

THEMATIC PROFILE

SPORT AND DISASTER RESPONSE

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Introduction to Sport and Disaster Response

This thematic profile introduces the concepts surrounding sport and disaster response. It includes an overview of the key issues along with links to recommended reading and resources.

Disasters, both natural and man-made, have occurred for many centuries and continue to affect the lives of millions of people across the world. Humanitarian relief efforts provide assistance to rehabilitate and rebuild communities affected by disaster. To address emotional distress, disaster responders have traditionally used a clinical mental health approach, focusing on trauma recovery. Trauma occurs when a person is exposed to a life-threatening event and their response is most often one of intense horror, fear and/or helplessness.

In recent years humanitarian organisations have begun to look more towards psychosocial interventions to address both emotional and social needs of people affected by disasters. A psychosocial intervention will aim to use community resources in order to rebuild the coping capacities of individuals affected by disasters, thus enhancing their inner strength, responsiveness and flexibility in the face of high levels of stress and traumatic events. In other words, this re-enforces their *resilience* - an inner strength, responsiveness and flexibility that enables them to withstand stress and trauma.

More and more projects are emerging that use sport as a psychosocial tool in disaster response. Sport interventions are being used in the field as a non-medical approach to build the coping capacities of people affected by disasters. Psychosocial sport projects are not about winning and losing but rather about the process of helping people to restore their social and psychological health. It is important to emphasise that the definition of sport used here goes beyond competitive sport but also includes notions of play and recreation.

Although the use of sport and play as a part of psychosocial disaster response efforts outlined in this section focuses on the use of sport and play specifically, it does not mean to imply an exclusive focus on sport and play as the *only* element in a psychosocial response to disaster response. The points raised in this section seek to highlight particular peculiarities pertaining to sport and play that may be beneficial in disaster response, as part of a wider disaster response framework, including e.g. nutrition, health and sanitation provision; education provision, generating economic opportunities, and so on.

Recommended Reading

Overcoming Trauma through Sport

(B. Henley & C. Colliard, 2005)

http://www.maggingen2005.org/downloads/02_E_input_trauma.pdf

A paper presented at the 2nd Maggingen Conference on Sport and Development that introduces the key concepts surrounding psychosocial sport programmes including trauma, resiliency, coping and the significance of coaching. This paper highlights the challenges for research in this field and introduces early research initiatives.

Helping Children Overcome Disaster Trauma through Post-Emergency Psychosocial Sport Programs: A working paper

<http://www.sportanddev.org/data/document/document/209.pdf>

(B. Henley, 2005)

This report reviews possible theoretical underpinnings and practical methods utilised by psychosocial sport programmes in helping children traumatised in disaster. Existing research and documentation is examined to draw upon the learning examples from active psychosocial sport programmes in the field and stimulate the development of a working body of knowledge for sport and disaster response.

Trauma and Sport for Development

(Toolkit Sport for Development, 2005)

The Sport for Development Toolkit includes a detailed section on sport and trauma that provides a number of resources to assist people working with individuals and communities who have had a traumatic experience. It includes information about trauma, tips for sending agencies and development staff as well as advice for stress management.

Sport as a Psychosocial Intervention

The use of sport as a means to provide psychosocial support to people affected by disaster is a relatively new area of sport and development. A small number of research efforts and project evaluations have begun to help us understand the link between participation in sport and physical activity and trauma relief. While it is not yet clear *how* sport programmes might be effective in relieving trauma, the little evidence available (most of which focuses on children and youth) has shown that sport and play activities can enhance resilience, facilitate emotional and social stabilisation and the acquisition of new skills and abilities in people affected by disasters.

Psychosocial sport and play programmes aim to restore social well-being and psychological health through group-focused practices, tailored to fit the contexts of local culture, traditions, needs and resources. It is understood in the emergency field that group intervention is most effective, whilst it is appropriate for individuals with more serious psychological symptoms to receive individual support within the overall health system.

Psychosocial sport programmes can provide a safe, structured and friendly environment for people to begin to share their emotions through verbal and non-verbal communication. The emphasis is on building social cohesion and encouraging community members to interact and communicate with each other. Sport and physical activity can allow for brief periods of respite, focus attention away from the experience of loss and provide an opportunity to reinforce educational messages. Additionally, sport and play can provide a welcome breathing space for parents and caregivers, highlighting the impact of sport and play programmes on different levels of community members.

Several project evaluation reports of the Terre des Hommes Foundation (Lausanne)'s psychosocial programme of recreation centres after the Bam earthquake in Iran revealed that children preferred being in the group rather than 'doing nothing at home.' In fact, 'having fun' was the least popular reason children chose to participate in the sport and play programme. There are also indications that participation in psychosocial sport programmes can positively influence school performance and children's behaviour in the home environment.

Psychosocial sport activities do not have a primary focus on competition but rather an emphasis on creating a cooperative and supportive environment in which people can share their emotions through verbal and non-verbal communication. There is no direct evidence supporting one activity over another, although contact sports should be avoided. Also, preferences for certain sports or games can differ between male and female participants for reasons relating to culture and religion.

Coaches (sometimes referred to as animators or facilitators) have an important role in providing psychosocial support. Coaches, after training, can become trusted adults whom young people, parents, and others affected by disaster can build relationships with over a period of time. This is an important element of psychosocial healing.

There is compelling practical, anecdotal and theoretical evidence to suggest that psychosocial sport and play programmes can assist people who have experienced severe stress or trauma in a disaster setting. However, little empirical evidence exists and this has been linked to the complexities of conducting research in an emergency

setting, to limited financial and technical capacities of disaster relief agencies and to a small number of validated tools to measure psychosocial impacts of sport and play.

Recommended Reading

How Psychosocial Sport and Play Programmes Help Youth Manage Adversity: A review of what we know & what we should research

(R. Henley, I. Schweizer, F. De Gara S. Vetter, 2007)

http://www.psychosocial.com/IJPR_12/Psychological_Sport_and_Play_Henley.html

A review of theories and practices related to the underlying dynamics of international community-based resilience enhancing psychosocial sport programmes, established to help children and youth affected by disasters. This paper includes a collection of the latest evidence on the role of sport and play in building resilience and offers suggested areas of future research.

Psycho-social Sport Programmes to Overcome Trauma in Post-Disaster Intervention: An overview

<http://www.sportanddev.org/newsviews/search.cfm?uNewsID=57>

(A. Gschwend & U. Selvaraju, Swiss Academy for Development, 2007)

This report identifies the different actors currently engaged in trauma-related sports projects and discusses their particular methodologies. This research paper explores the current sport programmes in disaster response and whilst direct comparisons cannot be made, a number of conclusions are drawn from the available evidence.

Sport and Play for Traumatized Children and Youth: An assessment of a pilot-project in Bam, Iran

<http://www.sportanddev.org/data/document/document/221.pdf>

(V. Kunz, Swiss Academy for Development, 2005)

Following the devastating earthquake in the city of Bam, Iran, the Swiss Academy for Development initiated a project with the aim of providing the young people affected by the earthquake with a means to re-adjust and re-integrate socially through the use of sport and play. This report summarises the experiences gained and lessons learned from the project and attempts to indicate the potential constraints of using sport and play in the psychosocial rehabilitation of children and youth in a post-disaster situation.

Mission Report: Evaluation of the TdH Psychosocial Programme of Recreational Centres in Bam, Iran

<http://www.humanitarian-psy.org/pages/resources.asp>

(C. Colliard, Terres des Hommes, 2004)

This is the first known research project to assess the effectiveness of psychosocial sports and play activities in helping children overcome trauma. It evaluates a Terres des hommes Foundation (Lausanne) psychosocial programme implemented in Bam, Iran following the earthquake in 2003. It evaluates the impact of the programme on the psychological well-being of the children who attended 'Recreational Activity Centres' for nearly a year and provides the first scientific evidence in support of sport and play as a way of addressing the negative effects of a traumatic experience within a psychosocial intervention.

Key Considerations in Project Planning and Implementation

Using sport and play in the post-disaster setting takes more than simply rolling a ball on the pitch. According to an expert account of sport programmes in Bam, when children were invited to play, "...no one moved. They were totally inhibited as if they had stayed frozen since the earthquake."

There are a number of key considerations in developing psychosocial sport programmes to achieve maximal effectiveness. These include:

- Deliver well-structured and planned interventions based on identified psychosocial goals
- Aim to meet the needs of all community groups
- Actively recruit the less-powerful or mobile members of a community
- Develop the programme in collaboration with local organisations and agencies
- Consider long-term sustainability from the outset

The needs of the most vulnerable community groups should be considered including those of women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities. Programmes also need to be flexible enough to adapt to changing needs of participants and be sensitive to local culture, traditions and gender relationships.

In relation to sport activities, it is important to bear in mind that local attitudes towards particular sports may prevail that dictate which social groups traditionally have or had access to competitive sport. For example, if sports were considered to be only accessible to social elites within the community, disaster responses that focus on the most vulnerable should consider how using a particular sport may be interpreted within the local community.

Experience shows that efforts are more successful when emphasis has been placed on the rehabilitative and recreational aspects of sport and play, rather than on the sport itself. Disaster responders and coaches must bear in mind that rules to games can be changed in order to further emphasise the psychosocial benefits of sport, including building relationships of trust, self-confidence, partnership and resiliency.

The physical space for sport and play activities is a crucial aspect to take into account in the planning and implementation of such programmes. In most disaster settings, space is particularly important, especially in camps for refugees or the displaced. Space for sport and play activities must be allocated with the participation and 'buy in' of the local community.

The experiences of loss, grief, guilt and other emotions can emerge in survivors of disasters as well as in disaster responders. Disaster responders can benefit from participating in physical activities which helps them both manage their own stress and trauma and to be more effective when helping others.

As with other areas of development and humanitarian aid, monitoring and evaluation of projects is essential to gauge how effective a programme is in meeting its intended aims. There are a number of challenges associated with conducting monitoring and evaluations in a post-disaster setting. However, a commitment to improve existing

assessment tools will go a long way to enhance psychosocial sport programmes by building on empirical evidence.

Experts have highlighted the central role that the family and community can play in building the resilience of an individual. The participation of the family unit in overcoming trauma and accelerating the healing process is crucial.

Recommended Reading

Coping with Disasters: A guidebook to psychosocial intervention

(J.H. Ehrenreich, 2001)

<http://www.mhwwb.org/CopingWithDisaster.pdf>

This manual outlines a variety of psychosocial interventions aimed at helping people cope with the emotional effects of disasters. It is intended for use by professionals concerned with responses to disasters (mental health workers, primary medical care workers, disaster relief workers, teachers, religious leaders, community leaders, governmental and organisational officials). Ehrenreich specifically outlines the emotional responses of men, women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities and offers appropriate responses to consider.

Gender Equity, Sport and Development: a working paper

<http://www.sportanddev.org/data/document/document/103.pdf>

(M. Meier, 2005)

This paper deals with emerging questions relating to gender equality in sport and development and the specific impact of sport on gender relationships. It provides an analytical framework as well as field experience and specific results from Iran, Zambia and Northern Caucasus.

Children in Crisis: Good Practices in Evaluating Psychosocial Programming

(J. Duncan & L. Arnston, Save the Children, 2004)

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMH/Resources/Evaluating_Psychosocial_Programming.pdf

This manual is the first attempt to guide evaluation and research in psychosocial programming. Given the rapid growth of project implementation this manual was designed to develop models of impact, share lessons learned and to build effective intervention practices based on sound measures of project outcomes and impact.

International Charters and Recommendations

In the humanitarian sector, recommendations and guidelines provide the basis of training and development and in planning and delivering psychosocial sport programmes in disaster response, practitioners should be aware of a number of international instruments in humanitarian relief.

With specific reference to sport and games, the Council of Europe developed recommendations in 2003 on the contribution of sport to alleviating the consequences of humanitarian disasters: “Ballons rouges.” Furthermore, leading sports organisations and international actors gathered to discuss the response from the world of sport to the tsunami in South East Asia in 2004 and have begun dialogue on avenues for future cooperation.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement developed a Code of Conduct in 1997 which outlines ten ethical standards in humanitarian relief. The code is voluntary and has since been signed by over 400 organisations committing to adhere to its principles.

Also in 1997, a group of NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movements developed the Sphere Project which is a Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response. It includes a Handbook, a process of collaboration and a commitment to quality and accountability. Importantly, a new chapter was recently added to the health chapter of the Sphere Handbook on Minimum Standards in Disaster Response which provides clear messages to improve mental and social health during humanitarian assistance.

A set of Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction has also been developed based on the right to education. These standards were developed in 2004 by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) which is a global network working to ensure the right to education in emergencies and post-crisis reconstruction.

The “Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings” is the latest effort sustained by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force (IASC) issued in 2007, which highlights the growing international focus on psychosocial intervention in disaster response.

With an increasing number of organisations implementing sport and physical activity programmes with psychosocial aims, there is a need for recommendations and guidelines to prevent harm, guide training, development and research and promote best practice.

Recommended Reading

[Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the contribution of sport to alleviating the consequences of humanitarian disasters: “Ballons rouges”](#)
(Council of Europe, 2003)

<http://www.sportanddev.org/data/document/document/131.pdf>

This recommendation from the Council of Europe outlines the commitment from the Council of Europe to provide games and sporting activities for children and young people living in a crisis or post-emergency situation. The Ballons Rouges project offers new ways of communicating the core values of sport, such as fair play, co-operation, sharing

and respect to the young people, particularly those living in difficult circumstances, whether inside refugee or other temporary camps or collective accommodations.

Roundtable on the Response of the World of Sport to the Indian Ocean Tsunami
(United Nations, 2005)

<http://www.sportanddev.org/data/document/document/11.pdf>

Leaders of more than a dozen international sport organisations gathered in Geneva after the Indian Ocean tsunami to join with the United Nations to assist recovery efforts. The participants explored common goals and avenues for future cooperation to provide long-term assistance to the people affected by the earthquake and tsunami and subsequent disasters.

The Code of Conduct in Humanitarian Relief

(The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Movements, 1994)

<http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/code.asp>

This is a voluntary code consisting of ten ethical standards in disaster relief that over 400 organisations have signed, registering their willingness to incorporate its principles into their work.

IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings
(Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2007)

http://www.who.int/mental_health/emergencies/guidelines_iasc_mental_health_psychosocial_june_2007.pdf

These guidelines aim to provide a multi-sectoral, inter-agency framework that enables effective coordination, identifies useful practices and flags potentially harmful practices, and clarifies how different approaches to mental health and psychosocial support complement one another.

Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction

(Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies)

http://www.ineesite.org/standards/MSEE_report.pdf

A set of global minimum standards for education in emergencies designed for use in emergency response, emergency preparedness and humanitarian advocacy. It offers minimum standards, key indicators and guidance notes that inform humanitarian action in the context of education.

Tools & Practice

To be able to effectively implement psychosocial sport programmes in the post-disaster setting, practitioners require knowledge and training in both sport and psychosocial intervention. This is to ensure that high quality sport is delivered and that coaches are able to appropriately recognise and respond to signs and symptoms of trauma and to respond in an effective way.

Engaging coaches from local communities is ideal as they possess greater knowledge of their community, language, culture and traditions. They also usually live in the local area and thus can be available outside of programme sessions if children or families want to consult with them. It is important to consider that coaches from the local community are likely to have been affected by the disaster themselves and may need additional support, which the organisation should provide. Although these coaches may come from the local community, they should be selected based on their understanding of the dynamics within the community in terms of ethnic groups, gender norms, social status, etc.

Being a coach in a psychosocial sport programme requires the skill, desire and interest in teaching sports and games, but also the ability to understand emotions, behaviours and facilitate interpersonal communication. Through in-depth training programmes, coaches can be better prepared to recognise traumatic reactions in the programme beneficiaries as well as in themselves, to offer quality interventions and be able (if necessary) to refer such participants to mental health structures. This means that ongoing training and support for coaches of psychosocial programmes is essential.

With training coaches can be better prepared to recognise the symptoms of more serious responses to trauma and refer such participants to a mental health professional. Ongoing training and support for coaches of psychosocial programmes is essential.

A number of training resources have been developed that cater for coaches, animators and facilitators of psychosocial sport programmes. Many include practical suggestions, game ideas and recreational activities along with advice for best practices.

Recommended Reading

Laugh, Run and Move to Develop Together: Games with a Psychosocial Aim

(M. Meuwly & J.P. Heiniger, Terres des Hommes, 1999)

<http://www.sportanddev.org/data/document/document/411.pdf>

This manual is a compilation of twenty games and sports activities that integrate the psychosocial approach. It is intended to develop the personal, social, methodological and technical skills of animators working with children, ultimately to develop the personal and social skills of children affected by disaster.

Resiliency Coach's Guide: For a sport-based HIV/AIDS prevention and youth life skills intervention

(Grassroots Soccer, 2006)

<http://www.sportanddev.org/data/document/document/280.pdf>

This manual offers a series of activities that allow youth to explore issues relating to HIV/AIDS and gain the skills necessary to lead healthy lives including critical thinking, communication, self-esteem and decision making among others, which can encourage and favor the development of healthy decision making amongst youth. The programme

Sport and Disaster Response thematic profile (print version)
International Platform on Sport & Development www.sportanddev.org

focuses on active participation and creates a safe, team-based environment for participants to share their feelings, beliefs and ideas about HIV/AIDS.

Community-based Psychological Support Training Manual
(International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2002)
<http://www.ifrc.org/what/health/psycholog/manual.asp>

This comprehensive manual builds on the experience of psychological support gathered in many different critical events over the last decade by National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. It covers more recently developed technical areas as well as recommended methodologies.

Current Initiatives

There are a number of disaster response interventions that use sport as a psychosocial tool to help survivors of such events to overcome trauma and strengthen resiliency.

Research and Evaluation in the Field

The Swiss Academy for Development has a number of ongoing projects and continues to develop the body of evidence for sport in disaster response through programme evaluation and research.

The project, “Sport and Play for Traumatized Children and Youth in Iran” began after the earthquake in Bam, Iran, in 2003 and continues to use a variety of sport activities and games to build resilience in children and young people in Bam. Research data has been gathered during this project with a focus on sport’s impact on children’s behaviour, the role of sports coaches in a disaster setting and gender equity.

In Sri Lanka, SAD is conducting a project called “Sport and Games for Social and Ethnic Integration in Sri Lanka” in partnership with Sarvodaya, a local NGO. The project involves 700 – 800 children and youth across eight sites in Sri Lanka and is designed to promote dialogue and trust; introduce psychosocial skills through sport and play activities; reintroduce structured leisure time; and to collect and analyse monitoring & evaluation data.

Sport in Post-Disaster Intervention Seminars

The International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education has developed a number of initiatives related to sport and disaster response. Following the tsunami, ICSSPE hosted a seminar in Bangkok, Thailand, on Rehabilitation through Adapted Physical Activity and Sport. This was followed closely by a second seminar in Berlin, Germany in 2006.

As interest in this area grew, ICSSPE developed a week-long training seminar on Sport in Post-Disaster Intervention in partnership with the German Red Cross and Kennesaw State University. Seventy-eight professionals from more than twenty countries attended the first international seminar in Rheinsberg, Germany in 2007.

In association with the seminar, participants received a Handbook on Sport and Physical Activity in Post-Disaster Intervention which detailed key theoretical and practical information to enable participants to plan and deliver a sport programme in the post-disaster setting. A second seminar will be held from 1 to 7 November, 2008, also in Rheinsberg, Germany. Visit the ICSSPE website for details www.icsspe.org

Moving Forward: A Toolkit for Disaster Responders

Mercy Corps, CARE and Nike have developed a new toolkit called *Moving Forward* to assist practitioners in applying sport-based approaches in post-emergency situations. The toolkit was recently field tested in Peru with a second pilot project planned for Afghanistan in summer 2008.

For additional information as this initiative develops, visit www.mercycorps.org/topics/sports/2151

Project Case Studies

Project Case Study

Sport and Play for Traumatized Children and Youth

Target group

Children and youth aged 6 to 18 in earthquake-affected areas

Location

Bam, Iran

Organisations involved

Swiss Academy for Development

United Nations Children's Fund (administered camps in which participants lived).

People in Need (Czech NGO which acted as an implementing partner 2004-2005)

Internal Assessment report

<http://www.sportanddev.org/data/document/document/221.pdf>

About this project

This pilot project was conducted using sport and play as tools for the psychosocial rehabilitation of children and youth in a post-disaster situation.

On 26 December 2003, a devastating earthquake struck the city of Bam, Iran. The mental and emotional trauma of the natural disaster called for a response beyond the provision of basic material and technical needs. Residents of all ages in Bam felt helpless and depression was common. This pilot project was conducted using sport and play as tools for the psychosocial rehabilitation of children and youth in a post-disaster situation.

The primary goals of the project were to:

- Improve physical and mental wellbeing;
- Provide useful leisure time activities that also promote norms and behaviours important for coping with daily life;
- Promote basic values through team sport activities such as the importance of respectful social cohesion and social integration;
- Provide a platform for the information and discussion of health issues (including drug abuse, violence, HIV/AIDS, hygiene);
- Give parents/relatives some relief and time to be on their own;
- Provide support in capacity building and empowerment of local coaches and project staff.

Impact

The role of the sports coaches in the project, by being role models for the young participants, showed the crucial position that coaches play in these kinds of sports projects.

Facts and Figures

Programmes were conducted in the village of Bavarat and the camps at Amir Kabir and Shahid Rajaie. Activities were held every day in Bavarat, and three times a week in the two camps with close to 300 children aged 6 to 18 involved in the three locations by 2006. Participation was open to all interested children with the project advertised in local schools in the area of Bam. All three locations were equipped with sports equipment for table tennis, gymnastics, football and volleyball.

Lessons Learned

The role of coaches is very important, as they are trusted, positive role models for the participants. The recruitment of sports coaches from the local population meant that they understood the trauma experienced. However, these coaches also suffered from the consequences of the disaster and therefore required continued support.

By conducting an impact evaluation, it was possible to capture the many aspects of rehabilitation in a post-disaster context while allowing the project and its goals to evolve. Weekly reports completed by coaches together with the project management and family interviews proved useful.

In Bam, girls were not accustomed to playing sports with boys or in public. It was therefore necessary to find a safe, covered space for their activities, which proved extremely successful and secured long-term participation of local girls.

To improve the mutual exchange between coaches and children, it was proposed that participants write letters to their coaches, even anonymously. "Friendship circles" at the end of every lesson also proved successful, in which the coach discussed a topic such as fairness, health issues, etc. with the participants and addressed problems that many of them were facing in a group setting.

Recommendations

The evaluation of the SAD project produced a number of recommendations on using sport as a tool in disaster response.

Recruitment of local coaches, continuous education and support is crucial to programme success. Motivated coaches understanding cultural and gender dynamics is essential to ensuring support from parents and families.

A thorough participatory monitoring and evaluation system should be incorporated into the project activities from the beginning, in order to trace problems and to find optimal ways in which to further improve the impact of the project activities.

The provision of safe sporting facilities and coaches for females provides girls with the opportunity to participate in the project activities and to enjoy them.

Coaches should address parent's concerns such as worries about their children's performance at school. By setting up joint activities with the schools, activities may be planned to avoid overlapping with school schedules and instruments can be developed to support children's performance at school (e.g. through guided learning groups).

External activities besides classes, such as team competitions or a picnic, were appreciated and helped establish friendly relationships among the participants. Measures to integrate newcomers into the group e.g. by having several of the former participants responsible for introducing them into the activities and into the group, ensure a team spirit can be established.

Voices from the field

Coach quoted from a weekly report:

“As they are telling me now, this centre has become their second house and they are much dependent on coming to the class. They are saying that they are gaining peace and relaxation here. These things give me a new energy to go on with the work!”

Masoumeh Moghadami, girls' ping-pong class in Baravat

“What was interesting here [in Baravat] was that there was no entertainment or any other places for children, so when they came to the class they were just trying to grab the ball and play by themselves but now they are fond of playing with each other.”

Project Case Study

Movement, Games and Sport (MGS) for children's psychosocial development

Target group

Sport school teachers and animators in recreational centres and communities

Location

Iran, Colombia and Sri Lanka

Organisations involved

Lead organisation: Terre des hommes, Lausanne

Partner organisation(s): Sport without Borders (Sri Lanka)

Evaluation report

http://www.humanitarian-psy.org/pdf/articles/final_anglais_04.pdf

About this project

The project was implemented to improve the social reintegration of children affected by the 2004 tsunami in Sri Lanka and the 2003 earthquake in Bam, Iran.

During the International Year of Sport and Physical Education 2005, Terre des hommes (Tdh) received funds for a pilot project on how to improve the use of games and sport in Tdh recreational centres.

The project was implemented in three different contexts: two emergency projects (post-earthquake in Iran and post-tsunami in Sri Lanka) and one development project (population displacements in Colombia).

The aim was that through training sessions and individual coaching, sports animators would develop their personal, social, methodological and technical skills and would be able to apply the intrinsic values of the activities specific to "Movement, Games and Sports" in order to improve their intervention with children for better social reintegration.

The intervention was aimed at local animators and school sport teachers (trainees). The 3-month project was undertaken in three main phases: training (psychosocial topics and methodology of planning physical activities), individual coaching and transfer of skills to others.

Impact

The most significant benefits are the changes expressed by project leaders (trainees) in terms of personal development.

Facts and Figures

Following a 3-month programme including a 2-week training period, coaching and replication time, evaluations show that out of 16 trainees in each group, there was a more than 80% success rate.

Conclusions drawn following the programme show that trainees feel more competent, that they are more able to respect the others' opinion and to solve conflicts thanks to empathy and dialogue. Relationships with the children have improved through better communication. The improved behaviour of trainees had a direct impact on children's

behaviour showing greater confidence and less aggressiveness.

The pedagogical practice of trainees also evolved towards more cooperation and less competition, with a larger focus on informal games and play rather than competitive sports

Lessons Learned

The most significant benefits are the changes expressed by the trainees in terms of personal development. Through the project they gained self-esteem and confidence, as well as leadership skills.

Ownership was ensured through the replication process with trainees becoming trainers for their peers in their communities, hence gaining respect and developing a more positive attitude.

The key to success was to allow sufficient time with the group and not to provide a one-off training of 1 or 2 weeks with no follow-up. The coaching and replications were extremely important parts of the project, as training content could be verified that it was being integrated and put into practice. Feedback on the programme was frequently requested.

The overall cost of the programme was low with good benefits in terms of transfer and reinforcement of capacities.

The unmet challenge was to evaluate the impact of the programme on the children. This would have required returning some months later in order to assess the impact using qualitative research tools.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations on using sport as a tool in disaster response were developed from this project.

The training-of-trainers to transfer knowledge and competencies to key community actors is fundamental for sustainability reasons. The need to take care of adults as well as children is proven by recent studies in psychosocial projects which show that adults suffer the same (if not more) effects of trauma as children.

Use 'learning from experience' methodology which puts participants into situations that they can then link to theoretical aspects.

Benefit from the added-value of the Movement, Games and Sport (MGS) tool through correct use: by placing an emphasis on the way physical activities are implemented and focusing on values such as cooperation. Because sport engages an individual through the mind, heart and body, shared experiences during a game are instrumental in building bonds.

Have a longer period of intervention including a period of coaching of trainees in the field (with children) in order to assist participants in integrating and practising their new skills; coordinate, train and coach resource-groups who will replicate the training to animators and peers.

Follow-up and sustainability: Anchor the project into an existing Tdh psychosocial project. Key persons responsible for the replication and follow-up of the project should be involved from the beginning, as well as in the strategic planning of a new phase to provide a sense of ownership.

Voices from the field

Terre des hommes Project coordinator Rosiris Angulo

“To play in a context of conflict, displacement and suffering, is a provocation, a way of transforming fear and giving way to hope. The “Movement, Games and Sport Project” (MGS) brings a new way of seeing and understanding play and sport. The project uses tools that are managed daily by animators and teachers with their groups of children, giving them a new meaning: it transforms them in a very practical way into psychosocial tools for the work with children who are living in various difficult circumstances. People who were integrated in the process consider the experience as valuable and transforming for their personal lives as well as their community work with displaced children and adolescents.”

Bibliography

The following selected bibliography on sport and disaster response is for books and articles (not accessible freely on the web) for further sources of information on this topic. Please note, this list is not intended to be exhaustive but rather aims to provide a selection of the main resources on sport and disaster response. Suggestions and further additions to this bibliography can be sent to: info@sportanddev.org

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