

FutbolNet, On The Way To Inclusion

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Background

The FutbolNet programme methodology uses physical activity and sport as an agent of change for children and young people in vulnerable environments. FutbolNet promotes the values of FC Barcelona — effort, respect, teamwork, humility and ambition — as construed from the culture of cooperation.

In all sessions of the programme, the children and young people participate in the 3-part FutbolNet match. In the first part, the two teams meet and agree on the rules they want to play with, relating them with the values and identifying the associated behaviours. In the second part, the two teams play, trying to implement the rules they have agreed together. In the third part, the two teams meet to discuss how the match went.

FutbolNet and diversity is born

In April of 2015, the FutbolNet methodology was adapted to create a group of introduction to sports for children and youths with disabilities in order to promote the practice of sports to improve and develop their abilities. The aim of FutbolNet and Diversity is to make physical activity and sports available to boys and girls who didn't have access to them before because of different barriers.

The educational team ensures that all members of the group, without exception, can be successful by bringing out their full individual potential. They also promote all physical activities by observing everything that happens during the game in order to use it as an educational opportunity. One of the most significant aims of educators is to give the children and youths tools and strategies to foment everyone's participation in contexts such as the classroom, school, home, public places, etc.

Adaptation of 3-part matches

From the beginning the 3-part methodology was adapted with the aim of favouring participation and making success possible for everyone. In the first part, the children and youths agreed upon the adaptations so that everyone could play and be successful while practicing sports. In the second part, they play, putting the adaptations agreed upon into practice. During the third part, they meet again to reflect on the degree of participation and in this space for dialogue, the children and youths are asked how they feel.

Besides of adapting the specific methodology during the matches, we promote games that let the participants experience the values and put new ways of interacting into practice. All the games that are played have a high degree of participation.

What novelties have been introduced?

The FutbolNet and Diversity methodology has introduced cooperative challenges, which allow all members of a group to participate together to achieve a common goal. These challenges make it possible to effectively experience the different values that are worked on. Cooperative methodologies are also put into practice in introductory sports activities that allow emphasis to be placed on the aims of the program, such as working on individual and group responsibility, autonomy, conflict resolution, motivation, and help between equals.

Totally inclusive sessions are also promoted, in which children and young people with and without disabilities share all of the time of the session: both in games and reflections. These sessions, which encourage participation and cooperation, ensure that the children and young people have common objectives and promote inclusive situations, which do not discriminate against anyone.

Results and conclusions

Once they participate in the program, the aim is to direct the participants and include them in inclusive or specific sports offers that already exist in Barcelona. A total of 67 children and youths — 58 boys and 9 girls — have participated in these 3 seasons, and 65% of the participants in the first and second season continue to be physically active and practice sports after forming a part of FutbolNet and Diversity.

Starting with putting FutbolNet and Diversity into practice, including everyone is one of FutbolNet's main goals. Participants in FutbolNet and Diversity are currently directed to other FutbolNets, giving rise to totally inclusive situations. There are participants in FutbolNet and Diversity that have been directed to continue their training studying aspects related to physical activity. For this reason, boys and girls that participated

in the program as participants form a part of the FutbolNet educational teams. Lastly, a pilot test is being carried out to form a regular group made up of children and youths with and without disabilities.

All these actions make possible that FutbolNet continues to propose sport as an educational tool, offering children and young people a comprehensive development as individuals, while they enjoy an experience of empowerment.