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CHAPTER 6

Group solidarity in practice

This chapter is part of the Baleria Solidarity Manual. The Manual was created within the Erasmus+ Sport project BALERIA – Social Inclusion Programme for Educators, School Kids and Parents.

More useful materials:

W. www.baleria.eu/project/

FB. BaleriaProject

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Psychology dictionary¹ describes Group Solidarity as »The sense of fellowship and community displayed by members of a collective who are united by shared purposes, responsibilities and interests. IN SHORT, GROUP SOLIDARITY MEANS 'UNITED FOR A CAUSE'«.

GROUP SOLIDARITY is the bonding of group members, through involving them in activities of common interest, for the benefit of a group, or community. Solidarity, in support of projects for the children in risk of poverty, illiteracy, or health issues.

A strong example of group solidarity - recycling as a form of solidarity combined with sustainability is further described in the next chapter, beautifully pointed out here: »At the initiative of the teachers, children and parents of an elementary school work together throughout the school year to reach a shared objective, that of aiding less fortunate children: funds are raised through the sale of hand-made goods, with the participation of everyone, and the products are donated to solidarity projects. For many years now, we have contributed, through donations, to our projects to support the communities in need.«²

Other examples of group solidarity:

6.1. Staff meetings – within the organization

Giving information to staff members for promoting the objectives, explanation of implementation methods, planned activities and financial aspects of the project. Discussion and exchange of opinions.

¹ Psychology Dictionary, N., Pam M.S., May 11, 2013, Link: <https://psychologydictionary.org/group-solidarity/>

² Two examples of solidarity: the messages of the donors to ATS pro Terra Sancta, June 2011, Link: <https://www.proterrasancta.org/en/two-examples-of-solidarity-the-messages-of-the-donors-to-ats-pro-terra-sancta/>

6.2. Informative Seminars with teachers and trainers

Goal: to have attendees acquainted with the idea, objectives and planning of the project as well as the methods suggested to put the ideas into practice. Sharing of opinions and pre-prepared material.

Participants: groups of school teachers, sports trainers, university students and mixed groups of children and parents.

6.3. Inclusive solidarity promoting sportive activities (outdoor and indoors)

Goal: Unite children in teamwork, healthy exercise and fair play promotion.

Participants: school children of different ethnic and social background.

Objectives:

- To unite children in teamwork, healthy exercise and fair play promotion.
- To develop sportive skills and discipline.
- To give children the possibility to exercise and enjoy collective games and friendly attitude.
- To give teachers, trainers, guest athletes, and the volunteering University students, the possibility to display for the school staff, parents and the general audience the results of their hard non-for profit work with the children..

Examples:

Training Courses in Inclusive Solidarity in Sports Activities, mainly through improvements and adaptations in curriculum profiles for technicians, directors, employees and parents that can be implemented successfully and with cross-sectional impact, aiming at raising awareness of a more supportive and inclusive sport for all. The training for parents it's actually a good way to promote the solidarity and the pacification in some sports.

Learning visits to institutions (sport university, museum of sports)

Visiting neighbouring schools, playing games and participations.

Meetings, communication and practicing with famous athletes.

Funds are raised through the sale of hand-made goods, with the participation of everyone, and the products are donated to solidarity projects.

6.4. Promoting Solidarity through creative Workshops

Goal: To promote unity between children through involvement in creative and artistic activities.

Participants: groups of schoolchildren, teachers and parents.

Examples:

- Collective writing and illustrating a book on the »Friendship« theme. Annex PDF
- Drawing together a big picture illustrating children's view on Solidarity.
- Singing and playing music together.
- Participation in Theatre activities and public celebrations.
- Preparation of treats for parties with parents.
- Making presents (toys) for needy children (Together with parents).
- Exhibitions of artwork.
- Photo albums about group work (with the help of teachers)
- Learning visits to Institutions (University and Museum of Sports)
- Meetings and practicing with famous athletes.
- Visiting neighbouring schools, playing games and participating in competitions.
- Collecting and delivering recyclables.

6.5. Taking part in games promoting Solidarity

There shouldn't be an 'I' in a TEAM. Participants in a group need to trust each other and communicate, in order to build effective solutions to the problems facing their communities.

Working on social change is often hard-driven and energy-consuming, thus fun and games can propel social change. Another purpose of games is to get people thinking together, so that everyone in the group has an input and shares ideas. Games are a great way to break up the monotony of a long hour's learning, or a hard day's work. They are also a great way to keep small children busy, and big children happy.



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The role of the facilitator is very important and must be intentional and good will prompted. A facilitator has to lead the activities, guide the reflection and be enthusiastic. Enthusiasm is contagious! The facilitator sets the tone for the entire group. Thus the main task of the facilitator is to stay positive and have fun with the activity, the session, and the players. The facilitator shall include participants in creating ground rules or guidelines before beginning the games. A very important one is to participate by choice - when the player wants and let him HAVE FUN!

Break down the barriers that may exist between students such as race, sex, background, and social status, build a sense of teamwork and purpose, show that everyone has specific strengths and abilities to offer the group and that no one is better than anyone else. And don't forget to reflect. Thus the activities will challenge players to work together as a team, think critically, and get active in what's going on. In a society where there is so much competition and separation, games can get people engaged in conversations and interactions.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

Each activity should be altered to meet your group's needs and situation. When you use games for social change work, the role of the facilitator is very important and must be intentional.

A **Facilitator's job has three parts**: lead the activities, guide the reflection, and be enthusiastic. Enthusiasm is contagious! Share personal experiences. As an adult ally, you have a wealth of knowledge and experience to draw from. Often, the mood of the instructor will set the tone for the entire group. So above all be positive and have fun with the activity, with the session, and with the players.

Create Guidelines & Goals

Have participants create ground rules or guidelines before you begin the games. There are three essential guidelines:

- Safety first. Never compromise the safety of yourself or others.
- Participate by choice. If someone wants to sit out, that's cool.
- HAVE FUN!

Reflect

One way to highlight the role of games in social change is in the reflection after the activity. An easy way to see the relevance of reflection is to picture games as a circle: you start with an explanation of the activity, framing its purpose and goals to the group. The activity progresses, with the facilitator taking a more hands-on or less guiding approach as needed. Finally, the group reflection helps participants see how they met the goal, and to envision the broader social change implications. Then the group has come full-circle. Be as concrete as you want – during the activities it's important to indulge ourselves in what we're doing, and to have a lot of fun. Finally, we have to come back to reality with the reflection. Reflecting on the activities is vital for bringing the group back to the reason why the games are played.

The following types of questions can be useful in reflecting:

- Open-ended questions – (prevents yes and no answers). "What was the purpose of the game?" "What did you learn about yourself?"
- Feeling questions – requires participants to reflect on how they feel about what they did. "How did it feel when you started to play?"
- Judgment questions – asks participants to make decisions about things: "What was the best part?" "Was it a good idea?"
- Guiding questions – steering toward the purpose of the activity and keep the discussion focused. "What got you all going in the right direction?"
- Closing questions – helps participants draw conclusions and end the discussion. "What did you learn?" "What would you do differently?"

TIP 5: Make Meaning With Players

The following activities can serve as bridges between social change work, learning, and community building, reinforcing communication, co-learning, and collective decision-making.

INITIATIVES

These activities challenge players to work together as a team, think critically, and get active in what's going on. In a society where there is so much competition and separation, games can get people engaged in conversations and interactions.