

Sport for all

“It is a bad game where nobody wins.”
Italian proverb.

THEMES



SPORT



DISCRIMINATION



HEALTH

COMPLEXITY



LEVEL 2

GROUP SIZE



8 OR MORE

TIME



120 MINUTES

Themes Sport, Discrimination and Xenophobia, Health

Complexity 2

Group size 8+

Time 120 minutes

Overview This is a high-energy activity. Participants use their imagination and creativity to design new games. The issues addressed include:

- Rules of games, their justification and monitoring
- The idea of human rights as rules for living
- Discrimination in sports

Related rights

- The right to health
- Equality in dignity and rights

Objectives

- To raise awareness of social and political exclusion from sporting activities
- To develop group-work and co-operative skills and creativity
- To encourage people to think about human rights as rules for fair play in life

Materials You will need one set of the following for each group of 4 people:

- 4 large buckets or waste-paper bins
- 1 ball of thick string
- 2 football-sized balls
- 2 newspapers
- One piece of chalk
- A pair of scissors

Instructions

1. Tell participants about the “Sport for all” movement. Say that, to mark the millennium, the National Sports Council has decided to hold a competition to invent a new game which can be played by all.
2. Ask people to get into groups of four.
3. Explain that each group has twenty minutes to devise a game using the equipment provided. It is up to each group to decide the aims of the new game and the rules.
4. Let the groups play each other’s games.

Debriefing and evaluation

Start with a review of how people in the different groups interacted with each other and whether they enjoyed the activity. Then go on to discuss the games themselves and the rules people invented and, finally, talk about sports and games in real life.

- Was it hard to design a game?
- How did the groups work? Democratically or did one person make all the decisions?
- Did you share the jobs? I.e. was one person an ideas person, another good at putting the ideas into a practical form, someone else good at setting the game up, etc.?
- Which games did people enjoy the most? What makes a game a “good game”?
- Which groups found it necessary to change the rules once they tried the game out with others? Why did they need to change the rules and how did they do it? (Was the process carried out by the whole group, by just a few individuals or by just one person?)
- How important is it to have a clear aim and fair rules in order for everyone to feel that they can participate?
- Did everyone feel able to participate fully, or did some feel that they were at an advantage or disadvantage?
- In reality, how are certain groups excluded from sports? Which modes of exclusion are infringements of people’s human rights?
- The Articles in the UDHR could be seen as rules for living in a pluralistic world. Are they good rules? For instance, are they universally acceptable to all players (everyone throughout the world)? Are there enough rules or too many? Are the rules fair? Do all players (all countries) play by the rules?

Tips for facilitators

Try to ensure that the groups are “mixed”, for example, tall and short people, those with glasses and those without, a mix of genders, ages, athletic abilities, etc.

Depending on the group, you may need to begin the session with a brainstorm about games in general. For example, that games need to have clear aims or objectives and rules.

You may need to set limits, for example, that the game must be played within a certain location or not last longer than a total of twenty minutes. If they find design faults as their games are being played, let the designers of the game change the rules.

The discussion can be linked to human rights in various ways. You can consider the similarities and differences between rules and human rights. Good rules, like human rights, exist to ensure the game is fair by limiting the use of power by some players over others. The rules have to apply to all players in the same way that human rights are universal. Many rules prescribe a right together with duties. For instance, a football player has the right to kick the ball but not a fellow player. There are penalties in the case of an abuse of the rules.

The process of making decisions about changing the rules can be compared with how laws are changed in “real life”. Are they changed by decree, by the legislature or by people through referenda or consultation with NGOs and others?

In the debriefing, people may say that exclusion and discrimination are not really big issues because people tend to choose sports that they are naturally good at. For example, tall people may play basketball and less energetic types may play snooker or chess. Nonetheless, there is an issue if only those young people who show promise get all the attention and opportunities to play in competitions while those who like to play for fun get less. Some sports exclude on grounds of wealth, because, for example, they need expensive equipment or coaching.

You may like to tell the group about the Street Sports project, an initiative with young people in the Balkans that is promoting tolerance and human rights (see the background information on sport and human rights on page 392).

Key date : **Variations**

10 October
World Mental Health Day

If you want to use this activity primarily to promote group-work skills you could ask one group to devise a co-operative game and the other a competitive one. In the debriefing you can compare how enjoyable each game was.

Suggestions for follow-up

If the group are interested in exploring other issues of equality, they may like to do the activity “Path to Equality-land”, on page 185, which explores issues about gender equality.

Ideas for action

Organise a co-operative “Sports day”. Invite young people from other clubs to play your new games. The group will have to decide how to make the event as inclusive as possible.

Further information

“Sport for All” is a movement promoting the Olympic ideal that sport is a human right for all individuals regardless of race, social class and sex. The movement encourages sports activities that can be practised by people of all ages, of both sexes and of different social and economic conditions. www.olympic.org/ioc/e/org/sportall