

Peo Bengtsson's speech at the 2nd Global Development Conference Friday 5th Oct, 20018 in Prague.

I was born 1933 – between 2 worldwars. I became interested in sport about 1942, when we had a very good track-and-field-runner – Gunder Hägg – who made 7 worldrecords on distances from 1.500 m. to 5.000 m. during the summer. After that I practised many disciplines in athletics such as high jump, long jump, pole jump. But like all other boys I played football.

The Olympic Games during the second worldwars were cancelled, in 1940 it was planned in Helsinki, and as have found out orienteering should be involved.

But in 1948 Olympic Winter Games took place in St. Moritz and the Summer Games in London, I followed the competitions very much in radio and newspapers. And Sweden was very succesful in both games.

In 1949 I became interested in orienteering and I was also very succesful. I liked the sport very much and I had great hopes that orienteering very soon could be involved in the Olympic Games. But not yet this has happened, but now I have heard that it can be possible in 2024 in Paris. So I try to live 6 years longer.

There are many talents for orienteering in all countries in the world. But most of them cannot take part in our sport, because they don't know about orienteering. And it is very difficult to describe it. You must practise it or look at it in TV.

If our fantastic sport had been shown in TV from Olympic Games, we had increased information about it, so all the world knows orienteering.

When I started with orienteering, it was mostly a sport in the Nordic countries and in Switzerland. It was also a sport in Soviet Union and other east Europé countries, but we had not so much contact with those countries.

A swedish baron and orienteer – RAK Lagerfelt – tried to develop the orienteering world with more countries. He convinced 2 Swedish clubs to travel with him to Arnsberg – a small town in West-Germany and have a club-match there. The finish was on the square in the town, so spectators could watch it. RAK introduced orienteering mostly to scouts, who like nature more than the competition, so the development was not so fast in West-Germany.

Lagerfelt made the same in England, Scotland and Belgium, but here he had ex-track-and-field-runners as target group. Orienteering became very popular for such wellknown worldrecord-runners as Gordon Pirie, John Disley, Chris Brasher and Gaston Reiff, and it was a lot of publicity and many new orienteers.

Orienteerng is also a military sport. I worked in our Swedish artillery from 1954 to 1977, when I finished as a major. A friend – Eric Carlsson – invited to the first military world championship in Stockholm 1965. After that this competition is organized each year in different countries in the world. In 1973 Carlsson and I instructed at a CISM-clinic in Argentina, after that Carlsson sent also mappers (also me) for mapping in Brazil and Argentina.

I tried to convince SOFT – Swedish Orienteering Federation – to follow Lagerfelt's example but instead of club-competitions have national team- competitions between SWE, FIN, NOR, DEN and SUI in new countries like AUT, ITA and YUG. But SOFT was not interested.

Instead I organized summer-tours myself in Europe with private cars and found local organizers in DEN, BRD and SUI. The first tour was in 1961 with about 15 persons and next in 1963 with 75 persons.

Before 1955 there were national team-competitions each year between the Nordic countries. In 1955 was the first Nordic Championship organized in SWE, after that 1957 in NOR, 1959 in DEN, 1961 in FIN and 1963 in SWE, where I was selected as a competitor.

IOF – International Orienteering Federation – started 1961 in Copenhagen with 11 member-countries, it was decided to have Europe Championships each second year, 1962 in NOR and 1964 in SUI.

USA became also a member-country of IOF, so 1966 in FIN the international championship was called WOC instead of EOC. So it continued each second year until 1978. After that it changed – perhaps in order to avoid collision with a future participation in Olympic Games - so it was next WOC in 1979 (FIN), 1981 (SUI), 1983 (HUN), etc. until 2003. Later we have had WOC each year. From 2000 we have also EOC each second year.

In 1962 the Swedish national team runners had started a trade union association and it was called O-Ringen. O-Ringen was not satisfied with the development of orienteering and wanted better maps for more fair competitions, more publicity and greater international development.

I became a member of O-Ringen after my qualification to Nordic Championship 1963. One O-Ringen-member – Sivar Nordström – had an idea about multi-days-competitions like in bicycle with Tour de France, Giro d'Italia and Swedish 6-days.

I planned a new Europe tour 1965, but my preparations were not so successful, so I cancelled the tour. Instead I contacted Sivar and offered my help to find 5 organizers near my place – Kristianstad – in Skåne. In our Swedish program was already a Sunday-competition about 120 km from Kristianstad, after that 5 free days before next weekend's 2 competitions about 90 km from Kristianstad. Our decision and information came only about 4 weeks before the first O-Ringen-competition. We had evening-competitions, so local orienteers could both work and participate. We were very thankful with 156 satisfied competitors.

Next year we got about 1.500 entries but because of our evening-competitions and darkness we could only allow 700. After that we have had morning-competitions. We had about 25.000 participants in 1983, 1985 and 2008. A third O-Ringen-member – Nils-Göran Albinsson – was the competition-leader from 1967 to 1977 – 11 years – and that was very worthwhile for O-Ringen 5-days. Now the 5 days-competition has been organized during 54 years.

1966 at O-Ringen 3 participants from HUN – one of them Sarolta Monspart – could not pay their expenses in expensive Sweden. Instead they became our guests, and we became their guests in Budapest already 3 months later.

We found that it was very important with a few days training in similar terrain, when you compete in new terrain in another country. So therefore we organized the first O-Ringen Clinic already next year at Motala.

In 1968 a club from Bratislava asked about similar exchange. O-Ringen said yes, and we organized an autumn travel to Czechoslovakia and Hungary. After that such travels have been organized, we call them O-Ringen autumn-east-tours, in Swedish Höst Öst. Friday 12th Oct we start the 51st travel to

FIN, EST, LAT, BLR and LTU during 10 days. We visit also Tartu in EST – the hom-town for our IOF-president Leo Haldna.

During the autumn east tour in 1986 a club was formed – the autumn east tour legendars. At each travel there is organized a money-collection and that money goes to that country of the visited, where the money can become most useful. Since 2000 Per Forsgren from Stockholm is the president of the club.

SOFT wanted also to spread out orienteering in other continents, so Swedish instructors were sent to USA and CAN, to JPN and to AUS and NZL. In 1975 I was one of 4 instructors in AUS and NZL during 4 weeks. We instructed very much in all AUS-states, but we learnt also very much about publicity and marketing from Tom Andrews, who had started orienteering seriously in 1969 in AUS.

Tom and I discussed a coming travel from SWE to Oceania. I said, that in such a case we take one route-choice to Oceania and another route-choice from Oceania, we want to travel around the world. We had this travel already 1977-1978 with about 60 participants during about 4 weeks to SIN, PHI, AUS, NZL, Tahiti and BRA. And Australa organized in 1985 very well the first WOC outside Europe, also with almost 10 spectator-competitions to get better economy.

Tom and I became very good friends. Tom was also president of DPC – Development and Promotion Committee – in IOF, and I was his vice-president. IOF had not so good economy, but we were succesful to send instructors and mappers to MEX, ITA and YUG. Tom and I were in this committee 1976-1982. Lasse Heidemann from FIN was IOF-president during these years, and he worked very hard for OL in Olympic Games.

Every year I have organized a lot of travels to old and new OL-countries. I learnt how to earn money, so I could send mappers to new interested and interesting countries.

In Spain and Portugal it was very succesful. In Madrid the Swede Martin Kronlund was working as a fencing teacher, but Martin was also ex-officer and orienteer. We found Miguel Borrero (air force officer) and Camilo de Mendonza (navy officer) in ESP resp. POR. I sent mappers to ESP and POR and organized winter-training there on these maps. The new money was invested in new maps and it didn't take long time before ESP and POR were very good competition-organizers and their orienteers are better and better.

I have also tried to develop orienteering in KEN and TAN, but it seems as the right persons were not found. My mappers and instructors there found only young and poor runners. It had been better with wellknown and rich ex-runners after Lagerfelt's example in Great Britain about 60 years ago.

If our sport can grow n a new country we have to find real enthusiasts there like Tatiana Kalenderoglu in TUR, Vasilis Hortomaris in GRE and Zoran Milovanovic in SE. Europe.

In France orienteering started in a very special way. RAK Lagerfelt had organized a competition with Swedish clubs there about 1965, but unfortunately a control was stolen, so the competition was cancelled. The early enthusiast there was not longer interested of orienteering. Together with Jan Kjellström – son of Silva compasses – I planned a summer-tour to western Europé in 1967, but unfortunately Jan was killed in a traffic-accident But I had seen in a Swedish sport-newspaper, that there were reports about sport in France with a Swedish author. I took contact with the journalist – Will Stlbrand – and he had orienteering-experience from Sweden. Will had also got an illness and had not long time more to live, so he had to retire. But when he visited his doctor next time, his illness was away, and he had very much time for orienteering, just when I contacted him. He became a

Silva-agent and sold also orienteering-material when he instructed in schools and military armed forces about orienteering.

In 2006 I organized a bus-travel in South America. A real orienteering-enthusiast Lorena Kleinmann from Buenos Aires helped me and she had found a culture guide – Gerardo Garcia – to inform us about the visited places in URU, ARG, CHI, PAR and BRA. But Gerardo was very curious so he tried also orienteering with us and became very interested about everything included in orienteering – specially mapping. And at WOC 2018 in Latvija he had the pleasure to take part in all distances for ARG.

So orienteering can be developed in the world in different ways, as you see.

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