

New cultures new sport



Brief description of the activity

This activity intends to promote the encounter between people from different countries and the knowledge of their cultures through the universal language of sport and its values.

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Objectives and methodology:

The objective of this activity is to facilitate the practice of sport by people coming from other countries, using at the same time the sport practice as a tool for the local community to meet and discover other cultures and have moments of spontaneous aggregation that revolve around the sport practice. The methodology applied is the promotion of knowledge and encounter between different cultures using non-formal activities in informal contexts

Duration:

The activity has no specific duration as it varies a lot according to the sport played. To reach its purposes it is indeed important to structure it as a stable and recurring event, instead of a one-time activity

Location:

Any outdoor place that is public, accessible and already frequented by young people such as parks, big parking areas,

squares...

Material:

The necessary material is closely connected to the specific sport you decide to play. This said, it can be useful to have available general sports gear (different colours jersey to make teams, balls, whistles, flags...)

Staff needed and eventual specific skills required:

No specific skills are required but having sport experience, even if not indispensable, is useful.

Participants involved:

This activity does not work with a monocultural group. Plus, as described later on, it is important to look for and involve groups who already play together a given sport.

Steps:

Before

Look for groups of youngsters/adults from other countries that already play some team sport. If searched for in the right time and places (non-working days, late afternoons at parks, big parking lot...) you will be surprised of how many sports that you did not even know are played around your city.

Ask them to explain you the rules of the game and propose to show it to other people in order to have more participants. Set then a date when they are sure they will play again, at the same place or in a bigger one if you think it will ease the participation of other people. Set the date with a comfortable margin to promote the participation in the activity among your youth center users and local community at large.

When arranging the next meeting, do pay attention to

not overturn the group routine. It is important to ensure a good participation of other people by setting the proper time and location, but if it is too far away from the group habits there is a high risk that it will not show-up, and it would be the failure of your activity.

Exchange contacts with two or three people of the group (mobile, facebook, Instagram...) in order to stay in touch until the next meeting for contingencies and updates. Ask if any specific material or equipment is needed.

Once the date is set, is time to promote it at your youth center and in your town. Waiting for people to spread the word is a good strategy, but do not underestimate the power of a good social network campaign. For example, you can create a specific event on Facebook (ex. "Cricket tournament on Sunday!", "Square dancing in the park", "Win the football-tennis cup") and build suspense by posting some videos of skilled players or official competitions of that sport.

If you manage to have in advance a solid group willing to participate in the event you can start explaining the rules, watching together videos of this sport, making some practice..

During

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Introduce the group of participants you gathered to the group who practices the sport. A good way to break the ice and make some informal acquaintance is to make some warm-ups together before starting to play.

Ask someone from the group to explain the rules to everybody, helping him/her with translation if necessary. Then make the teams, as mixed as possible with locals and foreigners, new players and expert ones. The more the teams are mixed, the best you will prevent excessive agonism and facilitate the encounter of diversities.

The aim of the activity is to have as many participants as possible, so try to involve also the passers-by or curious people approaching the group. Make yourself visible by

putting some flags, decorations, music...

After

Decide with participants other dates for a rematch or simply for playing together again, as well as other sport or games to play (perhaps locals would like to show their favourite sports to the foreigners next time).

Innovative aspects for the promotion of interculture

New cultures new sports helps promoting interculture by working on two fronts inclusion of newcomers in the local social tissue and support for locals in seeing the newcomers in a different and more complex perspective.

One the one hand it fosters the process of inclusion of migrant people - and foreigners in general - in the local community by easing the practice of a very important moment in individuals life such as the sport activity.

On the other and it offers to different cultures a moment to deepen the reciprocal knowledge, preventing prejudices and supporting a peaceful cohabitation. In fact, the reasons why people move to other countries (work, family rejoining, asylum claim, study, search for a better life..) often ends up absorbing and defining the individual, reducing his complexity to a mere part of him. This is one of the reasons why prejudices arise and the coexistence is often hard to achieve: the person ceases to be considered such and becomes an economical/political/social category. The methodology applied here is to deconstruct this approach to diversity and offer one (among multiple possible ones) field of encounter and acquaintance.

The activity is as simply as innovative, because it combines a ludic experience and an informal context outside the youth center. The sport here is used as tool to ease the encounter of people that normally do not have such occasions to share relaxing moments together and puts the basis for further meetings thanks to the simplicity and

replicability of its structure.

Possible follow-up

Following the event(s) that you had, you can organize a tournament of the sport most liked by participants. Once you have a solid basis of people playing one or more sport or games, you can include workshops of them in your youth center program. You can also set up a team composed by the best players and look for existing tournament or championship where to enrol it. It will foster the group spirit and the creation of positive dynamics among the players.

Once the group of participants is formed, there is no more need for mediation of youth workers so it is a genuine and effective way to trigger an intercultural encounter that eventually can continue autonomously.

