

# Craque do Amanhã

## Sports, schools, and family

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The article's purpose is to present a study about the "Craque do Amanhã" project, which is implemented by CIEDS (Center for Integrated Studies and Programs for Sustainable Development), a Brazilian non-governmental organization, and developer of a methodology focused on articulating sport, school and families. The article aims to understand the connections between educational sports programs and the integrated development of children and adolescents. It was also identified that other results were achieved through educational sports projects. The exploratory research based on qualitative data showed several indicatives confirming the hypothesis that educational sport contribute to the integral development of children and adolescents; it was observed, however, an urgent need to link that with public policies of assistance, education and health. The main impacts of the project are about: participants behavior, improving school performance, family relationships, youth leadership, the development of families and their territory.

*Keywords:* integrated development, educational sport, integrative education and territory.

### *Craque do Amanhã: Deporte, escuela y familia*

Este artículo tiene como finalidad presentar un estudio de caso sobre el proyecto "Craque do Amanhã", implementado por el Centro de Estudios Integrados y Programas de Desarrollo Sostenible (CIEDS, por sus siglas en portugués), organización no gubernamental brasileña, que desarrolló la metodología basada en la articulación de acciones entre el deporte la escuela y las familias. El artículo tiene como objetivo comprender las conexio-

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Article received on August 29, 2014, and accepted on November 22, 2014.

nes entre programas educativos deportivos y el desarrollo integral de niños y adolescentes, así como identificar qué otros resultados se logran a través de proyectos sociodeportivos. La investigación tuvo finalidad exploratoria basada en datos cualitativos y señaló varias pistas que confirman la hipótesis de que el deporte educativo contribuye al desarrollo integral de niños y adolescentes; sin embargo, se ha observado la necesidad imperativa de articulación con las políticas públicas de asistencia, educación y salud. Los principales efectos del proyecto fueron: comportamiento de los participantes, mejora del rendimiento escolar, relaciones de familia, liderazgo juvenil, desarrollo de las familias y del propio territorio.

*Palabras clave:* desarrollo integral, deporte educacional, educación integral y territorio.

## INTRODUCTION

In terms of protecting the rights of children and teenagers, the Brazilian law is among the most advanced in the world. Act 8069/90, which established the Statute of Children and Teenagers, was described by Unicef (United Nations Children's Fund) as one of the most advanced legislative instruments in the world, and it is the highlight of children and youth legislation. Despite the advances made after the introduction of this law, many gaps remain that need to be filled concerning the rights of children and teenagers and require government action.

Under this decree, children and teenagers are considered legal subjects and equal to all other citizens, as clarified by *Art. 5º, caput and inciso I* of the Brazilian Federal Constitution which states: "All are equal under the law, without distinction of any kind, guaranteeing to Brazilians (...) the inviolable right to life, freedom, safety, property, as follows..." and "men and women have equal rights and obligations under the terms of this Constitution".

Children and teenagers, as they are subject to these rights, are guaranteed a set of fundamental rights: the right to life and health; the right to freedom, respect, and dignity; the right to family and community life; the right to education, culture, sports, and leisure; and the right to vocational training and labor protection.

It has been observed, however, that children and teenagers are still impacted by social inequalities, differences that are manifested in problems such as poverty, violence, unemployment, malnutrition, hunger, child la-

bor, sexual exploitation, child mortality, withdrawal from school, poor quality of education, and drug addiction.

By the year 2020, Brazil's population of people between the ages of 10-24 is expected to reach 43.3 million. This is a significant number, even with the absolute reduction in relation to 2000.

It is worth noting that there is a dichotomy between the wealthiest areas and the peripheries of large urban centers. While some children and teenagers enjoy the benefits of development, others are directly affected by the lack of infrastructure, the instability of public services, violence, and low income levels. Therefore, it is important to observe and understand that poverty is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, and not simply a lack of access to income.

There is a need to develop strategies that consider the complexity of these situations and that can guarantee the attainment of rights for Brazilian children and teenagers.

As stated previously, access to sports and leisure is a right of all Brazilian children and teenagers. In addition, sports can contribute to improving the quality of life for children and teenagers, as it facilitates the full development of boys and girls and might also encourage changes in social behavior (Cedeca, 2014).

Statistics indicate that there are several gaps in the effectiveness of the right to sports and leisure in Brazil. In most Brazilian municipalities, sports are managed in conjunction with other programs and policies, and less than half have leisure programs for children and teenagers. We also observed that, with regard to infrastructures for sports practices and leisure, there are considerable disparities among most Brazilian schools. Furthermore, it is worth noting that Brazil's sports programs are primarily invested in high performance sports.

From the perspective of sports as a practice for social development, sports have assumed new functions that go beyond physical education, well-being, health and entertainment. Without losing its traditional dimensions, sports are currently recognized as a preparation for citizenship, respect for human rights, social inclusion, and combating violence, as well

as decisive contributions to the formation of a culture of peace, therefore confronting the issues previously presented.

The “Craque do Amanhã”<sup>1</sup> project was developed in response to such demands. This was accomplished through the intent of the educational component of the Sports Incentive Law. The Craque do Amanhã since 2012 has been funded by Ampla and implemented by CIEDS-Center for Integrated Studies and Programs for Sustainable Development. It aims to foster integrated development (physical, psychological, and social) and improve the quality of life for two hundred children and teenagers between the ages of 9 and 18 years, living in São Gonçalo, Rio de Janeiro.

The main purpose of this article is to investigate the educational use of sports as a tool for promoting the integral development of children and teenagers.

Thus, this article aims to answer the following questions: *a)* how can social sports projects contribute to the integral development of children and teenagers?; and *b)* what other results can be achieved through social sports activities?

Finally, we should note the limitations of this article. In no way is this intended to exhaust the discussion on the contributions of sports to the integral development of children and teenagers, nor should the results presented here be generalized. This discussion focuses on the Craque do Amanhã project, as an educational sports experience, and how the project contributes to the integral development of its participants.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As cited by Gil (1991, 17), we can “define research as a rational and systematic procedure that aims to provide answers to the problems that are proposed”.

From Lakatos and Marcone (2001, 43):

<sup>1</sup> In this communication, we prefer to use the original name in portuguese. The meaning of the name could be translated as “Ace of tomorrow”.

Research can be considered as a formal method with reflective thinking that requires a scientific treatment and is on track to meet the reality or to find partial truths. It means much more than just the truth: it is to find answers to questions posed, using scientific models.

This is an exploratory research, which aims to provide greater familiarity with the problem, make it more explicit, and allow for the construction of hypotheses (Gil, 2007).

The approach used for this research will be qualitative and based on single case study, while using the following methodological procedures: bibliographic review of the issue being researched; reading and analysis of institutional material and records from the performing organization related to the study topic; semi-structured interviews with project participants, professional staff, parents/guardians; and participant observation.

The presentation of the data and results found is based on the methodological model of a case study which, according to the definition of Yin (1990, 13), appears to be the most suitable method for the problem in question:

A case study is a way of performing empirical social research when investigating a current phenomenon within its real-life context, where the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly defined and in the situation in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

It should be noted that considering the methodology used, there are some limitations, therefore it is not possible to generalize the results obtained here.

## INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATIONAL SPORT

Each person learns to be an individual. What nature endows you with at birth is not adequate to live in a society. It is necessary to acquire that what has been achieved during the historical development of human society (Leontiev, 1978, 267).

The Statute of Children and Teenagers defines a child as a person who is eleven years of age or younger, and a teenager as a person who is between 12 and 18 years of age.

The advances in Brazilian legislation are undeniable in relation to children and teenagers; however, the reality is that Brazil still faces many challenges. Unicef figures indicate that:

Children are especially vulnerable to human rights violations, poverty, and inequality in the country. For example, 29 per cent of the population lives in poor families, but among children, this figure reaches 45.6 per cent. African American children, for example, are almost 70 per cent more likely to live in poverty than Caucasian children; the same can be observed for children living in rural areas. In the semi-arid region where 13 million children live, over 70 per cent of children and teenagers are classified as poor.<sup>2</sup>

Rizzini *et al.* (1999) emphasized that one of the major issues that plagues Brazilian society is the growing process of social segregation. The authors cited that despite advances in significant issues related to citizenship and rights, there are still many gaps and differences between the worlds of the poor and wealthy. They also assert that this issue is even more serious and complex when related to children and teenagers, given that this population has fewer chances for coexistence and interaction.

The 2011 Unicef report on the situation of Brazilian teens indicated that:

While some live in big cities with the benefits of development, boys and girls who live in the communities of urban centers face a daily life marked by difficulties: they are especially vulnerable to violence and early entry into the workforce; infrastructure services and sanitation in their communities are poor or non-existent; their living conditions are often unhealthy and exposed to the dangers of fires and landslides (Unicef, 2011, 70).

<sup>2</sup> Data extracted from the Unicef website, available at: <http://www.unicef.org/brazil/pt/activities.html> [accessed on June 22, 2014].

The report continued to note that:

It is urgent, therefore, to overcome these vulnerabilities and inequalities affecting the full development of teenagers so that Brazil can take advantage of this unique moment in its history to transform the lives of these boys and girls, their families, their communities, the nation as a whole [...] These strategies should take into account the complexity of the phenomena that affect teenagers and also be able to offer innovative and multi-sectoral responses [...] Therefore, public policies in the areas of education, health, special protection, sport, leisure, and culture promote and ensure the right of being a teenager (Unicef, 2011, 73).

The development of human beings is uninterrupted and gradual, and follows a certain order and regularity. Due to such a continuous process, we can affirm that each stage of life influences the following stages; childhood influences our teenage, teenage influence our youth, and so on.

Piaget, the Swiss interactionist<sup>3</sup> psychologist, stated that development is the result of an active, dynamic interplay between a child and his or her environment. He also emphasized that the rate and extent of the development process is not the same throughout the process. The development process is rapid in early childhood, then slows down, it is more rapid during the onset of pre-pubertal growth, slows during adolescence, and finally stabilizes between the ages of 18 and 19 to the early 20s.

Bronfenbrenner (1989, 191) defines human development as “the set of processes through which the particularities of a person and the environment interact to produce constancy and change in the characteristics of the person in the course of his/her life”.

From this perspective, the author asserts that humans live not in homogeneous contexts and that it is the diversity of our relationship experiences in which our development process takes place. Thus, according to the au-

<sup>3</sup> He considers that biological and social elements cannot be separated in the process of human development. Human development takes place in a network of relationships, in a set of interactions in which different complementary roles are assumed and assigned by and to the various participants.

thor, the privileged context for development is the one in which the person engages in increasingly complex collective activities that rely on the guidance and monitoring of other people who are committed to their well-being, and that can establish positive personal relationships.

Thus, Guará (2009, 73), in analyzing Bronfenbrenner's theory, highlighted the following with regard to the development of the child:

In short, the actual development process of the child, according to this theory, requires the existence of policies and programs that can give them stability, conditions, and recognition of all previous instances, including economic policies and social values of the institutions by which it will circulate towards its future.

The fundamental role of the family in the development processes of children and teenagers should also be noted, as well as the relevance of policies that consider the family included in this process:

There is no doubt that the situation of well-being of children and teenagers is directly related to the possibility of maintaining a stable family relationship (...) Help to the families, especially those in more vulnerable situations, and their recognition as active social agents and objects of public policies, establishes them as decisive priorities in the search for human development objectives, such as poverty elimination, access to healthcare, education, food, eradication of child labor, promotion of gender equality, and integral protection to its members, from children to elderly (Kaloustian, 2011, 9).

It is in the midst of this discussion that integrative education practices and methodologies emerge. Gonçalves (2006, 130), in defining integrative education, emphasized that:

The more traditional concept in terms of the definition of integrative education is one that considers the subject in its multidimensional condition, not merely in its cognitive dimension, but also in the understanding of a subject as a corporeal subject, with affection, and who is placed in a context of relationships. That



is to say that the understanding of a subject should be considered in its biopsychosocial dimension. We add, moreover, that the subject is a multidimensional desiring subject, which means that, beyond the satisfaction of their basic needs, it has symbolic demands, seeks satisfaction in its various formulations of achievement, both in creative activities and in obtaining pleasure in many forms.

In the wake of this understanding, we can comprehend that integrated development is one that considers the person in his or her multidimensionality (biological, psychological, cognitive, behavioral, affective, relational, evaluative, sexual, ethical, aesthetic, creative, artistic, environmental, political, technological, and professional aspects) inserted in the complex context of his or her various relationships.

Betti and Janela de Vidro (1998, 25-26) indicated that through practice and reflection sports allow the construction of a global health ethic. It is suggested that sports are an instrument of empowerment for modern society, in that they connect the biological function of health preservation with the socio-cultural function of communication and expression. It is also asserted “sports are the most important socio-cultural phenomenon of our time, and it is urgent to learn and position ourselves before it in terms of the means of mass communication”.

The trajectory of change in relation to sports functionalities has been covered in a gradual, although steady manner. According to Tubino and Maynard da Silva, “sports, as one of the most prominent phenomena in the transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century, had, at the International Charter of Physical Education and Sports (UNESCO/1978), its landmark of paradigm shift.” Previously restricted to the landmark of performance sports, sports became perceived as a right for all, including sports in schools, leisure-sports, and performance sports, and thus included in education and social life.

In Brazil, the gaps in realizing the right to sports and leisure are even larger for children and teenagers. According to the 2009 Survey of Basic Information on Municipalities, conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), it was determined that:

- 83.2 per cent of Brazilian municipalities have some sports policy reflected in the organic law.

Meanwhile:

- Only 17.4 per cent of Brazilian municipalities have an exclusive department for sports and leisure; while in 68.7 per cent of municipalities, sports and leisure programs are still treated in conjunction with other policies.
- Only 11.2 per cent of Brazilian municipalities have a municipal sports council.
- Only 42.8 per cent of the municipalities in the country had policies regarding leisure for children and teenagers, a clear violation of rights.

It is worth noting that public sports policies have focused on high performance sports. This is evidence that can be extracted from data relative to the Sports Incentive Law of the Federal Government, which plans to use resources originating from the deduction of taxation on taxable income from companies (1%) and individuals (6%). Table 1 illustrates the projects approved for funding in 2014.

The perspective of sports as a right for all provides a much more comprehensive and strong social character. The UN argues that sports can play an important role in the development of people and countries, not only in complementing public policies for education and health, but also in promoting the development and propagation of a culture of peace. Then UN General-Secretary Kofi Anan stated during a speech that sports can be “a powerful force to bring benefits to the lives of people devastated by war and poverty, especially children”. This realization led the United Nations in 2003 to adopt a resolution entitled “Sports as a means of promoting education, health, development, and Peace”;<sup>4</sup> this resolution became the base-document used to define 2005 as the International Year of Sports and Physical Education.

<sup>4</sup>Sports as a means to promote education, health, development, and peace.

TABLE 1. Projects under funding through the sports Incentive Law

| <i>Modality</i>  | <i>Number of approved projects</i> | <i>% in relation to the number of projects approved</i> | <i>Resources approved for funding (R\$)</i> | <i>% in relation to the approved value</i> |
|------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Performance*     | 62                                 | 63.92   | 89 145 630.38                               | 64.08                                      |
| Educational**    | 20                                 | 20.62   | 31 724 325.91                               | 22.80                                      |
| Participation*** | 15                                 | 15.46   | 18 245 301.44                               | 13.12                                      |

*Source:* Author's own elaboration based on data from the Ministry of Sports, available at: <http://www.esporte.gov.br/index.php/institucional/secretaria-executiva/lei-de-incentivo-ao-esporte/projetos-aprovados-aptos-a-captacao> [accessed on June 22, 2014]. \*Performance sports, practiced according to national and international rules, in order to attain results, integrate people and the country's communities with other nations (Art. 4, item III, Dec. 6180/07). \*\*Educational sports, whose beneficiary public should be students enrolled in a school of any system in accordance with Articles 16-20 of Law 9.394 of December 20, 1996, avoiding selectivity and hypercompetitiveness of its practitioners, in order to achieve the full development of the individual and its training for citizenship and practice of leisure (Art. 4, subsection I, Dec. 6180/07). \*\*\*Participation sports, characterized by voluntary practice, including sports with the aim of contributing to the integration of practitioners in the fullness of social life, in health promotion, and in education and environmental preservation. (Art. 4, subsection II, Dec. 6180/07).

Tubino (2006) characterized sports in three dimensions: educational sport, leisure sport, and performance sport. According to the author, educational sport are those that are educational in character; leisure sport seek the participants' enjoyment; and performance sport are institutionally formalized and abide by a set of rules. The author also proposes a subdivision of educational sport: instructional sport and school sport.

Table 2 presents the distinctions in the manifestations of sports developed by Tubino in his research.

In the context of this work, we will focus on the concept of educational sport. Barbieri (2001, 144) presented educational sport as an opportunity for the restoration of society, emphasizing the meanings of participation, totality, coeducation, emancipation, cooperation, solidarity, integration, freedom, autonomy, and the preservation of cultural identity. He defined it as:

(...) one of the meanings attributed to sports, as a human activity — upon full development of human beings, their individuality and their socialization, the preservation of their health, the development of self-esteem, self-knowledge,

TABLE 2. Features of sporting events

|                   |   |  |  |   |
|-------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Educational sport | Instructional Sport                       | Participation, cooperation, co-education, co-responsibility, and inclusion | Training in citizenship and an active lifestyle  | Rules adapted to the established principles and awards adapted to educational premises; for children, teenagers, and young people, inside and outside of school                                     |
|                   | School sport                              | Sports development and development of sportsmanship                        | Development of the fittest young people in the sport, without losing sight of the citizenship training | Formal rules of entities, valorization of integral education and sports competitions in appropriate measures; aimed at young people with more athletic abilities                                    |
| Leisure sports    | Leisure sports demonstration or free time | Participation, enjoyment, and inclusion                                    | Entertainment and active life (health)   | Normal rules of entities (federations), created or adapted to circumstances; can be practiced without opponents (e.g. cycling, skateboarding, etc.); intended for all people, regardless of age     |
| Performance sport | Performance or high yield sports          | Performance, resilience and athletic development                           | Victories, successes, achievements, records, awards, and personal fulfillment                          | Official and institutionalized rules; often practiced professionally; directed by entities such as confederations and federations; primarily aimed at athletic talent to suit all modality biotypes |

Source: Tubino (2006) cited in “Sports as a possibility for development”, Brasília, UNESCO and Fundação Vale, 2013, 30 (Sports reference books; 7), p. 10.

and making it in the world — manifests itself in formal education systems and outside them, having as its constitutive principles, cooperation, participation, coeducation, regionalism, and emancipation, and ultimately aim at the development of humans and citizenship.

In Brazil, the definition of educational sport is contained in the Pelé Law (Law 9.615/1998):

...going back to the integral development of the human being, sports practice is not a tool, but rather a factor in overall development to promote a critical reading of the world in which the subject is integrated. Unlike what occurs in relation to the other two dimensions, here the practitioner is called a student, not an athlete. Although this does not form part of the objectives of educatio-

nal sports to standardize gestural/technical/motor, as well as the dimension of sports, this dimension of sports is characterized by systematization, intentionality and commitment to some results, and in this case, in the educational field. It is worth remembering that, although motor performance is not the main goal of educational sports, this dimension does not disregard the importance of teaching sports in the correct manner.

In the Guidance for Semi-arid Municipalities - Sports and Citizenship, Unicef outlines five principles of educational sports (table 3).

TABLE 3. Principles of educational sport

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Inclusion of everyone   | All children and teenagers, regardless of gender, social class, or any other characteristics, must be guaranteed the opportunity to participate   |
| Collective construction | Participants, teachers, administrators, parents, and caregivers should be involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating actions  |
| Respect for diversity   | It is important to observe and appreciate the differences in all participants as aggregating constituents and developers of new possibilities, thus enriching the procedures. As a starting point, respect for differences and others in their entirety |
| Autonomy                | Contribute to an emancipatory education through the diffusion of individual empowerment and engagement in his or her own life; encourage the student to make choices and decide on the best paths to take   |
| Integrative education   | Understand the child and the teenager in his or her full dimension: body and mind. Recognize the various spaces of the region as potential educators  |

*Source:* Author's own elaboration, based on Unicef (2011a).

Unicef justifies that the motives behind the implementation of educational sport activities:

1. Are good for health and stimulate learning.
2. Extend their cultural universe.
3. Develop their potential.
4. Encourage healthy habits and healthy lifestyles.
5. Facilitate learning in different ways of reading the world.

6. Promote social and personal relationships
7. Provide conditions for a better quality of life.<sup>5</sup>

Despite all of the considerations surrounding the benefits of playing sports, it is necessary to underscore the suggestions of some authors regarding these benefits for a person's development. Brohm<sup>6</sup> (1982) made a radical critique of sports in modern societies; to the author, the sports system mimicked the capitalist system. The author came to understand sports as a promotion of the ideology of "permanent competition" which plays a triple role in contemporary societies: *a*) the reproduction of bourgeois values such as hierarchy, subservience, and obedience; *b*) propagation of a culture of competition and records; and *c*) promotion of the themes of bourgeois ideology, such as the superman myth, individualism, and success.

Vaz and Torri (2005, 1), by alluding to the Critical Theory of Sports, clarified that:

The Critical Theory of Sports did not intend to criticize the "capitalist" sport, or even western sports, but the conditions that made it happen: its logic of domination and repression, *i.e.*, the alienation strengthened by it (...) In its main thesis, the Critical Theory of Sports tries to demonstrate how sports are forged as an integral part of the capitalist society, *i.e.*, its complete affinity with alienated labor: the same structures that govern work in the capitalist society also determine the development of sports, both anchored in the principle of income.

Martins *et al.* (2002, 3) synthesized this chain to highlight that:

We can say that socialization through school sports can be considered a form of social control, by adapting the practitioner to dominant values and norms as the alleged condition for functionality and development of society. One of

<sup>5</sup> Educational sports for citizenship and social development, available at: [http://www.unicef.org/brazil/pt/br\\_cartilha\\_unicef\\_formacao.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/brazil/pt/br_cartilha_unicef_formacao.pdf) [accessed on August 10, 2014].

<sup>6</sup> The author coined along with Bero Rigauer the Critical Theory of Sport (TCE).

the roles it plays in our country, then, is to reproduce and reinforce the capitalist ideology. Thus, as we have seen, sports do really educate. But education here means that the individual internalizes values and norms of behavior, which will enable him/her to adapt to a capitalist society. In short, it is an education that leads to complacency, and not to questioning.

Vaz and Torri (2005, 1) additionally noted the following:

Discourses on these theories are in no way univocal, but contain contradictions that are present in every social phenomenon. Sports is one of these, and if so, it deserves special attention for raising such doubts and discussions.

Guedes *et al.* (2006) indicated that in recent decades, there has been a multiplication of experiences in the Brazilian scene, ruled by public non-governmental organizations (NGO), public interest civil society organizations (OSCIPs), private companies, and even through public power, that use sports as a motto for promoting development in order to reach children and young people in situations of social vulnerability. The authors cited that literature on the subject was still very scarce, therefore creating an imperative to conduct research in this direction: “analytical efforts which produce mappings and typologies that allow overcoming fragmented approaches, enable the exploitation of comparative dimensions, and situate case or ethnographic studies in broader contexts.” Meanwhile, they underscored that:

(...) Even an unsystematic view of these social projects allows us to affirm that sports, in general, and football in particular, have been thought of as insider strategies to reach children and youth. In many cases, they are a unique strategy, while in other cases, sports activities appear associated with professional activities or extensive or complementary to formal schooling activities (Guedes *et al.*, 2006, 2).

The authors justified the proliferation of social sports projects aimed at a diffuse enhancement of education as the only mechanism available to overcome the huge social inequalities in Brazilian society, when com-

bined with a vision of a low performing public school and the lack of effective public policies related to sports.

#### CASE STUDY

The Craque do Amanhã project is not merely a football school. It is a social project that develops actions that have an impact on family, school, and sports, from the perspective of the integral development of a young person.<sup>7</sup>

The City of São Gonçalo is located in the metropolitan area of the State of Rio de Janeiro, with a land area of 247 709 km<sup>2</sup>; it is considered to be one of the largest population concentration areas in the state. According to IBGE (2010), it has approximately 999 728 inhabitants, ranking it as the third largest population in the State of Rio de Janeiro (of which, 22.63% range in from age from 5 to 19 years).

São Gonçalo also has one of the highest rates of violence in the state. A total of 3 123 homicides were reported in the region during the first quarter of 2013. The council also has the lowest per capita rate of police in the state; each policeman is responsible for 2 200 residents.

The IDHM (Municipal Human Development Index) increased from 0.641 in 2000 to 0.739 in 2010 — a growth rate of 15.29 per cent. Between 2000 and 2010, the human development gap, *i.e.*, the distance between the IDHM of the municipality and the maximum index, which is 1, was reduced by 27.30 per cent.

In 2010, 54.27 per cent of students between 6 and 14 years of age in São Gonçalo were attending a regular elementary school and were in the appropriate grade for their age. Among adolescents between the ages of 15 to 17 years old, 30.57 per cent were attending a regular high school without any gaps. It should be noted that in 2010, 3.29 per cent of children between the ages of 6 and 14 years did not attend school; a percentage which, among adolescents ages 15 to 17 years old, increased to 12.19 per cent.

<sup>7</sup>Methodological booklet — Craque do Amanhã.



It is also relevant that 6.13 per cent of women between the ages of 10 and 17 years old have already had children.

The project was took place in the Arsenal neighborhood, a location that has serious deficiencies in basic sanitation, garbage collection, and health and education services. Its inhabitants have limited space for socialization and recreation and face a high rate of violence and drug trafficking.

Here, we don't have many options, usually (children) play in the streets; any street with enough space or in a square where they can. Our children need more places to play and learn more [...] Our young people are led astray while looking for entertainment. Unfortunately, I had to answer that way because it's the truth. Our Arsenal has been abandoned. [...] I answer in protest. How I wish that my six grandchildren had somewhere decent to play.<sup>8</sup>

The district of Ipiúba, of which Arsenal is part, has a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.781; it ranks third in São Gonçalo's districts and the population's average income level now equals two minimum wages. In terms of housing and urbanism, large public housing projects evolving from governmental programs such as "My House, My Life," as well as several irregular constructions, such as shacks, can be found nearby.

An analysis of the area conducted by the project's professional staff indicated that:

Arsenal and its surroundings are among the regions with the largest collection of taxes in the city of São Gonçalo due to the factories and laboratories within its perimeter. However, the official indicators are not compatible with the region's infrastructure and the low quality of life of its inhabitants. Economic development in this region was not synonymous with social development. Population growth has not been properly planned or invested in; most streets are unpaved and the sewage system is also unsatisfactory.

<sup>8</sup> Report of a participant's mother in the project, available in the Participative Diagnosis of Arsenal and Surrounding Areas, and conducted with and by the project participants (printed document).

TABLE 4. Indicators from Arsenal extracted from the participative diagnosis

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Infrastructure     | <p><i>Of the respondents:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>51% had no street lighting due to malfunctioning streetlights</li> <li>38% stated that garbage collection is sufficient</li> <li>73% stated their street had no paving</li> <li>48% were satisfied with the supply in their homes</li> <li>57% were satisfied with the public transportation system</li> </ul> |
| Education          | <p><i>Of the respondents:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>72% said that social investments in the territory should focus on the quality of education</li> <li>50% said that the education is a mixture of the realities learned at home and at school</li> <li>47% believe that education is the responsibility of the family</li> </ul>                                 |
| Sports and Leisure | <p><i>Of the respondents:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>85% consider having no leisure options in the neighborhood</li> <li>46% wish to have more space and football fields available</li> <li>22% want access to cinemas and theaters in the communities</li> </ul>   |

Source: Author’s own elaboration, based on Participative Diagnosis from Arsenal and Surroundings Areas.

This diagnosis was constructed from a participatory methodology involving project’s professional staff, children, and teenagers participating in the project, and the surrounding community. A total of 475 residents were interviewed in the vicinity of the court where the project activities were conducted. The collected data confirmed the conclusion indicated by the project team. Table 4 highlights some indicators which were introduced in the analysis.

The Craque do Amanhã project proposes utilize football and psychosocial practices in order to create a favorable environment for the integrated development of the participants and to directly influence three aspects of the participants’ lives (family, school, and sports). The procedure manual states that:

Through the practice of sports, it is possible to promote socialization, routine, compliance with rules, discipline, teamwork, leadership, respect, persistence, solidarity, and cooperation, while providing situations that encourage

learning from mistakes and conquering achievements. These values, achieved through games, are based on principles that should govern the education of children and teenagers. The values of the game are not only taught to be validated in sports, but also to be effective in students' lives, in order to make their own paths and broaden horizons, and to create goals and ways to achieve them (CIEDS, 2013, p. 8).

It also notes that the aim of the symbolic space built is to promote young people as potential social transformers by involving children and teenagers in productive activities, increasing emotional ties, and contributing to the empowerment of strong children and teenagers who have the potential to become agents of change in their communities.

The overall objective of the project described in the proposal is:

To implement educational and socio-sports projects, such as football in a sports center, in the city of São Gonçalo, state of Rio de Janeiro, in order to benefit 200 children and teenagers between the ages of 9 and 17 in vulnerable social situations, and, who, preferably, are properly enrolled in public schools, and to provide comprehensive development (physical, psychological, and social) of the participants and improve their quality of life as well as that of their families.

The specific objectives are:

*a)* To provide soccer training for children and teenagers residing in São Gonçalo and who are enrolled in public schools; *b)* to promote the health of 200 children and teenagers through sports practice; *c)* to contribute to the improved nourishment of 200 families through the distribution of monthly food parcels, totaling 2 000 units; *d)* to encourage the pursuit of the educational values of respect, persistence, solidarity, and cooperation.

The project activities are divided into three themes: family, school, and sports. Activities consist mainly, but not exclusively, of three hours meetings twice a week that take place before or after school. Participants receive

TABLE 5. Table of activities by thematic area

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| Family | Psychosocial counseling for those responsible for the project participants, and workshops for participants' families; referrals to public services available   |
| School | Periodic visits to school units to raise the faculty's awareness of the project methodology; monitoring of participants' school attendance and performance; conducting joint activities with schools |
| Sports | Construction of sports workshops; collective elaboration of rules; tracking of body mass index, blood pressure, waist/hip ratio; nutritional guidance; incorporation of values and skills            |

*Source:* Author's own elaboration, based on the project's procedure manual.

snacks, engage in external activities for the appropriation of territory, visit museums, and gain access to sports equipment. Students also attend cultural performances and lectures by professionals from various fields of knowledge. They join activities that encourage reading, attend bimonthly meetings with parents and guardians, have their body mass index monitored, participate in competitions, games, and friendly matches, and receive referrals to local public services. Participants receive a monthly food basket; however, there is no allowance of any kind.

Participants were divided into six groups of approximately 35 participants each; the groups were divided by age and mixed according to gender. We emphasized the observance of eight participants with some form of disability, who were also aggregated into the groups without any kind of distinction.

The project's multidisciplinary professional team was formed and included one technical supervisor, one local coordinator, one psychologist, one social worker and four physical education teachers.

The project's rules for behavior and interaction were collectively defined with the group of participants. From reflections and discussions, a consensus of twelve rules were established and designated as "board goals." These rules were depicted and made clearly visible in the environment in which the project was implemented.

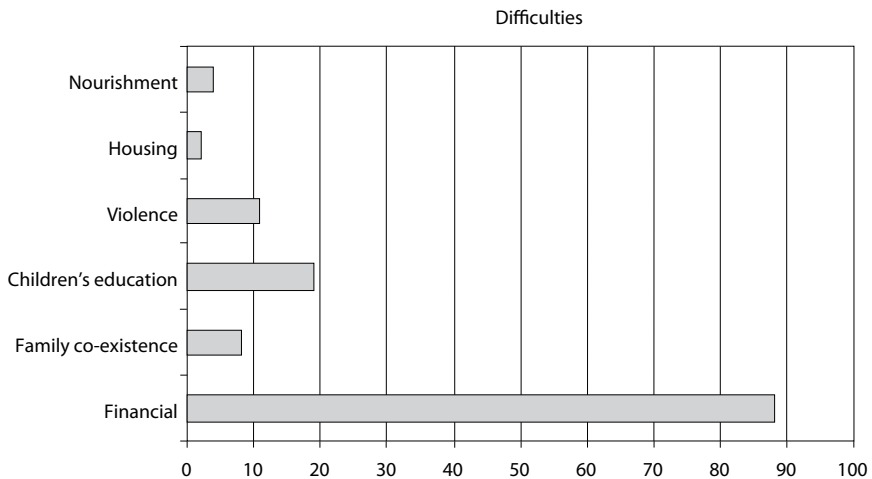
Classes are segregated into three interconnected stages. The goal of first stage, which is called the "warm-up," is to help young people develop their

concentration and stamina peaks, prepare them for motion, and prevent injuries. The “warm-up” is also used to incorporate reflexive dynamics that work on sports values such as socialization, routine, compliance with rules, discipline, teamwork, leadership, respect, persistence, solidarity, and cooperation. The second stage, known as the “game,” is the practice of football itself; the participant is encouraged to put into practice the contents of the first stage. The third stage, referred to as the “collective conversation and review”, is where the participants, together with the teacher, self-evaluate and assess the group with respect to appropriation of the contents and values worked on during the first stage.

The data presented in this article was obtained from June 2012 to July 2014.

Of the project’s 200 young participants, up to 176 families were accounted for and it was verified that of these families, 65 per cent said that they receive up to one minimum wage per month and are mostly contract workers. Therefore, the family income is not consistent, resulting in a lack

FIGURE 1. Difficulties in the development process of children and teenagers from the perspective of parents and guardians



Source: Author's own elaboration.

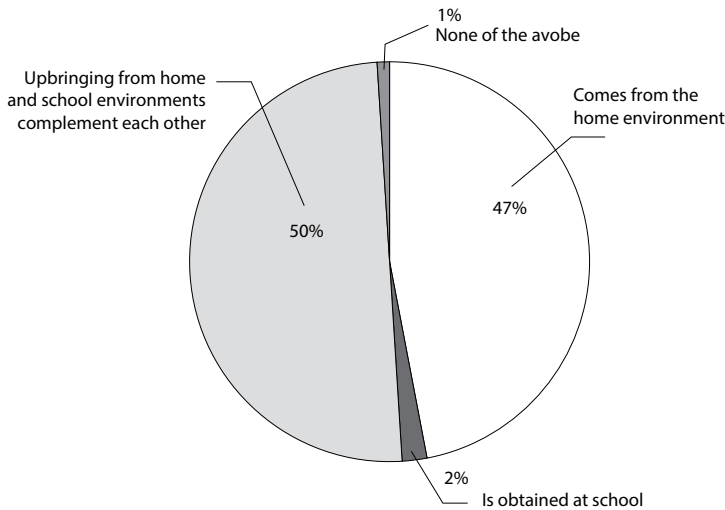
of resources for the basic needs. As for the age group, we observed the following: 34 per cent of participants were between 9 and 11 years of age; 34 per cent were between 12 and 14 years old; and 32 percent were between 15 and 17 years old.

During the research conducted with the parents, they were asked to identify the main factors that hinder their children’s development processes. The answers obtained are depicted in figure 1.

As illustrated, from the parents’ and guardians’ perspective, financial issues are cited as the most relevant factor related to difficulties in their children’s development.

It is important to note that, when parents and guardians were questioned about the origin of upbringing, we detected an understanding of the importance of family and school involvement in the development of children and teenagers, as shown in figure 2.

FIGURE 2. Responsibility for upbringing according to parents and guardians of the project’s participants



Source: Author’s own elaboration.

In the focus group<sup>9</sup> conducted with parents and guardians, the following results were obtained:

TABLE 6. The project's strengths, weaknesses and improvement opportunities as classified based on the perception of parents and guardians

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Project strengths         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved behavior at home and at school</li> <li>Increased autonomy and sense of responsibility in the participants</li> <li>Improvement in school performance</li> <li>Improvement in communication and expression skills</li> <li>External and appropriation activities in other spaces of the city</li> <li>Occupation of participants' downtime with safe activities</li> </ul> |
| Project weaknesses        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not contribute to income improvement</li> <li>Offers no support for the labor market</li> <li>Activities do not enhance professional qualifications</li> <li>Few weekly working hours</li> </ul>   |
| Improvement opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the weekly workload of project activities</li> <li>Merge the sports project with activities for professional qualifications and referral to the labor market</li> <li>Improve snacks offered and items in the basic food basket</li> <li>Offer learning support in mathematics and Portuguese</li> <li>Offer computer and foreign language classes</li> </ul>              |

*Source:* Author's own elaboration.

The research conducted on children and teenagers participating in the project revealed the following results shown in table 7.

With regard to satisfaction in project participation, 98 per cent of participants rated it as excellent or good, denoting a high level of satisfaction.

When asked about the level of socialization and behavior, 92 per cent of participants revealed improvements in their behavior towards the others, both in school and family environments, and in other social gatherings.

It is also worth noting data relevant to the improvement of relationships in a group, in which 94 per cent of participants said the project helped in the process of socializing and interacting with different people.

<sup>9</sup> The focus group was attended by 15 parents or guardians, randomly chosen among the project participants.

TABLE 7. Classification of the project’s strengths and weaknesses based on the participants’ perception

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Project strengths  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers participation in events and championships</li> <li>Offers trips and external cultural activities</li> <li>Provides recreational space for sports</li> <li>Enables access to sports equipment such as uniforms, boots, balls, etc.</li> <li>Promotes contact with professional players</li> <li>Promotes learning to follow rules better</li> <li>Helps with meeting new people</li> <li>Helps with learning to work in teams</li> <li>Improves family relationships</li> </ul> |
| Project weaknesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few weekly meetings scheduled</li> <li>Low participation in championships</li> <li>Does not offer other training activities, such as dance, percussion, graffiti, etc.</li> <li>Few opportunities for referral to professional teams</li> <li>Infrastructure of the environment in which the project is offered</li> </ul>  |

Source: Author’s own elaboration.

Of the project’s participants, 92 per cent also stated that their interest in the educational content offered in schools increased after participating in this project.

In the focus group<sup>10</sup> conducted with participants, we observed the results shown in table 7.

Based on records from the project’s professional team’s weekly meetings, it was possible to classify the main strengths and weaknesses from the point of view of specialists who worked on the project, as depicted in table 8.

Specialists’ reports indicated the project’s main quantitative results as: seven young people with disabilities participating in the project; 100 per cent of families connected with psychosocial staff; 200 young people’s BMIs monitored; 51 health center referrals; eight meetings set with parents and guardians; and 83 per cent of the young people participating were passing in school.

Highlights of the project’s main qualitative results included: systematization of social technology applied in project’s procedure manual; facilita-

<sup>10</sup> The focus group consisted of 28 children and teenagers participating in the project.



TABLE 8. Classification of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for project improvement based on the professional team's perspective

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Project strengths         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team motivation</li> <li>Multidisciplinary team training</li> <li>Methodology of the project systematized</li> <li>Engagement of families</li> <li>Supply of basic food baskets for participants</li> <li>Impact on the behavior and socialization of participants</li> <li>Focus on results</li> <li>Impact on the overall development of the participants</li> <li>Financial resources required to purchase sports equipment</li> <li>Visibility of the project</li> <li>The ability to have professional players as project "sponsors"</li> <li>Formalization of partnerships in the region</li> </ul>                      |
| Project weaknesses        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of professionals on the professional project team</li> <li>Insufficient number of vacancies offered</li> <li>Infrastructure of the environment in which the project is offered</li> <li>Difficulty in accessing the location</li> <li>Difficulties in communication with the schools, which do not provide the necessary information for monitoring school performance</li> <li>Subjectivity of indicators used for monitoring the integral development of the participant</li> <li>Project space is not exclusive (context)</li> <li>Violence in the territory and high crime rate in the surrounding areas</li> </ul> |
| Improvement opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of tutoring activities</li> <li>Offering vocational courses and referrals to the labor market</li> <li>Systematization of a set of indicating objectives used to monitor the integral development of the participant</li> <li>Discussions with other projects in the vicinity</li> <li>Broadening the scope of the project to encompass cultural issues</li> <li>Expansion of cooperation with the area schools</li> </ul>   |

*Source:* Author's own elaboration.

tion of access to public services, such as the family package, social tariff (electricity), and referrals to regional health centers; improvement of participants' behavior at home and at school; and contributions to the development of skills and construction of values.

The report also underscores the strong interaction that the project has with local government bodies and private companies. Throughout the execution of activities, partnerships were formed with other companies, with

Unicef, with UNESCO through the Child Hope program, with area schools and with São Gonçalo City Hall, denoting the highly mobilizing power of the project in promoting development, and integrating public policies and activities of private societal investments.

As the project's main challenge, the report refers to the structuring of an integrated system of indicators that allow for the assessment of both the achievements and the long term impact of the implemented activities.

## CONCLUSION

The experience of the implementing the Craque do Amanhã project provides us with several clues that confirm the hypothesis that educational sport contribute to the integrated development of children and teenagers and may be used by third sector organizations to strengthen public policies. However, it is crucial that it be in conjunction with assistance policies, education, and health services.

The project contributes to the integrated development to the extent that, from the activities of a multidisciplinary team, an integrated view of the participant set is promoted, demonstrating their interactions with the local environment, with the other participants, and with the region's institutions, continuously encouraging an interchange of ethical and moral activities.

It was also observed that the project has an impact on the behavior of the participants, on school performance, on family relationships, and on youth involvement.

It was emphasized that this impact is not limited to the young participants, but also contributes to the development of families and their own region. The choice of themes appears to contribute significantly to this impact, considering that school and family share important functions in the citizen development.

It was also noted that it was possible through participant observation to determine the use of educational sports principles: inclusion of all —boys and girls participate in the project, regardless of race, religion, or social origin; collective construction —the project rules for day-to-day interactions


are built collectively with the participants; respect for diversity— through conversation, the project promotes the importance of respecting differences and can also add value to relationships; autonomy —realized through instrumentalization for self-knowledge and support to decision-making; comprehensive education —appropriation of various educational spaces and conception of the multidimensionality of the participant.

It was also possible through the set of activities undertaken by the project to observe the use of the underlying principles of participation, totality, coeducation, emancipation, cooperation, solidarity, integration, freedom, and the preservation of cultural identity.

However, one weakness worth noting continues to be the absence of a consistent system of indicators that will allow for the systematic evaluation and monitoring of the project's impact.

Another factor that deserves attention is that project's participants identified questions related to referrals for try outs for professional teams and a low number of championships as weakness. This factor may indicate that the participants do not understand the concept and the project proposal, which can lead to increased feelings of frustration, considering that football career opportunities are limited and that the project is not focused on high performance sports. This participant perception appears consistent with the issues raised by the Critical Theory of Sports, which aims to reproduce the values of the capitalist system. To that end, a cautious review of the process implementation and project communication is necessary to ensure a better understanding of the objectives and the desired impact.

Another worthy consideration relates to the imperative need to coordinate with the municipality to facilitate and ensure access to information, thus allowing for better monitoring of the project's impact.

The execution of educational sports projects can contribute to the integral development of individuals and of the regions in which they live. It is necessary to expand research in this field in order to support such an implementation, to ensure that sports are not just a replication of the capitalist model and patterns, and to also establish consistent standards and indicators for measuring its effectiveness. 

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