



Title

Sport for all A Praia sport democratisation project

Basic data

City: Praia

Country: Cape Verde

Number of inhabitants: 140,000

Topics: associationism and participation, civics, culture and leisure, health and sports, personal development, policy and administration, urban development and welfare.

Principles of the Charter of Educating Cities: 1, 2, 4, 9, 10, 17, 18, 20

Summary

In every city there is a great interest in doing sport, but on many occasions the existing facilities do not meet the minimum standards necessary. In Cape Verde, in general, and in Praia, in particular, there is a great potential for doing sport, due to the fact that most of the population is made up of children, adolescents and young people.

On the other hand, urban violence, the result of the intersection of many phenomena and social problems, is taking on alarming proportions. The need for recreational alternatives for young people through sport might be one of the tools to fight this social problem that is unfortunately dominating urban societies, mainly in the city of Praia, the country's capital, where the pace of urban growth is worrying.

In the face of this situation, the City Council of Praia, based on a sport policy addressed to the idea of democratizing sport, has opted to intervene in:

- the renovation of 6 existing sport facilities.
- the construction of new sport facilities (9 sport centres, 10 street basketball courts, 17 fitness parks, 3 football fields and another 3 fields for seven-a-side football).
- the creation of a management system for the sport facilities consisting of neighbourhood committee made up of residents, and with close collaboration with the City Council of Praia.
- the inclusion of sport professionals to manage the project.
- the creation of sport initiation schools (football, basketball, handball, judo, karate, etc.).

The Programme also promotes women's sport since this population group practises less sport than the masculine group.



Community gymnastics session



New football field

Objectives

- To provide a recreational alternative for the entire population, especially young people.
- To fight against violence and social exclusion through sport.
- To involve the population in the management of sport facilities.
- To do physically healthy activities.
- To foment women's sports.
- To foster inter-neighbourhood relations.

Methodology

Young people who are unemployed in the community are hired to build the sport facilities there. This way we also encourage young people to watch over and maintain the facilities once the construction has finished.

The spaces designed and built under this project are also used for school sports, since most of the primary schools do not have their own sport facilities.

The sport initiation schools, which have an important educative dimension, also use these spaces. One of the main conditions for the children to attend these schools is that they be in the school system and show a positive attitude toward learning.

The fitness parks are spread out around 17 neighbourhoods in the city and contribute to improving people's health. For example, doctors recommend that the elderly use them, especially those people who have an illness that requires they do physical exercise, although these parks are also used by young people of both sexes. Moreover, 10 street basketball courts have already been set up in the city and are functioning normally.

In order for the citizenry to use these facilities as their own, they are managed by neighbourhood committees, whose members are in local development associations and chosen by the community. One of the criteria is that the entire committee must have a woman in charge of encouraging and stimulating women's sport, as well as one member of the City Council, to ensure good relations between the local government and civil society.

The committees are in charge of planning schedules and organising the sport activities, as well as cultural activities. Some examples are: sports tournaments, musical competitions, lectures on social issues, etc. They obtain funds through collaborators (companies, state or local institutions, etc.) and often these sport spaces are used to raise funds for educative and cultural activities.

The use of the sports facilities is free of charge, although if they are used at night the electricity costs must be borne.

The publicity for this initiative is done using the communication channels of the City Council of Praia: magazines, website, radio and television. The organization of events at the facilities is also used to promote them, mainly through sport and cultural exchanges.



Judo initiation class



Fitness park facility

Social and urban context

Praia is located in the south of the Island of Santiago and is the capital of the archipelago of Cape Verde. It has around 140,000 inhabitants, which is 27% of the population of Cape Verde (2007 data). 47.8% of the population is male and 52.2% female and more than half are young people under 25 years old. Families in which the women are the bread earner make up 43.6% of the total.



Aerial view of Praia – Photo: David Trainer

More than 9,000 families live in precarious housing and there is a lack of 15,474 housing units. Only 47.3% of the population has access to drinking water.

Praia, as a major urban centre, houses almost half of the population of the Island of Santiago and has the largest number of business opportunities. The prevailing economic sectors are linked to the tertiary sector, especially trade, transport, communications, financial services, government services and tourism, of special note being business tourism and events organisation.

The economic activity index is 64.67%. 22.96% of the active population is unemployed, women being most affected (28.09% women, 17% men). Unemployment among youth (15-24 years old) has reached 57.72%.

The population that most benefit from this experience are people who live in the neighbourhoods in the city of Praia and in the outlying rural towns whose inhabitants have a low level of schooling or are illiterate. These are densely populated areas, with a predominantly young population.

Most families are single member families made up of a single mother and her children. In these areas the unemployment rate is high; the main activities are informal retail trade, domestic work and civil construction.

Assessment

- Sports activities amongst young people have increased considerably.
- The mixing of young people from different neighbourhoods is greater and has improved how they get along with each other.
- Young people take on more responsibility in the organisation of their cultural and sport activities.
- The involvement of young people in the life of their community has increased.
- The sport facilities are very popular, mainly amongst associations, sports clubs and companies, and, accordingly, we must schedule many activities.

Future projects:

- We must set up a maintenance system for the sport facilities and build washrooms in all of them.
- To set up local and inter-neighbourhood tournaments in all sports.
- To continue promoting gender equality since the sport facilities are more often used by men.

Contact

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