do these instances involve the participation of the other students exploring how the group feels when these instances of disrespect happen?
- How can the facilitator teacher draw in students who are reluctant to take part in dialogue?

- How do students know they are valued?
- Are different perspectives encouraged?
- Are all voices heard?
- Do participants speak from the 'I' perspective sharing their thoughts and experiences, instead of generalising?

### **TIP: Two stars and a wish – to get participants to give constructive feedback.**

- **I like how you did that**
- **I saw you do this, and it really helped**
- **I feel you are good at....**
  
- **What went well?**

- ▶ **What I wish could be improved....**
  
- ▶ **Even better if....**



## Checklist for facilitators

- Are you able to be impartial on the topic? Be aware of your presumptions on the issue.
- How will you ensure students suspend judgment/start with an open mind?
- What are your techniques for ensuring that all feel they have a voice in the dialogue and that it is not hijacked by a few?
- How are you ensuring students feel safe to take risks?
- How can you model listening deeply and engaging in the dialogue?
- Are you encouraging responses to what is said as opposed to allowing the dialogue to become a Q&A session?
- How do you encourage students to show empathy towards one another?
- Are you ensuring that students are speaking about themselves and not on behalf of others?
- How do you encourage students to bring their own experiences to the dialogue?
- How will you measure the effectiveness of the activity?
- Do you have strategies to help students to recognise assumptions in their comments and/or questions and help them to rephrase in a less prejudicial way?
- Do you ensure that references to people or groups not represented in the dialogue are fair?



# Useful manuals and guidelines:

- ▶ **Sport for Development and Peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – Commonwealth Secretariat**
- ▶ **Enhancing the Contribution of Sport to the Sustainable Development Goals – Commonwealth Secretariat**
- ▶ **Sport for Development Knowledge Box – GIZ**
- ▶ **Grassroots Sport Diplomacy Overview – ISCA**
- ▶ **Playing for Life – Table Tennis Manual – Australian Sports Commission**

