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Peace Is in Good Hands in South Africa

4-5 Minuten

On 19th March 2022 we wrote about the visit of Johannes and Regina Daxbacher to Lesotho and South Africa. Let's focus today on their stay in South Africa where they supported the Judo for Peace South Africa programme led by IJF Academy alumni Roberto Orlando, who has been developing an extensive programme, financed by the International Judo Federation, aiming to deepen the inclusion of refugees within local communities, while offering new life opportunities to those in need.



Johannes has been working with the IJF for many years. Involved in Ethiopia where he helped to found the Ethiopia Judo Association and in his role as head of the IJF Police Commission, he has put all his knowledge and energy into the promotion of judo and its values.

“This February Johannes and Regina Daxbacher, paid a visit to South Africa, focussing on the Judo for Peace programme, bringing their expertise, friendship and contagious judo enthusiasm to the judoka here in the country,” explained Roberto Orlando, before adding, **“For our judo people, the visit of our German colleagues was a unique occasion to bring together judo passion and shared experiences on the tatami.”**

During their stay in Johannesburg and around, Johannes and Regina embarked on a series of seminars and encounters that ranged from the application of judo as an intelligent conflict resolution tool to the capacity of judo to develop self-defence and gender equity.





Regina and Johannes Daxbacher

For a couple of weeks, the delegation travelled throughout South Africa, visiting most of the refugee dojos opened by the Judo for Peace programme in Johannesburg, Berea, Alexandra and even further to Durban Harbour.

The highlights of the visit were numerous, especially focussing on judo high performance seminars in local clubs in Johannesburg as well as an international seminar after the national ranking event, which was attended by people from 7 countries, with the notable presence of the national team from Mozambique and the refugee team of Judo South Africa.



The main subjects addressed during the seminars were:

gender equity, judo as a tool for conflict resolution, judo values, prevention of sexual abuse and violence, integration of refugees, orphans and peace aspects.



Meeting with the Japanese Vice-Ambassador

Johannes Daxbacher also had the opportunity to meet with several partners of Judo for Peace programme, helping to reinforce the engagement of the IJF for the benefit of society: Japanese Vice-Ambassador, head of UNHCR South Africa region, a representative of NIKE Social and Community Impact - South Africa, officials from Judo South Africa and partners of the Three2Six initiative.

Roberto Orlando concluded, **“The mission was received as a true success. The refugee judoka gathered together to make a small yet unforgettable gift to Johannes and Regina the day before their departure:, a judo for peace logo made from beams and iron wire, a traditional item of South African artisans. They**

expressed their gratitude hoping for a return soon.”



Meeting with the head of UNHCR South Africa region

There is no doubt that peace is in good hands in South Africa and in the whole region. In the coming months there will be more initiatives involving refugees and local judoka, simply because there is a need for that and judo is one answer.