



Practitioner's Guide:

Sports for Peace



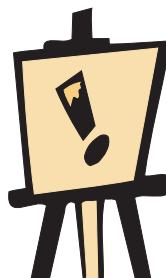
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Sports for Peace

Brief Description



The following modified concept of “Sports for Peace” is an alternative approach for conflict transformation and peace building since it integrates the culture of peace, core values and children’s rights into the concept. The modified concept has been field tested in Mindanao, Philippines, a region where continuous political, ethnic and religious strife have hindered its development. Sports for Peace was modified in order to create space for peaceful interaction while teaching the students life skills such as decision making and problem solving as well as the values of cooperation, respect for others and fair play. These are all critical in human, social and economic development and peace building.



As early as the 1920ies, sports has played a vital role in development cooperation and peace building programmes. Although used only in an ad hoc way, it was a means to reach development-related objectives.

In 1995, UNICEF implemented the Sports for Development Program which recognized sports as a fun way in learning values and lessons that would last a lifetime. Through the program, adolescents developed analytical and decision-making skills while providing them with a sense of hope, normalcy and security in times of conflict, post-conflict and emergencies. It is a universal language that can help bridge divides and promote the core values necessary for lasting peace. On sport grounds, there is no difference between children. They all learn how to win and to lose honorably (Sport, Recreation and Play by UNICEF).

During the International Year of Sport and Physical Education in 2005, the international development community recognized sports as a strong unifying factor in the process of conflict transformation and peace building. The fundamental values of sports and play are very important elements in the building of a strong civil society and states where tolerance and friendship are being built. Furthermore, sport has been granted the potential as a conflict-prevention measure, helping forestall processes that generate aggression, hatred and fear.

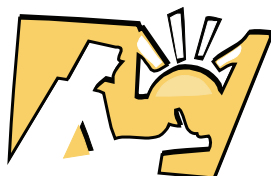
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Proposed Main Users

Non-Governmental Organizations, Local Government Units, Private Sector, Development organizations



Purpose of the Method



The aim of the Sports for Peace concept is to raise awareness of the sports core values by allowing the values to be demonstrated and seen in the pitches, courts and playing fields. By requiring the students to observe all matches when they are not at play, they are capacitated to see good performances and to note violations of the desired values. On the other hand, while being observed by the other players, the students are given the chance to practice what they learned and act accordingly. The students thus learn the importance of transparency and good decisions. While the power to choose is theirs, they learn to take over responsibility for their own choices.

Aside from enjoying the games and developing mental and physical agility, Sports for Peace surrounding activities also provide children the opportunity to understand cultures of their playmates through the conduct of cultural activities before and after the games. To build a trustful and safe atmosphere it is important that the students get to know about the cultures of the conflict parties in the area they live in. That would give them the opportunity to find peaceful ways of dealing with each other with respect.

Through these activities, the participants at that stage of their lives are taught the importance of respect for and acceptance of cultural and religious orientations different from their own. They learn about children's rights and the value of harmony, not only within themselves, but more importantly with other children, with the environment and with the Supreme Being they believe in and worship. Lastly, the activities teach the children to be more tolerant of other children and live in peace and harmony with them in their respective communities.

The contribution of Sports for Peace in peace-building efforts has generally been considered at the grassroots and national levels. At the grassroots or community level, sports can be seen to provide a useful way of creating an environment wherein people can come together to work towards the same goal, show respect for others and share space and equipment. All these aspects are crucial to peace-building processes.

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Advantages



- ▶ Even though the participants come from different backgrounds (social, religious, ethnicity, etc.), they have similar strengths and weaknesses. By playing together as a team, goals can be achieved.
- ▶ The overall rules of the sports played are known to most of the participants and therefore it's easy to start off the activity. At the same time binding rules create confidence in a conflict setting.
- ▶ The rules for the Sports for Peace event can be discussed / negotiated in advance to adapt them to the local conditions
- ▶ Most students are keen on sports and like to participate in the activities.
- ▶ Sports for Peace increases awareness of the dynamics of conflicts.
- ▶ By being put into different roles (player, spectator or even coach) the participants get to see a problem from different angles and therefore get a deeper understanding of the situation to derive a solution.
- ▶ Sport integrates an important part of the human being, which often gets forgotten in peace building: the body and its emotions.
- ▶ Gender sensitivity can be addressed by ensuring an appropriate sports type is identified and applied during the event
- ▶ Using mixed teams for the sports events could contribute to gender sensitivity.
- ▶ The participatory approach of the Sports for Peace programme ensures ownership for the involved community members, teachers and students.

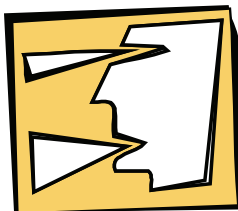
Limitations



- ▶ Programmes that use sport must take into account the ways in which sport and physical activity is seen in culturally different settings and how it is constructed in a given conflict context.
- ▶ Sport, in its traditional form, is not a conflict preventive measure. On the contrary, its nature is exactly the opposite: a physical contest between people or teams with common goals. To prevent the outbreak of violence, conflict sensitive approaches should be in place.
- ▶ External forces and influences are not taken into account. Outside forces affect and sometimes perpetuate war. This programme does not bridge the gap between communities at war and the context in which the war occurs.
- ▶ The outcomes from the Sports for Peace events depend completely on the participants. Not everybody has sufficient critical self-reflection, especially if the participants come from the conflict parties themselves.
- ▶ Sports for Peace is often a one-time activity and the effect it has on the community is difficult to measure. Its sustainability remains a challenge.
- ▶ Sports for Peace can't be conducted while there is an open conflict ongoing.

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Some Basic of Sports for Peace

Sports programmes aiming to contribute to peace involve a clear understanding of different concepts/principles:

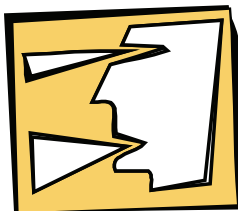
- ▶ Sport does not **primarily prevent conflict**. On the contrary, it may initiate conflict as it is based on healthy competition against opponents trying to reach a similar goal. However, sport may facilitate constructive and peaceful understanding of the conflict.
- ▶ Sport is also considered as a **social construct** i.e. socio-cultural norms and values dictate the ways in which sport is viewed and is carried out in a community. Sports for Peace utilizes a more holistic approach by emphasizing positive values through workshops on culture of peace, marble theory, sports core values, etc. The sport activities themselves are only the means by which the participants apply what they have learned.

Photo 1 and 2: Workshops on the culture of peace



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- ▶ Sport is indisputably the **most popular leisure activity in the world**, not only for children and youth, but for all men and women as players, coaches, leaders, administrators and spectators. And even though the intrinsic values and inherent qualities in sport and play lie entirely in how the participation in the activity is experienced and perceived, play is a natural part of people's physical, mental and social development and growth. The popularity of sport and games among children and youth and the widespread acceptance of sport and games from the parents side, make sport a low entry point for social change. Projects can be labeled as leisure activities and bring about a change of attitudes and behavior. It all depends on how you play and how the players react to the surrounding and the outcome of the games. This is the reason why appropriate training of coaches is so crucial.
- ▶ Sport can be a **key entry point** for persons who are skeptical about peace and social cohesion. "Just play for fun!" helps to integrate persons who wouldn't participate in activities labeled "sport for peace with e.g. Muslims, Tamils, Christians, Serbs or Hutus". Sport and games allow therefore to work with the critical voices or even with persons who are against intercultural dialogue and nonviolent conflict transformation.
- ▶ **Sport integrates** an important part of the human being, which often gets forgotten in peace building: the **body and its emotions**. Sustainable conflict transformation means that you address also the participant's feelings. Sport offers the space for joy, fun, creativity and happiness, but also for rage, sadness and frustration. The latter emotions can be worked on by the coach (if necessary) and be transformed into positive feelings and reactions by making them part of a joint reflection that needs to be done on a regular basis.

Photo 3: Principles and procedures: "Body and emotions"

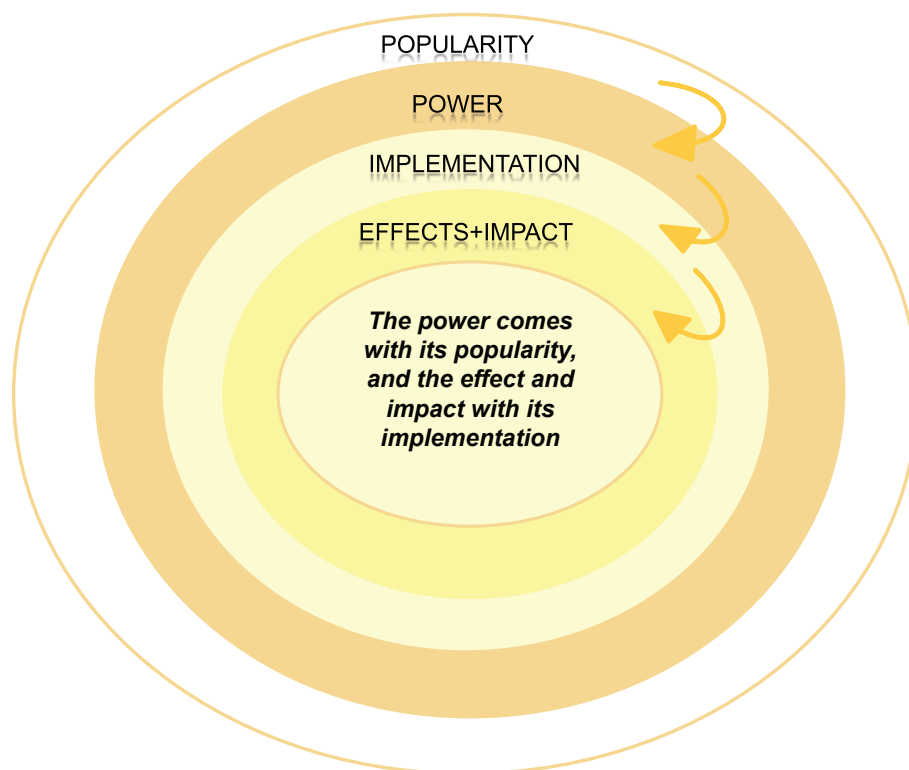


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Figure 1: From Popularity to Effects and Impacts



Focusing on mutual interest rather than using the problems as starting points for intervention, sport activities can create a neutral ground for interaction where communication can be restored and understanding and tolerance can be built provided one has acquired the adequate knowledge of the situation. This includes:

A. Accessibility:

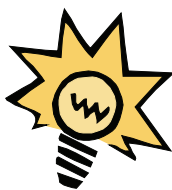
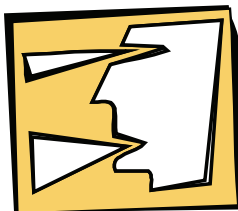
All stakeholders (groups/ ethnicities/ conflict parties/ etc.) must be included in the Sports for Peace programme. It should be inclusive. Efforts must be made to ensure that all have access to the infrastructure, including access to play spaces and equipment, as well as transportation to and from the play areas. The timing and schedules should also be appropriate for all parties involved. The venue should be on neutral grounds to ensure participation, safety and security for all stakeholders.

B. Barriers to interaction:

The Sports for Peace programme should ensure that the kind of interaction between participants encourages mutual acceptance and respect. Direct physical contact between participants has been cited as a tool to actively provoke the emergence of intense relationships. Studies have shown that traditional games and dance were found to be effective in overcoming initial obstacles or barriers to interaction.

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C. Choosing the students:

The selection of participating students is an important part of the Sports for Peace initiative. The participants have to be from all different groups/ethnicities/conflict parties and it must be possible to have students from the same age group competing against each other. The resource person has to set up the groups according to a set of criteria agreed upon by all stakeholders.

Some important Do's:

- ▶ Understand the conflict and its context;
- ▶ Choose the activities based on commonalities and mutual interests/identity;
- ▶ Base the activities on local premises, situation and resources;
- ▶ Use Peer Educators to ensure openness and interaction rather than teacher-student or a top-down approach;
- ▶ Be conscious of equal distribution of services across conflicting lines;
- ▶ A one sided support might spawn conflict rather than reduce it;
- ▶ Know how to handle immediate conflicts within the group;
- ▶ Know how to handle differences in groups and how to perceive them as an asset;
- ▶ Observe: Look, listen and learn.

Main expected outcome:

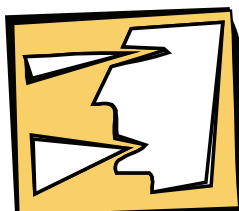
The outcome to be achieved is greater social integration among different ethnic and/or religious groups.

Some of the factors contributing to the success of using sport as a platform for exchange and building relationships between different groups include:

- ▶ Sport's non-verbal means of communication;
- ▶ Sport as a means to engage in collective experience and establishing direct physical contact; and
- ▶ Sport's ability to transcend class divisions.

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Sports for Peace step-by-step approach

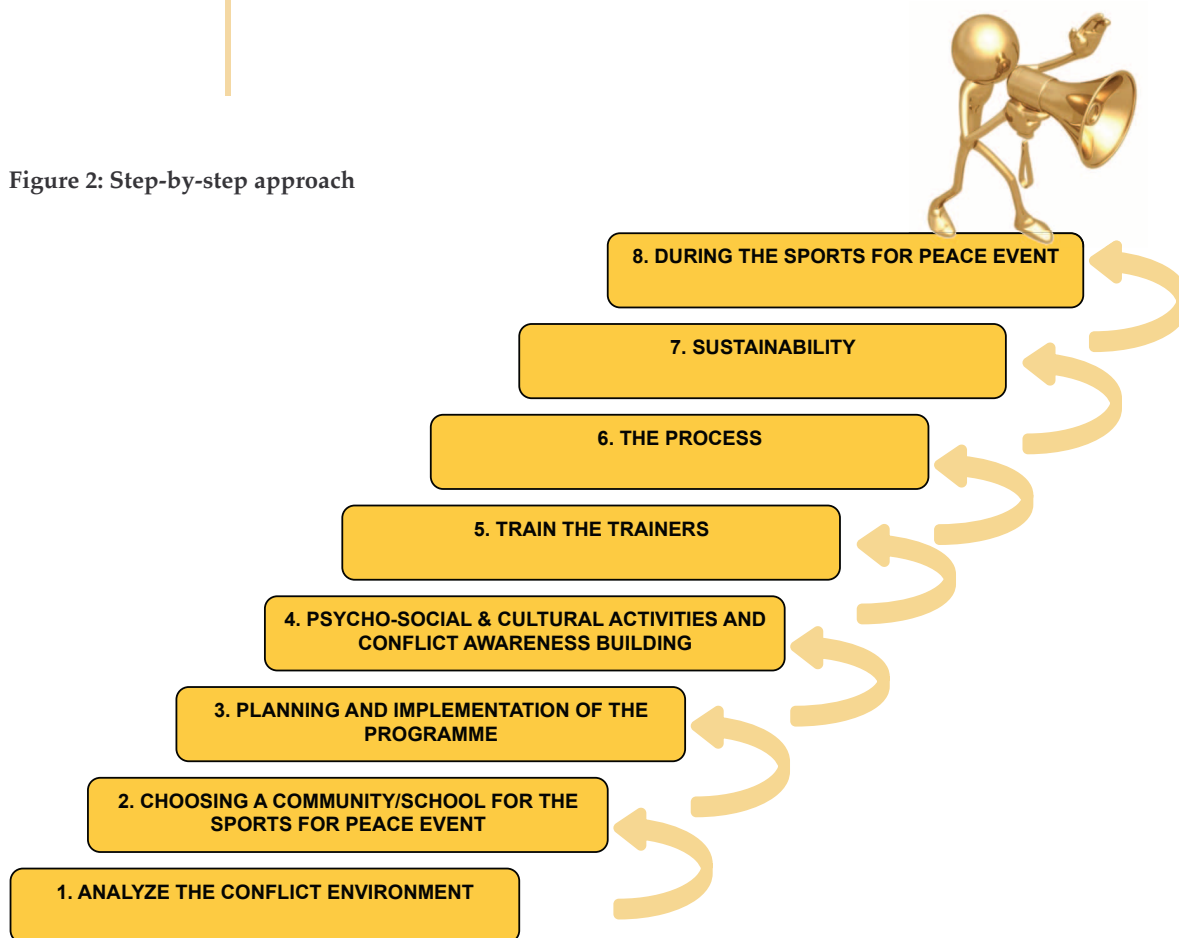
There are several different approaches using sport as a peace building method. The uniqueness of the Sports for Peace concept is the inclusion of the culture of peace, core values, the “marble theory” and children’s rights to support conflict transformation and peace building.

There is no prescribed rule in conducting Sports for Peace. The activities and modules chosen have to vary according to the following:

- ▶ Objectives and needs of the participants and the community the programme takes part in;
- ▶ Capacity of the participants to understand the conflict, its root causes and its influence on them personally;
- ▶ Age of the participants, their physical and mental fitness and the support from the community.

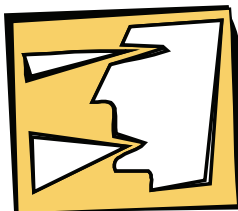
However, there are several steps you need to consider in implementing a Sports for Peace event. Depending on the situation you are faced with, it is possible to have additional or even different steps to undertake.

Figure 2: Step-by-step approach



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Step 1: Analyze the conflict environment

A thorough analysis of the conflict environment/context you plan to work in is vital in the conduct of a Sports for Peace event. The analysis would involve identification of the different conflict lines, the different actors and their relationships, development of the conflict and its present situation and how it would look like in the immediate future. A conflict map would be a useful tool for this exercise. The results of the conflict map and analysis would guide you in choosing the appropriate area/venue, activities, participants, etc. for the Sports for Peace event. A simple check list (see below) can also be a useful first step.

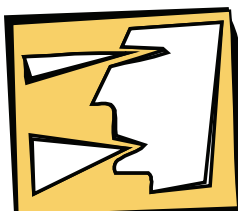
One limitation of the Sports for Peace programme is that it cannot be conducted where there is open fighting going on or the conflict parties are not at all willing to cooperate.

Simple checklist prior to conducting Sports for Peace:

- ▶ What conflict are you dealing with and what is it all about?
- ▶ What is the security situation at the moment?
- ▶ How did the conflict develop, how does it look today and what could be possible future scenarios?
- ▶ Who is involved in the conflict and who of them would be interested in a Sports for Peace programme and which groups/people would be spoilers?
- ▶ What communities would be possible partners and why did you choose the specific one? Are all conflict parties involved in the Sports for Peace programme and represented equally?
- ▶ What does it need to perform the Sports for Peace programme in a safe and welcoming environment and can you provide these needs?
- ▶ Is the programme set up in a sustainable way and can the community members be involved in the whole programme and help making it sustainable?
- ▶ Which activities best fit to set up the programme in a conflict sensitive way, for the students, the teachers and the other people involved?
- ▶ Can you or the community/school provide all necessary sports and other equipment needed for a successful Sports for Peace event?

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Step 2: Choosing a community/school for the event

The next step is the selection of the community / school you are willing to work in. A set of criteria agreed upon by all stakeholders is ideal to minimize biases as well as the feeling of inferiority by other communities/schools not selected. The criteria should provide a clear description of the community / schools/ participants to be chosen and the challenges being addressed by the Sports for Peace intervention.

There are a number of things to consider in the selection criteria:

- ▶ The security situation in the community / school; the conflicting parties; possible spoilers;
- ▶ Age/ generation, gender and groups of participants; and
- ▶ The atmosphere that the event would create during the conduct of the event.

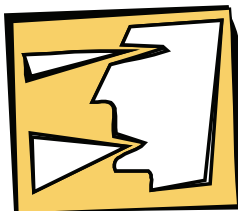
Step 3: Planning and implementation of the programme

Before the actual conduct of the Sports for Peace event, a sound, realistic and conflict sensitive plan should be developed. It is important to know that there is no substitute for a good plan but planning requires time, effort and much thought. A two-month lead-time is suggested considering the involvement of several stakeholders and the number of activities to be conducted on the ground.

- a) First, choose the date and venue. In choosing the venue and date, keep in mind that the time and place would be convenient for all stakeholders. The area to be chosen should be a consensus among the stakeholders wherein all could participate. It is accessible and should be conducive for the kind of activity to be conducted.
- b) Next task would be to inform the parents and the whole community about your planned programme and get the permission from the parents to let their children participate in the event. Throughout the whole Sports for Peace Event a participatory approach should be used and the community should be involved wherever possible. All people in the given community / school should be reached and involved in the whole process. Give each stakeholder tasks to do and include them right from the start (e.g. help setting up the venue on the date the event will take place; help giving out the sports items; support the teachers as team leaders etc.). Tap credible individuals in the community to organize your meetings and activities; actively solicit their involvement or participation. Their connections and standing in the community could work to your advantage and facilitate in achieving desired results. Keep them also updated of changes, achievements and further responsibilities along the way.

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- c) You should decide if political leaders and/or heads of agencies are invited to grace the opening or the closing program. Out of courtesy give them ample time to work on their schedules and previous commitments to ensure their participation. Remember that these people are busy and some have peculiarities you should consider.
- d) Coordination involves establishment of meaningful and effective linkages among various entities and units within a given organization or group of people. It also means the active role that people play in contributing to the various processes and/ or activities to ensure their success.
- e) Discuss issues that are crucial to the implementation of the plan. Responsibilities, delineation of functions and contributions in whatever form (monetary or services) should be agreed upon and properly documented. As much as possible, minutes of meetings should be prepared and provided, specifically noting down commitments of the participants and other people involved in the programme. By doing that you will prevent discussion and misunderstandings and the whole process will be smoother and less conflictive.

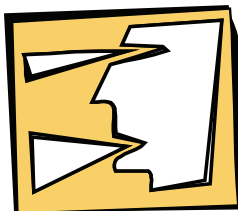
Photo 4: Planning for the implementation of the Sports for Peace event



- f) Tap the services of the National Red Cross or similar entities in the area to provide medical assistance. Place first aid kits next to each playing field and place a responsible and trained person next to it. If possible get the Red Cross members on a voluntary basis. Consider the services of a media person if you intend to document the activities. If doing that, try to get journalists from different news agencies to be sensitive to different preferences and audiences. Get a caterer who can stick to the meal requirements (e.g. Muslims who only eat halal food) and knows the requirements of preparing that kind of meals.

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Step 4: Psycho-social, cultural and conflict awareness

- g) Regarding financial issues it would be an ideal set up to assign a national project staff to disburse and monitor the expenditures on site to ensure that cash advances are used for the items for which the amount is intended.
- h) The Sports for Peace programme does not only involve the sports activities themselves, but surrounding activities as well. These are meant to teach the children and the community a peaceful way of living together and solving conflicts. Therefore they need to be set up carefully and you have to be deeply aware of the environment and the conflict line(s) you are working in.
- i) You need to train the teachers on their specific tasks they will be given. Best is if they decide among themselves who will be doing what during the event. If there are teachers who already have knowledge about some of the specific tasks (e.g. are trainers for one of the sports, are umpires for one of the sports etc.) you can ask them to help you train the others.

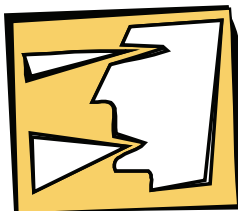
Photo 5: The tasks ahead



- j) The participants are the prime consideration in choosing resource persons. Remember that in this case the participants are children whose span of focus and attention is limited compared to adults. With this consideration, the resource person should be able to adapt to the level of the participants. While mastery of the subject matter is desirable, the resource person should be sensitive to the issues and experiences of the participants. He or she should have the ability to capture and maintain the interest of the participants. Provide the resource person with a profile of the participants in advance (if this is possible) to help him or her develop topics effectively.
- k) The students and teachers need to get trained in conflict sensitivity and will have to use a conflict sensitive approach throughout the Sports for Peace programme. Therefore the resource person him-/herself should come from a peace building / conflict transformation background. The teachers should be trained on addressing issues and conflicts peacefully and effectively.

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Step 5: Train the trainers

In some cases it could be better to use peer educators of different backgrounds and gender to ensure openness and interaction rather than a top-down approach as it would be with teachers. Even though this could be more difficult and time consuming, it would be good to “invest” in building an open and trustful atmosphere by doing so. The peer educators need to be trained in their specific tasks and the conditions they will be working in as well as in conflict sensitive approaches.

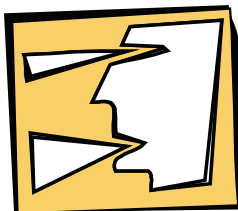
Furthermore, the trainers and teachers need to get educated in ways of reacting to possible outbreak of a conflict while the Sports for Peace programme is ongoing. There could be different reasons for an outbreak among the students, spectators or other community members participating in the event. With the training, the teachers and trainers could prevent or mediate conflicts.

Step 6: Managing the overall Sports for Peace process

- ▶ **Participatory and conflict sensitive approach:** This would involve discussing, negotiating and agreeing on the different steps and procedures to undertake. It has to create an environment of trust, safety, security and inclusiveness. One of the goals that shall be achieved through this programme is the strengthening of openness towards the others using an inclusive approach. Having this in mind you will have to carefully assess the chosen conflict and the everyday experiences.
- ▶ **Agreements on the rules, regulations and policies:** This should be finalized before the actual event happens. Consequences regarding violation of rules should also be discussed as fair play is part of the core values being taught during the event.
- ▶ **During the event it might come to emotional outbreaks:** You need to be aware of this possibility and the trainers and facilitators should be able to handle these emotions. It could be done on a one-on-one session or within the group, especially if more than only one person is involved or it could have influence on the whole group. The trainers, teachers and other resource persons should be trained on handling this kind of situations, as well.
- ▶ **Reflection and evaluation of the event should also be part of the process:** This would ensure that all the steps are conflict sensitive and that giving feedback would be easier and more meaningful. Therefore try to get feedback from as many different people/ groups as possible and compare their inputs to use them for the improvement of your programme.

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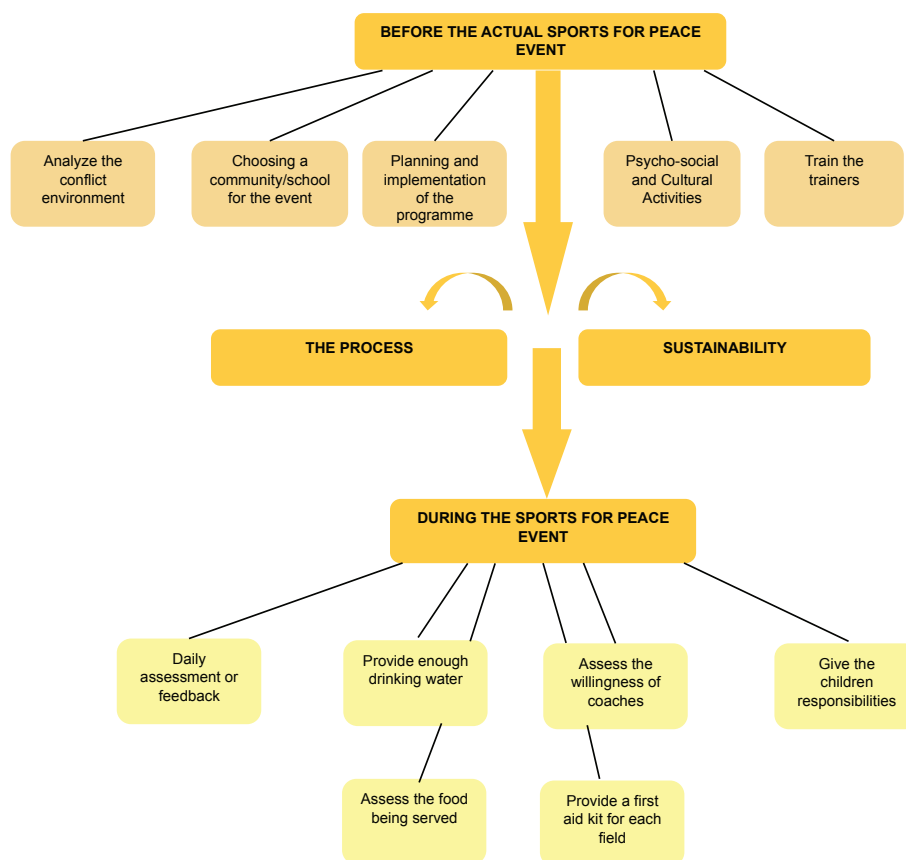
Step 7: Ensuring sustainability after the event

The topic of sustainability should already be within your plan right from the start. All stakeholders involved should have this as one of the goals. Options on how to institutionalize the programme could be developed and further worked on even after the sports for peace event. By doing so, it would be a continuous event wherein greater impacts and outcomes would be generated.

To prevent having only a onetime event the programme has to consider all surrounding influences and the people involved need to understand the idea of the Sports for Peace programme. You should choose a community where you get a lot of support from the start and the community members are interested in dealing with the conflicts they are facing.

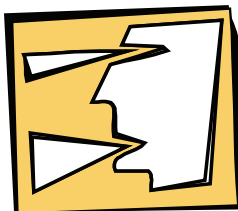
Bear in mind that the community will be the one to continue the process in the future after the sports for peace event. They need to gain the knowledge and understanding of the different ways of dealing with the conflict. At the same time, the community needs to appreciate that Sports for Peace is not a peace building method but a conflict transformation approach. Therefore they have to consider additional activities if they really want to solve the conflict(s) they are facing in the longer-term.

Figure 3: Overall Process



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Step 8: During the actual Sports for Peace event

The actual event should come easy with good planning. Nevertheless, some of the simplest tasks may be forgotten or assumed to be taken care of by somebody else. As a result, some activities are left unattended or neglected while others overlap. A simple check list helps. Caution should be observed so that in the midst of all the activities taking place one does not lose track and nothing is left out in the process.

- ▶ A daily assessment or feedback of the activities is a useful tool, as shown by the pilot experiences. This activity gives the core team an opportunity to evaluate what went well or wrong to improve implementation.
- ▶ Make sure that enough drinking water is available for the children during the games. Make this a requirement for the caterer and follow it up at the pitch or courts when games are in progress.
- ▶ Assess the willingness of coaches for more involvement in the activities and not be mere spectators. Solicit their assistance and involve them in other activities. This involvement gives them a sense of ownership and belonging.
- ▶ Give the children responsibilities. Simple tasks such as picking up litter and cleaning their sleeping quarters could provide them the feeling of importance and value. You will realize that the children appreciate being able to help.
- ▶ Take time to talk to the coaches and the children most specially to assess the food being served. Is the serving enough? Are there participants who by their special affiliation or health do not and could not take any particular dish? If there are, discuss this with the caterer.
- ▶ A first aid kit should be made available next to each field for immediate action if an emergency happens. If possible get somebody who has knowledge about first aid to be responsible for the kits and place them next to the fields to react promptly.

To successfully implement a Sports for Peace programme all above mentioned points need to be considered.

Only then the desired outcome of the Sports for Peace concept can be met and it can be used as a peace building method.

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