

TEAM SPORTS, MARTIAL ARTS AND COMBAT SPORTS AS PREVENTIVE SOCIAL WORK

A Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu based project for school-aged children

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ABSTRACT

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The contents of this paper are based in a 17 weeks internship in Icehearts, a NGO which promotes preventive social work for school-aged children through daily activities. In this period, a Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) project was implemented aiming to improve the socio-relational skills, self-confidence, self-concept and self-esteem of specific children. Exposure, observatory, and participatory methods were applied in order to recognize, with Icehearts' educators, four children who could benefit most from this project. The project consisted in weekly activities, twice a week, with BJJ for one hour period. Deliberate play, participatory, peer tutoring, and cooperative learning were methods applied during the sections.

The analysis and evaluation are based on outcomes related to collective aspects, including social interaction, improvement of integration, and recognition of social position in a group. In short-term basis, it is possible to affirm that children have shown traces of improvement of self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-concept aspects. Therefore, this paper also permits to understand that professional guidance, clear social intentions and educational support are vital to accomplish the benefits that such project may offer as social instrument.

Keywords:

Preventive Social Work, Child Welfare, Physical Activities, Collective Sports, Contact Sports, Martial Arts, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Project

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, scholars and researchers have been arguing about new theories, methods, and approaches toward clients in the social work field. And the current information is related to the constant changes within the society. One of the roles of a social worker is to identify and to propose changes in present social issues and inequalities. However, it is also an aim of social services to anticipate possible social outcomes and prevent social problems within the society. Thus, the preventive social work is an important approach in social service and it is a motive why currently its efficacy has been debated more sorely.

In the following pages this paper aims to answer and argue about these and other related questions. In order to provide substantial report, it was made several placements in environments destined to child and youth welfare, such as the Icehearts organization in Helsinki, Finland, and a public children's home - Auerkulma - in the city of Järvenpää, Finland. In total, these placements involved a period of 24 weeks - 17 weeks in Icehearts and 7 weeks in Auerkulma children's home. In both places it was conducted different projects, both focusing in sense of belonging and aiming to improve children's self-esteem, self-confidence and self-concept.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to argue about preventive actions towards work with children in preventive social work, the importance of team sports and contact sports for school-aged children, and sense of belonging. This paper, however, aims to focus and examine the social service provided by Icehearts, focusing more precisely in the social project conducted by the author of this paper, based on Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu for children. Its results, short-term outcomes, importances, and efficacy of its purpose will be argued and debated in this paper.

2 PREVENTIVE SOCIAL WORK

... a wise society would learn to apply knowledge about human behavior and social system to develop humane social policies and create mechanisms that would eventually prevent the onset of problems... Wittman, Milton (Roskin 1980, 192).

Social workers work with individuals and families to help improve outcomes in their lives (The British Association of Social Workers). According to the previous affirmation may be assumed that preventive social work is programs and activities provided by social workers in order to prevent possible future social issues from clients' lives. In other words, the goal of prevention practice is to prevent major problems of living (McCave & Rishel 2011, 227). However, what is prevention? According to Michael Mills and Geoffrey Rose, scholars of preventive interventions in the health system, "prevention can cover a range of activities — preventing something happening, continuing, getting worse, recurring, spreading and having a wider impact, becoming endemic. What is to be prevented can also vary greatly — for example, social and economic insecurity, unemployment, illness, disease, accident, death, benefit dependency or drug dependency. It may involve action and bring benefits at one or more levels: structural, local and individual." (Mills, 1993; Rose, 1992).

The conception of preventive social work emerged in 1960s, and posteriorly more debated in 1980s; however the incorporation of preventive social work in the social service agenda is relatively new, becoming more recently more established in the social work field (McCave & Rishel 2011, 226). Although the idea of preventive social work is recent, its debate has expanded significantly. The preventive work in public health has been practiced in specific cases in 50s and 60s, for instance in sexual health and sexual behavior through ordinary preventive attitudes, such as HIV/AIDS prevention and pregnancy and STDs; only from 90s it has been enlarged for different areas of social work (McCave & Rishel 2011, 226). Scholars such as Carrie W. Rishel has categorized preventive social work by the terms universal, selective, and indicated.

Universal prevention programs are targeted at the general public or an entire population group. Selective prevention efforts are aimed at those who are at an elevated risk for a particular problem as compared to the general population. Finally, indicated prevention efforts are aimed at high-risk individuals, usually those who already demonstrate signs or symptoms of the targeted problem, but in whom it has not yet fully developed (McCave & Rishel 2011, 227).

According to McCave and Rishel definition, preventive intervention may be applied for an entire population or community (universal prevention); to those who have not experienced the problem (selective prevention); or to those who have experienced the problem and are leaning to develop specific disorder (indicated prevention) (Hawkins, Shapiro & Fagan 2010, 519). Therefore, preventive actions are the application of preventive theories and methods focused in preventing individual and collective/social matters. Its goal is to reduce negative outcomes of client's life, which may be influenced by individual factors, family factors, and environmental factors (McCave & Rishel 2011, 227).

Prevention principles has showed efficacy in the public health sector and now its conception has been embraced by social work field. Despite preventive social work is recent and there is no good data related to its efficiency thus far, scholars of prevention science have achieved significant progress by developing an experimental research based on the evaluation prevention endeavor (McCave & Rishel 2011, 228). Despite of the proven effectiveness in prevention interventions in decreasing problems, most recently workers are applying prevention-orientated approach in their practices. However, it is necessary to improve the incorporation of preventive principles, theories and methods into practice.

Although preventive intervention in social services are comprehended new, it is already understood that preventive actions are, generally, cheaper than "curing" or fixing social (and perhaps chronic) issues. Preventive social actions may produce significant (and cheaper) results in the wide field of social work, such

as social security system, economically, and other several social areas (Sinfield 2012, 4).

It is a nearly consensus that preventive social actions and interventions should embrace many different social sectors; and, consequently, have a major importance in the social work field. However, it is understood that, along the years, the profession of social work has not only focusing in remediation, but it is moving gradually towards prevention. And social work interventions have emerged focusing, more and more, in preventing social issues. (Roskin 1980, 192).

In a recent past, preventive social work has been a more relevant theme in the social services. It has also been assumed that preventing or decreasing risks, where and when it is achievable, is a better manner of providing social security (Sinfield 2012, 3). The effectiveness of preventive social work studies and its outcomes are understood as contemporary, even if it is comprehended by scholars that prevention is an efficient approach in dealing with social problems. Scholar Dr. Michael Mackintosh has written, in 1953, that “everyone says that prevention is better than cure, and hardly anyone acts as if he believes it” (Mackintosh 1953, 5). In fact, such affirmation was applicable in a recent past; however, at the present time, preventive social worker has left its secondary roles in social services.

Recent researches have detailed and illustrated the benefits of a professional approach based on preventive actions and interventions. It is possible to find several articles and researches in late 2000s and the positive outcomes from this preventive social interference. The International Social Security Association (ISSA) has debated more effusively in the recent past about the importance of prevention in large scale in the social system (ISSA 2014); and also other international social bodies, such as the International Federation of Social Workers, United Nations, European Commission, and so on (International Federation of Social Workers 2014). Therefore, it is right to assume that preventive

social intervention may have had a later recognition; however its approaches and effectiveness are being included, gradually, in the social work agenda and recognized as a powerful approach in social service.

3 PREVENTIVE WORK IN CHILD WELFARE

Social exclusion is one of the major concerns of social work among child welfare. It is because of external factors, as such as economic situation of the family, housing, family structure, and other relevant aspects influence directly the child's life. Several factors may reduce the life opportunities of a person since her/his birth.

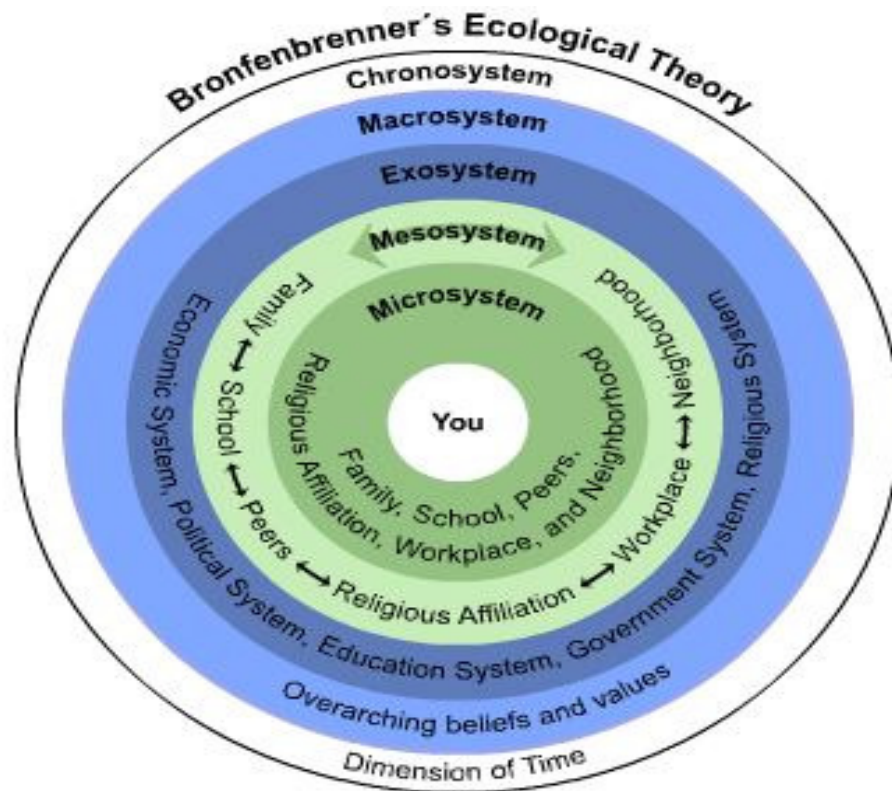
Social exclusion happens when people or places suffer from a series of problems such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, ill health and family breakdown. When such problems combine they can create a vicious cycle.

Social exclusion can happen as a result of problems that face one person in their life. But it can also start from birth. Being born into poverty or to parents with low skills has a major influence on future life chances. (Barnes, Marian; Mason, Paul & Morris, Kate 2009, 5).

Preventive social work in child welfare has an aim to promote social well-being for the child in different aspects, levels, and social areas. Its intention is to reduce the risk factors - circumstances that increase the probability of negative outcomes - by promoting protective factors - circumstances that decrease the possibility of negative outcomes (McCave & Rishel 2011, 227).

'Protection' in this context is defined as something other than the opposite of risk. It refers, specifically, to factors that have been consistently associated with good outcomes for children growing up in circumstances where they are, otherwise, heavily exposed to risk. Less evidence is available about protection and its workings than about risk. (Barnes, Marian; Mason, Paul & Morris, Kate 2009, 33)

Individual factors, family factors, and environmental factors are three categories of risk and protective factors; and they are represented by the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (McCave & Rishel 2011, 227).



Adapted from Bronfenbrenner

Preventive social work in child welfare has the goal of decreasing these mentioned risk factors in children's lives, either in their microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. It is known that children face challenges during the whole process of development, which may be physical, social, mental, and/or educational. These challenges or risks can be associated with the individual child, with the family, or extra-familial sources - see Bronfenbrenner (Middlemiss 2005, 85).

The risk aspects which may emerge during the development stage of a child are several: family circumstances, emotional difficulties, school problems, ecologi-

cal contexts, constitutional handicaps, interpersonal issues, and skill of development delays. (Middlemiss 2005, 85). Such factors hit in different aspects the developmental engagement of a child.

Thus, the preventive social work in child welfare reveals important because its purpose is to secure and assure that the development of a child will be, as less as possible, interfered by negative factors. And it is comprehended that, to safeguard the children interests, it is also necessary to include the surrounds of the child's life, such as family and community.

A correct social intervention during the childhood increases the possibilities of good outcomes which will influence positively the lifespan of a client. Therefore, it is an important task for social worker to develop services for children in order to prevent future social problems during their adolescence, youth, adulthood, and elderly age.

In sense, the social services provided to secure the basic needs of a child and the family may be comprehended as a non-direct intervention and preventive approach. Securing the basic needs of a child, listed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - which can be highlighted non-discrimination, best interests of the child, protection of the rights, right to life, survival and development, and other topics (United Nations 1989) - tend to lead positively the life of a child to a healthy life span; and consequently to decrease the possible negative outcomes of a person. However, several factors - as previously mentioned - may interrupt or enable to assure the children's rights; then it is necessary to intervene with the right approach, in order to "fix", in the early stages, the possible issues which may come up in a person's life.

4 SENSE OF BELONGING

Collective sports and team sports are mechanisms which may integrate children with different backgrounds, beliefs, ages, and even cultures. Being part of a group is a manner to stimulate children to integrate socially with other children and to avoid social exclusion in a present and future time. Sports in general are likely to transform children's lives and teenagers and the way how they think, how they see, how they interact, and how they comprehend themselves, others and their environment (Beedy, Perkins, Spangler & Wicks 2007, 108).

A sports program focused on youth development enables youth to develop positive relationships with adults and peers, experience a sense of belonging and connectedness, and learn valuable life skills. (Beedy, Perkins, Spangler & Wicks 2007, 108).

Opportunities for participation and contribution through youth sports programs with a youth development focus and recognition enable youth to address several of the needs of adolescents, including the ability to have a sense of belonging, sense of mastery, and sense of generosity and mattering. Moreover, youth who are making contributions are reframing their own self-perceptions and adults' perceptions of them from being a problem to be solved and a receiver of services to being a resource and provider of services (Le Menestrel & Perkins 2007, 21)

However, what is sense of belonging? There are several definitions by different scholars about this subject. Scholar Bonnie Hagerty defined it as the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment such that one feels as an integral part of that system or environment (Hagerty, Hoyle, Lynch-Sauer, Sargent & Williams 2002, 123). Another scholar, Santokh S. Anant, affirmed that sense of belonging is the experience of a personal involvement to a system or environment where the individual person feels integrally part of that system. And Hagerty added other conceptions to Anant's explanation, with a theory of

sense of belonging in two dimensions: a) the personal experience of feeling valued, needed and accepted; and b) the perception of being part or to complement the system or environment (Hagerty, Hoyle, Lynch-Sauer, Sargent & Williams 2002, 121). However, in simple words, as explained by Ann-Dorte Christensen, belonging defines who is included and excluded (Christensen 2009, 22).

And sense of belonging has been proven as a positive approach to improve people's lives in emotional, psychological, and social levels, and personal identity. Describing belonging in the emotional level, Yuval-Davis affirmed that it is an "emotional attachment and about feeling at home and feeling safe" (Christensen 2009, 24). Within the psychological field, sense of belonging is seen as a vital mental health concept, directly linked with psychosocial order. It is also described as a psychological understanding, associated with the behavioral and psychosocial functioning. In this level, building sense of belonging avoids loneliness, emotional distress, depression, psychological disturbance, and mental disease (Hagerty, Hoyle, Lynch-Sauer, Sargent & Williams 2002, 120-122).

In the social level, belonging is assumed as process based on interplay between organizational and subjective aspects, and in an interpersonal relationship with others. In this level, belonging is assembled analytically in three factors: social locations, individual's recognition, and (in the Exosystem level; see p. 9) ethics and political values (Christensen 2009, 25).

Sense of belonging has been a subject of several researches and its benefits has been proven, also, in child welfare and school-aged children, such as the clients of Icehearts. Being part of a group, during the schooling period, is comprehended as a beneficial instrument for children. Having stable relationships through peers and friends of a common group can be beneficial to school adjustments, predominantly in during periods of school transition (Faircloth & Hamm 2011, 50).

Thus, we may comprehend that sense of belonging is a powerful instrument in the social area, in several periods of our life span. In the following topics, this subject will be also argued more practically in the Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu project topic, developed in common agreement with Icehearts educators.

5 PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES, TEAM SPORTS AND CONTACT SPORTS AS A PREVENTIVE SOCIAL WORK

Team sports and contact sports are powerful tools in preventive social work with children and youth. It has been proved by researches that sports and physical activities have significant importance in children's lives, not specifically related to their health, but it is proven that there are also socio-emotional and educational benefits (Le Menestrel & Perkins 2007, 14). Researchers have found that consistent participation in at least one extracurricular activity - such as physical activities or team sports - throughout the high school years is associated with positive outcomes such as attending college, voting, and volunteering. (Le Menestrel & Perkins 2007, 14). It is important to underline that physical activities for children and youth do not have exclusively physical benefits, it focuses in reducing feelings of anxiety, depression, and hopelessness (Le Menestrel & Perkins 2007, 15) - which improves social interaction of an individual with/in his/her environment.

(...) several recent studies indicate support for the positive effects of sports participation on a range of outcomes. For example, Hansen, Larson, and Dworkin found that youth in sports activities reported higher rates of selfknowledge, managing emotions, and physical skills experiences compared to youth in academic and leadership activities. Bartko and Eccles found that youth who reported being highly involved in sports described being more "psychologically resilient," or able to bounce back from problems. Others have found that sports participation protects student athletes against social isolation, with longer-term participation in sports serving to promote attachment to the school community. (...) Thus, developing good character in sports encompasses teaching good sportsmanship as well as promoting the five C's of positive youth development: competence, confidence, connection, compassion and caring, and character. (Le Menestrel & Perkins 2007, 16)

Others researches revealed that parents, coaches, sport organizations, and other players are directly related to the creation of an environment which promotes moral behavior and character in sports. These researches illustrated that (school aged) sport practitioners tend to develop good character in sports, promoting the five C's of positive youth development, as mentioned by Le Menestrel and Perkins (Kirk 2005, 16).

Sports in childhood are not only beneficial for emotional and psychological aspects. Notoriously, physical benefits are also assigned to sports practice. And researches testified that good fitness level of children engaged in sport activities are directed linked with greater level of attention and working memory. Also, socially, researches have proven that positive sports experiences in childhood decreases the risks of social acceptance and depressive symptoms, both for boys and girls. Therefore, in a long term period, sports in childhood supports children in developing their abilities to plan their lives, being self-reliant, and to search for others' help when needed (Kirk 2005, 17-19).

Thus, it is able to affirm that team sports and physical activities have significant impact in the life of children and youth. And the outcomes from these activities are positively confirmed not only during the childhood or youth; however it has positive results during the lifespan of the practitioners. Thence, the positive influence of sports in children's lives is claimed as an effective tool in preventive social work with children.

6 MARTIAL ARTS AS SOCIAL SERVICE INSTRUMENT

Within the society, martial arts (MA) and combat sports (CS) have divisive opinions. The perceptions vary for those who know the philosophy of them and for those who are just influenced by the entertaining and commercial industry (Theeboom & Vertonghen 2010, 528). Majority also comprehend martial arts as a specific type of sport, focusing strictly in physical abilities and activities. Concentrating only in the physical benefits, studies have proven that such as other physical activities - for instance running, walking or jogging and aerobics - the improvement of physical health is also related to the improvement of self-concept (Vockell & Kwak 1990).

The dual perception concerning martial arts tends to be even more arguable when the practitioners are children and youth. On the one side, martial arts practices are seen as an educational opportunity for children and young people. Based on this, a study of the European Physical Education Association (EUPEA) suggested that in the majority countries where martial arts are taught during the physical education in secondary school is believed that such activity may offer positive educational possibilities for the students. Also, martial arts have been a constant instrument of socialization among deprived youth (Theeboom & Vertonghen 2010, 528). On the other side, martial arts for non-practitioners have mostly a negative image, perhaps due that short researches and social discussion concerning the subject.

In Finland, however, the knowledge concerning martial arts and their philosophies has been widespread in the society. A recent study of T. Tammelin (2003) appointed that the percentage of youth practitioners registered in martial arts clubs in Finland oscillated between 64% and 86%, which is a considerable number (Theeboom & Vertonghen 2010, 529). However, there is no study yet

explaining the reason why there is such large number of youth martial arts practitioners in Finland.

Certainly we may assume that there are several factors which are determinant in offering a positive experience in martial arts. Aspects such as good environment, good professional, good dynamic and philosophy are vital in order to enjoy the real purposes of martial arts. A study in Columbus, OH, USA, researchers studied 32 couples who practiced any martial arts with their children. The first perception was that mostly fathers stimulated their children to engage the practice. According to them, parents in general, understand that martial arts would be positive aspects in their children's lives, improving aspects of self-confidence, physical vitality, concentration, respect, friendship, moral development, spirituality, self-defense, and others (Lantz 2002, 568-579). Also, the constant participation of the parents in their children's lives was a significant aspect, in order to identify when and where the martial arts were a positive influence on their children. In the same research, parents related that is vital to identify a good professional in order to give a positive experience for the pupils. "You get a bad instructor; you are putting your kid in danger." - affirmed one parent in this study (Lantz 2002, 579).

It is necessary to comprehend that martial arts itself has not the competence to help and support practitioners socially neither to provide relevant social changes, if the right ideology and social proposes are not put into practice. If their ideology and philosophy do not take place in the activities, martial arts tend to be a sport such as any sport with no further purposes than entertaining and improve physical skills.

With the modernization of martial arts and the popularity of emerging events, such as mixed martial arts (MMA), martial arts was influenced by a modern approach on their techniques and ideology. The competitive level in the present society had also direct influence in the way how martial arts may be taught

nowadays. The modern approach aims to focus in the performance of the practitioners. And this conception of practitioners is, gradually, moving towards becoming potential athletes. As a practitioners of martial arts myself, I perceive that there is a constant growing discussion about joining competitions and to succeed as a practitioner. The level of being a martial arts practitioner is, little by little, higher and the enjoyment of the art is mostly being aside.

In this sense, a study of Richman and Rehberg demonstrates that the level of the performances had constructive results on the personality characteristics of the participants in several aspects, such as self-esteem. Another research (by McGowan and Miller) revealed that anger - in this case comprehended positively as the energy needed to win - is more present in successful competitors than in less-successful ones. And concluded that successful athletes have more positive outcomes from martial arts in general (Theeboom & Vertonghen 2010, 530).

The understanding of positive outcomes from martial arts is more often related to more successful practitioners are related to this contemporary approach. The traditional approach, however, focuses on meditative aspects, stressing self-control, conflict avoidance, respect others and other social aspects of their philosophies (Theeboom & Vertonghen 2010, 530). With a traditional approach, martial arts can be a meaningful social instrument, if it finds a proper professional to develop it so.

Several researches and scientific articles have discussed about the positive outcomes of martial arts (with traditional approach). Vockell and Kwak illustrated in the article "Martial arts in the class room" (1990) about the approach applied in the taekwondo classes, conducted by Kwak. Using a motivation method in his instruction, he understood that motivation is a human need, and lower tasks helped the pupils to build the needed confident for future more complex tasks. The concept of martial arts as a self-defense approach also is related to

the motivational built. The psychologist Abraham Maslow stated physical safety as a human basic need and martial arts self-defense ideology supports this affirmation. In this research, Vockell comprehended that feeling safe from external threats through martial arts is the initial step to motivate higher needs, such as self-actualization, expanding knowledge, or improving self-esteem (Vockell & Kwak 1990).

The socialization within martial arts practices also influences in major social interaction. In several martial arts practices, there are often moments to work in pairs. These activities support peer tutoring and cooperative learning processes. Through these sections, practitioners are able to learn from the partner, to support and/or tutor the partner, and they generally learn that tutor frequently benefits from tutee and vice-verse. Such experiences are often brought to other environments, including class rooms, where children martial arts practitioners understand the need of promoting peer support in different situations (Vockell & Kwak 1990).

More specifically, martial arts have been applied as social intervention in complex contexts. Lamarre and Nosanchuk (1990) claimed that martial art is culturally responsive, concrete, and easy to use to support therapeutic process. Furthermore, Twemlow, Sacco, and Fonagy (2008) stated that aggressive adolescents normally do not respond well to traditional therapies alone. Combining the active movement of martial arts with therapeutic principles can make a significant difference in drawing these challenging adolescents into considering changing lifestyles. (Burt & Butler 2011, 49)

Burt and Burter also reaffirmed that martial arts with a non-violence approach reinforce determination, pro-social connections, objectives orientation, and responsibility modeling for aggressive adolescents. With proper approach and supervision, in a safe environment allowing consuming of excessive natural en-

ergy and expression of anger build physical and emotional balance in adolescents (Burt & Butler 2011, 49, 52).

Other research conducted by Graczyk, Hucinski, Norkowski, Pęczak-Graczyk and Rozanowska, concluded that as higher is the level of expertise of a combat sport of martial art athlete, the level of aggression is lower. Also, in the same study, they highlighted that aggression means the competitive anger - mentioned already in this paper - and fighting spirit are also beneficial attributes in their everyday life (Szabo & Urbán 2014, 53-54). Thus, we may conclude that it has been proven that martial arts applied as a traditional approach in specific cases may also provide diverse positive outcomes, where the modern approaches have failed.

Another interesting research reveals the positive influence in combat sports and martial arts practitioners relating to Emotional Intelligence (EI) - also as known as Emotional Quotient (EQ). EI is defined, by Salovey and Mayer, as “the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions”. Later, Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso also defined it as “the ability to engage in sophisticated information processing about one’s own and others’ emotions and the ability to use this information as a guide to thinking and behavior”. (Szabo & Urbán 2014, 53)

The same study mention another research conducted in Finland by scholar Bäckmand. In his paper, Bäckmand have studied the EI upcoming in retired athletes and non-athletes in Finland. And the result was possible to affirm that athletes were more extroverted than non-athletes. In another study conducted by Sule, the results revealed that after self-defense-orientated combat trainings for one month, patients suffering from anxiety and pathological inhibition disclosed lower anxiety and higher extroversion (Szabo & Urbán 2014, 54).

In Szabo's and Urbán's research about EI in boxers, judokas and non-athletes they concluded that both boxers and judokas presented better rates of EI in different areas than non-athletes, including higher scores in extroversion, self-emotional appraisal, others' emotional appraisal, and using of emotions and regulation of emotions. They also suggested that both sports, judo and boxing, may foster the development of EI in the long term, disregarding the fact that practitioners may possess higher EI before their involvement in the sports (Szabo & Urbán 2014, 55).

Thus, as described in the previous lines, it is possible to confirm that martial arts and combat sports have positive physical, educational, emotional, and social outcomes in the life of the practitioners. If the right approach is applied, the philosophy, the proper environment, and social concerns, martial arts may reveal a powerful social instrument in different social approaches and interventions.

7 ICEHEARTS RY

Icehearts RY is a non-governmental organization in Finland which promotes child welfare through collective sports. Icehearts aims to prevent social exclusion, to promote social skills and to provide a secure, long-term support for the children (Icehearts 2009). It is a long-term - 12 years - professional support for children who have been recognized as being at risk of social exclusion or require special support in their growth. These children can join a from the team at age of six years old - 1st grade students - Each team is managed by an educator who take care of about 10 children and the teams are supplemented to include a total of 20-25 children (Appendix 1: Icehearts: Everyone really gets to play, 3). The initial number of children is limited in order to offer proper support and to assure the interaction and involvement of the whole children of the team.

The conceptualization of Icehearts is undoubtedly put into practice in their work: it offers, mostly for those who cannot afford, the opportunity to engage a supportive environment through sports, joining ice-hockey, floorball, or football teams. Icehearts, through its work focusing professional guidance, group work, and peer relationship in long-term, indirectly develop sense of belonging among the children. Once they join Icehearts from the 1st grade - which is a relevant period of life adjustment to a new environment, norms and life transition - many children face social issues to adapt to their new life stage and routine. For many children, engaging school, making new friends, and being comfortable in a new environment can be uneven and even traumatic. Therefore, being a part of a group/team, such as Icehearts' propose supports the children in their life transition and building new relationship with other pupils.

Certainly aspects like social background, social class, gender, and others have significant influence in the early experiences in sports for children. Also, there

are notorious evidences that a quality experience in sports for children is directly related with, principally, children's social class (Kirk 2005, 245). It has been illustrated by a recent research in England that children from white middle-class are the majority in sports club, especially due their social class and economic situation. They can more easily afford the fees, kit and equipment, transportation, and other relevant economic aspects.

In Finland, similar perspective is also true. In this sense, Icehearts provide all their services free of charges. Then, children from lower social classes in Finland are able to participate of team sports, especially ice-hockey, which is arguably an expensive sport. Icehearts provide kit and equipment, professional guidance, proper space for the activities, transportation, and feeding for the children. Thus, Icehearts is able to offer for the pupils opportunities that they certainly could not afford without such social support.

8 ICEARTS WORK: LINKS TO DIACONIA PERSPECTIVES AND IDEOLOGY

The conception of diaconia is naturally related to Christian faith and its ideology. It is comprehended as call for every Christian, following Jesus' commandment: "love your neighbor as yourself" - Mat. 22:39 (Holy Bible - New International Version). The conception of "neighbor" may be relevantly wide; however Jesus, through the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 29-37), explained - in simple words - that neighbor is who is in need.

This philosophy of helping those who need is also present in Icehearts work. In several occasions in the Bible, Jesus expressed His love and care, especially for children. In Matthews 19:14 and Luke 16:14 Jesus says: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these". Other example can be found in Mark 9: 36-37: "He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me'" (Holy Bible - New International Version).

Diaconia on its work aims to help those in need, despite gender, faith, sexuality, social position, age, race, ethic, and other several aspects. Unquestionably, churches encompass several sources and its work can be wider. Icehearts, on the other hand, focuses its work in a long-term support, aiming to offer for children life opportunities in order to obtain positive and significant outcomes in their life spans.

In several aspects, concepts of Diaconia can be found in Icehearts work. Danish Diaconal Council described ten theses of Diaconia, and most of them meet the ideology of Icehearts. Diaconia in its essence means service - from the Greek word "diakonia". Diaconia also sees human beings as its starting point to

help others, through the Christian view of every person is unique and in the image of God. Also, as already mentioned, diaconia is based on Jesus' teaching concerning loving the neighbors. Diaconia tasks are to redress human suffering, in community or individual levels. Focusing in human being, diaconia also tends to be multi-cultural on its approaches (Danish Diaconal Council 2008, 2).

Such diaconal bases meet directly Icehearts ideology. Icehearts promotes social service for those who are or tend to be marginalized. It is a long-term project in action, which a continuing professional support is offered for 12 years. Its aim is to support children and families with (emerging) social issues, despite their social and cultural background. In fact multiculturalism is a reality in Icehearts work, providing service for families with diverse cultural background, such as Russians, Estonians, Somalis, Congolese, Chinese, and other different backgrounds (Personal Communication, Tero Tiittanen, 2013).

Since Icehearts' projects, as previously mentioned, are based in 12 years work, an important aspect is vital to keep the good environment and to obtain positive outcomes: belonging. Belonging is concept mixed in diaconia work. Being part, unified and homogeneous are basis of diaconia work and its aims. Since we comprehend the importance of our neighbor, when he/she is integrated, mutual care and support are important tools to human begins. This concept is also linked with the work of Icehearts. The organization comprehends that group work is wider than the support and guidance of the educators. It is necessary to create a atmosphere were pupils can find peer support between themselves.

Clearly Icehearts is not based on faith or religion. In this sense, there are no spiritual values on its philosophy. The comparison to diaconal works concentrates exclusively in the social work promoted by both strands. However, it is interesting to underline that Icehearts and its work could be also provided by diaconal institutions, such as churches, parishes, or other specialized organizations. Icehearts work can be directly related to diaconia work and vice-versa. If it

focuses also in spiritual matters, Icehearts' example could be fruitful and successful also with a diaconal approach.

9 ICEHARTS IN VUOSAARI, FINLAND

The Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) project was developed in an Icehearts' united in Vuosaari, Helsinki, Finland. Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu is categorized as soft combat sport, such as Judo, for instance. It means that strikes are not allowed - like other hard combat sports, such as boxing and kick-boxing - and the techniques are based on using the opponent's energy to counter-attack. In order to introduce and to proceed with this project, I have done two different placements, totalizing 17 weeks in Icehearts Vuosaari. In the first placement - 7 weeks, the primary goal was not to start such project, but to comprehend the social work among children through sports in Finland. During this period I took part of the activities with the children and team practices of the ice-hockey teams. It is important to underline that whole children are boys and their work is focused for this particular gender.

In this specific group in Vuosaari there are two teams of ice-hockey: one is formed by students from 1st grade and another of students from 3rd grade. The 1st grade team has around 13 children and the 3rd grade team has around 20 children (Icehearts educator Tero Tiittanen, Personal communication 2013). Each team has their own coach/educator and they practice ice-hockey once per week. In the other week days, children come to a common location - in this case a school - where they engage different activities. They are free to choose what they want to do, which can be walking/playing in the forest, play football, play basketball, play in the gymnastics hall, use the computer room, and other activities. Even though the children are free to choose their activities, the coaches/educators supervise these activities in order to maintain the order and assure that the whole group is included in the activities.

As cited previously in this paper, children who join Icehearts teams are those who have been recognized as being at risk of social exclusion or require special support during their childhood - and perhaps during adolescence. In this group there are children from different nationalities, mostly from immigrant families - even though there is also notable amount of Finnish boys. Among the nationalities, there are children with a cultural background from Congo, Somalia, Russia, Romania, Morocco, Iraq, and others (Personal communication, Tero Tiittanen, 2013). However, every child was born in Finland, and, therefore, language is not a barrier of communication.

An important aspect to highlight is that most of the activities chosen by the children are based in collective sports or physical activities. A recent research of children's "favorite things to do" appointed that 54,8% of boys with the same age of Icehearts' children have major interesting in team sports (Guerin & Tatlow-Golden 2010, 552). Thus it number ratifies the importance of the activities promoted by Icehearts among their boys.

9.1 Methods and Approaches to Understand Potential Clients

During the first weeks, I used the exposure methodology to observe and to comprehend the environment, the services, the educators, and the clients/children. I was able to participate of every activity; however during these activities my aims were to understand such work developed by Icehearts and how it affected the lives of the children.

In the following weeks, I utilized the participatory method. Thus, I participate of every activity with the children. My main objective at this stage was to know more the clients but also to let them know me better and to trust in me. At this point, they start to recognize also my authority; and despite I tried to put myself at the same level of the children, they comprehended my role, also as a co-

educator. This recognition was important in order to limit boundaries and to clarify my tasks and responsibilities with them.

9.2 Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu: an Introductory Project

In common agreement with my placement supervisor, my supervisor teacher, and Icehearts board, I started a project of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) principally focused for those children who do not feel confident or do not have interest in ice hockey. The project, however, had a great interest from most of the boys, and at that time I realized that would be more effective if it was an introductory project than a fixed project limited for specific children.

The initial project consisted in two weekly sections and I have around 6 boys per section. During the beginning, most children came to participate, but in the end only those who had real interest in BJJ came more often. From the first section I made clear that they were not allowed to apply the BJJ techniques in their friends and they only should put into practice what they have learnt in the BJJ section. Another Icehearts employee participated of every section with me and helped to demonstrate the techniques and to teach the children.

9.3 Primary Observations

This project had 3 weeks duration - 6 sections in total. Thus, is not possible to bring into light visible outcomes in children's lives. However, I realized that those children who used to play called "boy's games" - such as pretending that they were fighting, try to tip their friends, and other related games - had more interest in learning and practicing BJJ. We cannot assume that these games have an intentional aim to hurt their friends; either it is a consequence of an aggressive behavior. However, these BJJ section were a supervised place where these boys could learn properly how to fall down, how to defend themselves

and how to apply the techniques. In a sense, for the boys it was a supervised game that they used to play outside the class, however in the BJJ section they have learnt to do not hurt themselves or their friends with these games.

Another aspect observed was that those children from 1st grade could not comprehend the intention of BJJ sections and they used to face, as mentioned, as a supervised game of "tipping their friends". Those boys from 3rd grade already understood that BJJ was a martial art and they were willing to learn the techniques and improve their skills.

This project was also beneficial for me particularly in a sense that I could create a hierarchy between me and the children. The boys were respecting me as a professional but also as "the BJJ teacher". Thus, they used to respect and obey what I said to them. And this visible hierarchy also helped to approach the children not exclusively with their issues concerning BJJ, but they were free to share other different issues, such as discussion with group friends, school homework, and interesting in other activities, for instance.

10 BRAZILIAN JIU-JITSU PROJECT

10.1 Improving the Introductory Project

In the previous 7 weeks placement was developed the BJJ project. In fact it did not have further social aims than an introductory course to provide entertainment and leisure for the children. As a supervisor, I understood that the project could have deeper purpose if applied as a social service tool and not generalizing it exclusively as a sport nor entertainment.

Certainly the introductory project had positive acceptance and outcomes. However, it was also possible to identify negative results, mostly related to its wrong aims. We comprehended that the wrong application of this project did not offer particular social benefits for the children, principally due the constant rotation of children and a non-continued section with same children. Once, majorly, the negative aspects of the initial project were identified, I decided to modify the approach in order to provide, through martial arts, not only entertainment, but also social potential changes in the children's lives.

In this sense, in common agreement with Icehearts educators in Vuosaari, we decided to apply such project for, at this time, 2nd grade children - 6-7 year old children. The amount of participants would be reduced to four children, in order to identify more properly the possible outcomes from this project. Also, the project would be focused for the same participants during the 10 weeks project, enabling the continuity of its work and, consequently, its outcomes.

10.2 Identifying the Challenges

The introductory project was positive in order to, beforehand, anticipate possible challenges and difficulties which could compromise the success of the project. The (Finnish) language - which was a relative barrier in the introductory project - was not more a significant issue, principally due the fact that I was familiar for the children and vice-verse.

I was already familiar with the environment and the school facilities. Certainly it was a positive factor. However, I also understand that the school schedule was not well set and it could influence the frequency and the routine of the activities. Not only the school schedule but the children's schedule could also be an issue, since they come from different schools and they have, consequently, different schedules.

The children's commitment could also become a problem. Since it was identified that these 1st grade children - now 2nd grade - had problems to focus in the sections, it would be needed to change the approach in order to retain their attention. Also, 6-7 year old children are more prone to lose their interesting in specific activities, not only the approach of the sections should be different, but also the sections themselves.

Identifying possible outcomes from this short-term - 10 weeks - project was also a concern. From the beginning of it we could not assume that would be possible to notice probable outcomes, neither positive nor negative. The risk was assumed, however minimized by the reduction of participants.

The selection of the participants could also be a major issue. If they did not present particular social skills to work on it through this project, its outcomes could be unclear and, consequently, compromise the intention of it. Thus, the way of selection of the participants was vital in order to find more visible outcomes and data from this project.

10.3 Selecting the Participants

In order to acquire visible results from this project, it was essential to select children whose could benefit more from it. Despite the sportive interest from most children, it was necessary to pick those children with recognized social and emotional skills to be improved, even if they, initially, were not interested to engage the activities.

The first placement allowed me to observe the children, to understand them better and, consequently, to comprehend them in an interpersonal level. In this period was possible to understand their preferences, the way how they interact with others and the environment, their position within the group, their response in specific activities, and other social interactions. The observation and participatory period was crucial in order to identify the clients who could benefit most from this project.

While the introductory project embraced every children and did not have continuity in the activities; the project itself focused in offer continuing and regular activities for the same children, during a mid-term period of ten weeks. The initial idea was to select six children; however, with in agreement with the educators and placement supervisor, we comprehended that an amount of four children would allow us to have more visible results from it. Thus, with the help of the educators and also my personal perceptions, we select four boys to engage the project.

10.4 The Participant and Different Approaches

After the selection process, we announced for the children those who were taking part in the project. Certainly, the real purpose of it was not explained for the children, and they comprehended that these activities had not other purpose

than entertainment and fun. In order to preserve their identities, this paper will present fictitious names.

Jefferson, a seven years old boy with Chinese background, was the first one selected. During the observation period I perceived that he used to be alone most of the time. He used to be away of other children and, mostly, to use his cell phone to play game and watch videos. In a sense, it was hard to interact to him because he seemed to avoid it. In his particular case, I comprehended that, in order to have his attention, I should introduce and reveal same preferences as him. To approach him, I used my cell phone and installed some games that I supposed he would be interested in playing. This approach revealed effective in order to know each other better. I also used this instrument to "negotiate" his playing time. For instance, he just would be allowed to use my cell phone and play games after playing or engaging common activities with the other children.

The second selected boy was Abraham, also seven years old boy, with Congo background. Differently of Jefferson, Abraham used to interact with other children. However, occasionally, he used to demonstrate more social and emotional affection. Differently of other children, he used to hug and stay around the educators. We cannot assume, eventually, that it may be a revelation of missing emotional affection in his family. Certainly the cultural background has relevant influence in the way how he interacts with others and it was taking into consideration. His selection in this project is not related to his relationship with the educators; Abraham was selected because, during the observation and participatory stage, we observed that he used to have a good relationship with the other children and to participate in the group activities. However, we identified that he did not have the same sportive skills of other children; and since he understood that he was not at the same level of the others he just stopped playing and lost interest in the activities.

The third boy selected was a Finnish boy who we will call Sami. Just like Jefferson, Sami also enjoys doing things on his own. However, he does not use technology, such as cell phones, to entertain himself. Every day he used to come from his school with something in his hands, which could be a rock or a wood stick. And during the initial hours of Icehearts activities, he used these materials he had with him to entertain himself. In general, he was more socially interactive than Jefferson, and despite he used to do things on his own, he accepted others to engage his activities and ideas.

The last boy is also Finnish, who will be called Jarno. Differently of the other three children, Jarno was not part of Icehearts during my first placement. However, during the early days of the second placement, I could perceive that he had no problems to interact with the other children. However, just like Abraham, he did not have the same sportive skills than the others. And his response for that was to complain or cry when things were not happening the way how he thought they supposed to be.

Therefore, we can understand that these boys had visible issues concerning social interaction, self-esteem, self-confidence, and social response. Since the improvement areas were already identified, the implementation of the project would have a defined social purpose: not only to offer fun and entertainment for the children, but to seek for probable social outcomes that these boys could be benefited from it.

10.5 The Project

As previously mentioned, the project consisted in two Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu sections per week, each with around one hour of duration. Certainly the project had major aims, focusing in the outcomes for the children. However, I also had my own expectation; which were to strength my relationship with the children, to

understand them better individually, to identify their weaknesses and strengths, and, obviously, to understand the outcomes of this project during and after it.

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu as martial arts had been introduced for the children during the first seven weeks placements. Thus, its concept was not unaware for the children. However, the different approach for younger children was changed in order to attract more their attention and interest.

11 APPROACHING CHANGES: THE BRAZILIAN JIU-JITSU SECTIONS

11.1 Warming-up, Games, and Deliberate Play

In the previous placement was identified that younger children - as such as these four selected children - had problems to focus in the activities and used to lose their concentration during the sections. Since the present project was destined to them, it was necessary to find different teaching processes which would be funnier and educational simultaneously.

Since I comprehended that teaching Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu techniques was not interesting for the children, the first change of the section was to bring different activities that would be more attractive for the children. Thus, during the warm-up sections I decided to introduce different "games" where they could apply some initial BJJ techniques and also have fun.

In order to change the approach and the way how the activities should be conducted, I understood that, according to David Kirk, children around age of 7 to 12 follow a general pattern in sport activities. At this stage - called by Bloom as first stage - is comprehended that the principal motivation for children to engage some activities - which may be arts, sports, science, and so on - is fun and enjoyment. Thus, for the children, it is rather playing than training. This phase is known as deliberate play (Kirk 2005, 241).

Scholars Hay and Côte defined deliberate play as activities designed to maximize inherent enjoyment (Kirk 2005, 241). Such as suggested by them, these warm-up activities and games in the Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu project had specific rules regulated and monitored by me. Similarly, I participated in every activity and

game, and I comprehended that it was crucial in order to obtain children's full engagement and participation.

Through this study of Kirk, I understand the importance of deliberate play. According to his and other scholars' studies, during the first stage, as funnier and enjoyable the sport and physical activities are, the probability of continuing the activities in the coming years increases (Kirk 2005, 241-242). And since Icehearts ideology is based in a 12 years project, it is crucial for the children to enjoy the activities in the early years.

Thus, differently of the first placement, where the focus was teaching Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu techniques, the objective of this placement and BJJ sections was to offer fun and enjoyment through Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, with a professional guidance and supervision.

See Appendix 2 - Personal pictures of the project, pp 62-63, pictures 1, 2 and 3.

11. 2 Exploring the Environment

In the previous placement, if there was no room or facility available to develop the BJJ section, I decided to suspend it. However, once this present project had a clear objective, I comprehended that its continuity was an important aspect for its success.

The school where Icehearts in Vuosaari is located offers different opportunities and exploiting facilities. Normally, the activities were conducted in a room destined for several activities, mostly for arts like dancing or acting. Also we had mattresses available to develop the activity more properly. Certainly we can assume that the school could not offer a perfect environment for the practice of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, once we did not have proper BJJ mat, however this scenario - private room with mattresses - was the best we could have.

In this scenario was possible to develop important aspects and primary steps of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, just as rolling, learn how to fall, crawling, applying ground BJJ techniques, and so on. However, such scenario was not offered frequently; thus it was necessary to explore different situations and possibilities.

Occasionally, we had a room available, but with no mattresses. In this case, it was necessary to do some exercise on the floor, surely taking care of children's well-being. In this picture, we could not apply some falling techniques and other BJJ drills. Thus, it was decided to apply different games and exercises to continue with the regular activities. In this situation was important to use some material available in the room and the physical space. If there was any material available, different games and activities were applied. It may be comprehended that in this situation were not taught BJJ techniques, however some primal drills could be learned, and they are important in order to apply perfectly complex techniques in the future.

In some opportunities, we did not have a proper room available for the BJJ practices. In two occasions, we only had the gymnastics room available. In this case, we used the "mattress pool" to apply some falling techniques and to learn how to fall. Also, different games were played in this situation, always with my monitoring, supervision, and participation.

Certainly it would be impeccable if we had the same working conditions regularly. However we comprehended that more than just teaching Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, it was important to create an environment where the children would enjoy and participate. In this sense, when we did not have the proper means to have the sections, BJJ became secondary; more important than teaching BJJ was to be with the children and to have continuing and regular activities with them.

See Appendix 2 - Personal pictures of the project, pp 63-66, pictures 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

11.3 The Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Sections

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu sections had a different and innovative approach for the children since the warming-up activities. For them, it was fun and enjoyable from the beginning of the activity, and they were more open to learn BJJ, since they comprehended it could also be fun.

The sections were, basically, divided in three parts: 1) warming-up, stretching and first BJJ steps/drills; 2) BJJ techniques: watching, observing, and learning the techniques from the teacher; then applying the techniques working in pairs; and 3) relaxing games, deliberate play, not necessarily focusing in BJJ. The idea of the section was not focusing in the importance of BJJ or learning it perfectly. Thus, the principal focus was not in spending considerable time in learning BJJ techniques. In fact, this part of the section involved approximately 15-20 minutes. The majority of one hour section was spent with different BJJ drills and games, which was not necessary for the children to concentrate overly. In practice, these periods were the most enjoyable for the children, and that was what we planned to offer to them.

The first part of the sections consisted in warming-ups and first BJJ drills. For the children, they were just rolling, running, and having fun. But my ideas were to introduce some important drills that are necessary to learn in order to apply properly BJJ techniques. In this part of the section, we could jog for a couple minutes, and then make some other important BJJ drills, such as learning how to roll, how to fall, hip escape, front rolling, back rolling, side rolling, shrimp crawl, and others. In many different BJJ techniques is needed to apply some of these drills movements. Then, while they were having fun, they were also, already, learning Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.



Adapted from Thiago Fernandes - personal data. Warm-up drills

The second part of the section consisted in teaching BJJ techniques and to apply them in pairs. In the beginning of this project, the demonstration of techniques was made with the support of an Icehearts' educator. However, during the project I decided to be alone with the children, since they knew me better and trusted in me. Also, this approach was beneficial in order to shorten my relationship with the children.

In this part of the activity, I demonstrated the BJJ techniques around five times. After that, they should tell me what to do in order to apply the technique in the

right way. Through this method, I realized they were more focused and they start to work together in order to find the right answer. At this stage, positive short-term results started to appear, and I realized that it was a successful approach.



Adapted from Thiago Fernandes - personal data. Demonstration of BJJ techniques

After the demonstration and their support in this process, it was time to apply the techniques in pairs - peer tutoring and cooperative learning methods. Every child should apply the techniques in 2-3 minutes, and then they should change pairs and apply them again. The peer tutoring and cooperative learning method was applied because, firstly, BJJ is an individual sport/martial art; thus it is summarized by one confronting an opponent. Secondly, and focusing in socio-

emotional outcomes, it allows children to learn from each other and also teach those with some learning difficulties. The results of such method will be argued in the topics concerning general outcomes.



Adapted from Thiago Fernandes - personal data. BJJ techniques + peer tutoring and cooperative methods

In the third and final part of the section, we normally played different games. At this part children could bring their ideas and suggest what games they wanted to play. During this part the intention was not to focus in BJJ, but to let the children have their supervised entertainment, also with my participation. At the end of every section, we used to seat together and talk about the section and other different topics, like sports, school, videogames, movies, and so on. In this moment, my objective was to create an environment where the figure of an

exclusive educator could be undone. The aim was to be at the same level of the children, and let them share their thoughts, wishes, and desires.



Adapted from Thiago Fernandes - personal data. Closing section + free conversation

Further pictures; see Appendix 2 - Personal pictures of the project, pp 66-67, pictures 10 and 11.

11.4 Collecting Data

During ten weeks of placement and, consequently of this project, I have been collecting data daily. The data collected consisted in daily diaries, BJJ section video-recording, informal conversation with clients and co-workers - Icehearts

educators. For several reasons, it was not possible to record every BJJ section; however it was possible to record 11 of 19 BJJ sections.

The recorded videos were crucial during the process of the placement. Through the videos was possible to comprehend what was working and what could be improved during the sections. Through the videos I also comprehended, for instance, how to utilize better the available time, not focusing excessively on the BJJ techniques, but offering for the children more fun and enjoyable time. They also enabled to understand children's development during the project. Comparing the first videos with the last ones, I realized that they acquired significant knowledge about Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. Also, their posture during the sections has improved in the sense that they became more focused in learning BJJ techniques thoroughly.

Through the videos was also possible to perceive the interaction between the children and the relationship they developed between themselves and with me. The sections did not have a "classroom" environment, with a strong picture of a teacher and the students. The interaction, freedom to participate and opportunity share their opinions and wishes were predominant to develop a trusting environment. And BJJ section's improvement and the engagement and participation of the children were more notorious across the sections.

Daily diaries were also important in order to comprehend the daily progress in their relationship and interaction with the other children of Icehearts' group. Since BJJ sections were twice per week and the children have different daily activities, I assumed it was necessary to substantiate the changes of behavior and/or interactional socio-emotional skills demonstrated in an everyday basis. Every slight or significant perception about the children of BJJ project was documented, and through the daily diaries was possible to understand the outcomes of this project.

Informal conversations with Icehearts' educator were also documented in order to understand their perceptions about the project and possible socio-emotional and behavioral changes in the children's lives.

12 GENERAL AND RELEVANT OBSERVATIONS AND OUTCOMES

During and after the project, based on the data collected and personal perceptions, was possible to identify several outcomes from this project. Certainly we may not assume that these outcomes will have significant impact for a life time term; however they were positive in order to comprehend that continuing activities, such as this proposed project, may bring relevant outcomes, if applied properly and for a mid/long-term.

12.1 Sense of Belonging

We may assume that the primary purpose of team sports, combat sports or martial arts may, perhaps, not being an instrument of building sense of belonging. However, physical activities in group arises a plenty of other benefits not only related to physical health; for instance it also influences the life of a practitioner in socio-emotional, psychological, and socio-interactional aspects as well. Building these positive aspects during earlier age supports the child to be easily social accepted by others by the unconscious skills developed through team sports or a martial art group, as the case of this project.

In our project, sense of belonging was an expected outcome. Certainly BJJ as an individual sports tended to obtain more results in an individual level. However, among the children of the project, it was possible to comprehend that they were proud of being part of the project. To exemplify it, they used to denominate themselves as "the Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu group" or, in several occasions, they expressed happy to be part of the group, as comprehended that those specific activities were prepared specially for them. Each group member also used to

remind others about the BJJ sections schedule and to come to practices together.

Therefore, such attitudes may be understood as a slight demonstration of sense of belonging. However, in fact, such manifestations have significant value in case of a ten weeks project. We may assume, then, that in a long-term project sense of belonging related outcomes could be more visible and predominant in the children's lives.

12.2 Peer support, Communication, Self-confidence and Self-esteem

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, as an individual sport, require constant support of the peer practitioners in order to develop and improve own skills. The sections, in a sense, were conducted expecting that every child would support each other in the activities. The peer tutoring and cooperative learning methods allowed them to put in practice what they had learnt, but also they had opportunity to support and help their friends to apply correctly the taught techniques. Also, they learned listening their peers and to comprehend their support as an advice.

It is important to underline that, at this age of 7-8 years old, competition is still not a reality for the children and it has to be comprehended as a positive aspect. They helped each other because they enjoyed seeing the progress of the whole group members and, probably, in a competitive environment such peer support would reveal invisible.

Through the sections and the referred approaches, they improved their communication skills. They learned to listen, to observe and to focus in the moments I was teaching the techniques. Also, they were more confident to share their ideas, their perceptions and to support the others. And these improved skills were also visible within the Icehearts group. Children from BJJ project were more

confident in engaging the games in the larger group, to participate in the activities, despite their skills.

In this sense, such attitudes highlight the study of Lee (1995), when was argued about the understanding between effort and ability. Lee affirmed that normally children under 10 years old - which can vary - tend to believe that they can accomplish specific activities if they try harder (Kirk 2005, 242). In our example, before the BJJ project, the children did not have confidence that they could achieve specific tasks with focused dedication. And the project has helped them to focus their determination in order to achieve specific goals.

In parallel with the self-confidence, it was possible to recognize improvement of self-esteem and self-concept. These BJJ sections helped them to comprehend that they could achieve certain objectives with the right approach. And such recognition allowed them to feel more confident and determinative to engage several group activities. We could recognize that their position within the large group of Icehearts started to be concrete and their posture had changed among the group.

12.3 The Role of the Educator

In several different occasions, the role of the educator is crucial to bring into light such outcomes. I comprehended that my figure had an important impact in children's self-confidence and self-esteem. As mentioned in the previous pages, my role was not exclusively to develop the BJJ sections. I was with the children every day, participating of after school activities. I comprehended that in this short-term project, such results such as self-confidence and self-esteem would not reveal only based on the project. It was necessary daily monitoring and support to achieve such outcomes.

In several activities with the large group, children tended to repeat their usual posture and responses. Thus, my role as an educator was to intervene and to support the children, talking to them and reminding about different responses they could give, based on what they learned in the BJJ sections. These interventions were vital to support the child to face their challenges, difficulties and problems with a different perspective.

Therefore, we may assume that the differential of being an educator is not only to teach a specific sport or martial art. Continuing support, life experience, professional guidance, interpersonal relationship, communication, interactive sensibility, and other interactional skills are necessary to make the difference in children's lives. Without such skills, this project would offer exclusively fun and entertainment, and would be empty in its social purpose.



Adapted from Thiago Fernandes - personal data.

13 SPECIFIC AND INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES: POSTURE CHANGING IN THE LARGER GROUP

13.1 Visible Outcomes and Documentation

Most studies and researches concerning the benefits of martial arts and combat sports focus in individual outcomes, mostly linked to psychological and emotional aspects. This research, however, focus in collective outcomes, highlighting the social benefits of these sports for practitioners in a larger group. Thus, the following results reveal posture changing, positioning in a larger group, self-concept, self-esteem and self-confidence in social interactional manners.

Through daily activities and conviviality was possible to identify slight or significant changes in children's traits during this project. Children's socio-emotional traits have been already explained in previous topics. This topic, however, will reveal some perceptions about specific changes in the children's lives, in each individual and particular case. Consequently, comprehended outcomes in individual level will be argued in the following paragraphs.

Surely these outcomes were documented and perceived in different levels. To assume such results, different sources were took into consideration, such as daily diaries, videos, informal conversation with Icehearts educators and other children of Icehearts team of Vuosaari, further my professional perceptions.

13.2 Jefferson's Case

Before the project, Jefferson had specific posture and interactional skills which we identified the necessity of improvement. Certainly, this project did not aim to

change children's characteristics and personalities. We comprehend the essence of each child, and also their characters and particularities. This project aimed, specifically, to improve their interaction with other children, their self-esteem and self-confidence, and their social position within the group.

In the case of Jefferson, we comprehended that is his characteristic being shy and relatively close to others and to new opportunities. In his case, specifically, was necessary to toil his characteristics in order to avoid, in the future, possible exclusion of the group or find himself aside the group.

My role as an educator was to integrate them in the group activities, revealing that it could be funnier than being alone, if he adopted the right approach and posture. A continue monitoring was important in order to make him join the group activities, instead of being alone. However, it was also necessary to understand the child's wish and respect his position. Such respectful posture was mutual and I understood that my company was, in a sense pleasurable and positive for him.

Through daily approaches and the BJJ project, he was trusting in me gradually. And, consequently, trusting in my advices and guidance; not only in the project but in the whole group. He tended to engage the group activities which I was participating and the data collected reveals that he was more confident and happier to join group activities. In his specific case, the BJJ project - alongside professional support - revealed a correct approach with this specific positive outcome.

13.3 Abraham's Case

Abraham did not have serious issues concerning social integration and interaction. The diagnosed issue concerned his personal position during the group ac-

tivities. In his specific case, I understand that the "working in pairs" practicing method had relevant influence in his social position.

Abraham developed skills concerning peer support and self-knowledge. In the group activities, instead of leave them because of his lack of sportive skills; he was open to receive his peers' support and help. In his case, my role as educator was to motivate and to encourage those more skilled children to help and support Abraham. Once he was more open to accept others' support, his posture within the group changed, and his integration was improved.

Through conversation with other children and educators, they have informed that Abraham scored a goal in the first ice-hockey friendly match. As result, he started to be better recognized in the group, which directly helped him to be better integrated.

13.4 Jarno's Case

Such as Abraham, Jarno also had lack of skills and his response for that was crying or complaining about group activities. However, it was understood that he did not have issues concerning social acceptance and interaction, and simply his responses should be different in order to avoid future issues with other children.

Similarly to Abraham's case, I also realized that he felt more confident and had different responses when I was participating in the activities. We may assume, thus, that my presence and my role as an educator influenced on his position within the group. With a participatory posture and words of encouragement as an educator, he put more efforts in the group activities and realized that he could achieve several goals if face them with right approach.

Jarno's change of posture is an applicable example of a child who tended to equate effort with ability. Before BJJ project, he did not try harder in the activities because he understood that he would not be possible to accomplish some tasks. After the project and with a professional support, he comprehended that his abilities could be improved if he was more determined. As Lee (1995) mentioned in his study, at his age - 7 years old - is important for children to develop the determination to achieve specific tasks; and later on the child will comprehend his real skills and limitations (Kirk 2005, 242).

13.5 Sami's Case

Sami, specifically, did not have relevant issues concerning integration and social interaction. In fact, we comprehended that the fact he used to do things on his own and to explore his environment was a positive and creative aspect, since he did not avoid others participation or did not engage group activities. However, some aspects concerning Sami's development came from feedbacks of other children of Icehearts.

In the Icehearts' team, Sami has an important role as ice-hockey goalkeeper. During my project, Icehearts ice-hockey team of Vuosaari started to participate of ice-hockey tournaments and friendly matches. Several children mentioned that Sami had vital importance for the team and his value started to be recognized by other children; and also his communication with other children in the game was more notable. Certainly it is not possible to assume that the project enable him to develop such skills. However, we may comprehend that it had positive influence in bringing into light hidden a different posture and improvement of self-esteem and social recognition among other children of the group.

CONCLUSION

This paper does not aim to argue about the efficacy of combat sports and martial arts in social work, although the most studies about this subject tended to argue about physical, emotional, and psychological benefits of these sports. And comprehensively there are several studies confirming the (social) benefits of these sports. During my research I have not found articles concerning Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu as a social instrument. In fact, there are several articles concerning other martial arts, like judo, boxing, taekwondo, capoeira, and so forth. Thus, this study may be pioneer addressing the efficacy of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu as a social intervention in child welfare.

During the implementation of the project, several challenges emerged during its progress. The absence of proper facilities, inadequate environment, my personal management with Finnish language, and frequent re-adaptations during the process were some challenges which may be pointed. Thus, it was necessary to be flexible in order to adapt in different pictures and to maintain the focus on the purpose of the project. Also, the personal diaconia background permitted to create a belonging environment, and issues such as facilities and environment were possible to manage.

Since this present project has been implemented focusing on its probable social benefits, it is possible to assume that it achieved success on its purpose: to obtain outcomes which could improve the children's lives in socio-interactional and socio-integration levels. Its benefits included also psycho-emotional benefits, improvements of self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-concept aspects, which directly influence the manner how the pupils interact with others and their environment.

Visible outcomes emerged from this project and we comprehend that it had significant importance in the children's lives during its process. We also understand

that other results could arise if such project would be applied in mid or long-term bases. Therefore, short-term BJJ project allows concluding that a similar project, in long-term project, may produce significant outcomes for a life-term. Also this paper permits to understand that professional guidance, clear social intentions and educational support are vital to accomplish the benefits that Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu - and similar martial arts - as social instrument may offer.

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APPENDIX 1 - ICEHEARTS: EVERYONE REALLY GETS TO PLAY



2

More than a sports club

- Icehearts – preventive child welfare work through team sports at school and during leisure time
- Icehearts is more than a sports club. Icehearts is an operating model which has been developed to prevent social exclusion and promote well-being. Icehearts is a tool and cooperation partner for municipal basic services.
- Icehearts is a team sport operating model promoting the well-being of children and supporting social work, school and leisure time. The aim of Icehearts is to prevent social exclusion, promote social skills and create a long-term and safe environment for children with a presence of adults through all the transitional stages of growing up. Icehearts philosophy supports a child's growth into a self-reliant member of a team, who takes others into account. The operating model is based on values which give every child a chance.
- Icehearts is a cross-administration operating model which cooperates with social and education department professionals. The operating model has received awards and is widely recognised.



Caring, equality and fairness are all part of winning.

Icehearts in a nutshell

- Icehearts' operating model was established in 1996 in Vantaa, Finland.
- The Icehearts operating model is an innovative early intervention operating model focusing on boys. It provides long-term professional support for children who are particularly at risk. Each team selected by experts functions for 12 years. The team is supervised by an educator with professional qualifications, who manages the team.
- Children who have been recognised as being at risk of social exclusion early on and who require special support in their growth are selected for the team. In addition, children who, for some reason, would not have the opportunity to otherwise participate in leisure activities are chosen for the team. A typical Icehearts child is a boy from an immigrant, single parent or large family, and whose resources for providing leisure activities are limited.
- The core group of the team (about 10 children) is selected with the help of a municipal social department and the school when the children are at the age of six. The team will then be supplemented to include 20–25 children. The small size of the initial group is explained by the fact the social load-bearing capacity of the team is limited. Initially, it is important to ensure that the capacity is not exceeded. Children who require special support on their journey towards adulthood are selected to join the team.
- Early intervention and the provision of long-term help to ensure the best efficiency and results. As the life cycle of the team is long, the educator can provide support for as many challenges as possible wherever the child or the family need support. Long-term activities provide comprehensive assistance for children needing special support, which makes the rehabilitation prognosis good.
- The role of physical exercise and sports in the operating model is to prevent obesity and raise the physical and psychological condition as well as the sphere of life of the participating children. Team sports enable growth and learning to be good partners. In addition, players will learn in practice what work means to the development of their skills.
- There are teams in Vantaa, Helsinki and Uusikaupunki with their own Icehearts associations. The sports offered by the Icehearts associations are ice-hockey, football, Finnish baseball and floorball.

When you feel welcomed, you don't want to stay away.

APPENDIX 2 PERSONAL PICTURES OF THE PROJECT



Adapted from Thiago Fernandes - personal data. Front Rolling exercise (1)



Adapted from Thiago Fernandes - personal data. Back Rolling exercise (2)



Adapted from Thiago Fernandes - personal data. Front Rolling exercise (3)



Adapted from Thiago Fernandes - personal data. Warming-up games (4)



Adapted from Thiago Fernandes - personal data. Warming-up games (5)



Adapted from Thiago Fernandes - personal data. Warming-up games (6)



Adapted from Thiago Fernandes - personal data. Warm-up drills + crawling (7)



Adapted from Thiago Fernandes - personal data. Warm-up drills + crawling (8)



Adapted from Thiago Fernandes - personal data (9)



Adapted from Thiago Fernandes - personal data. Demonstration of BJJ techniques (10)



Adapted from Thiago Fernandes - personal data. Demonstration of BJJ techniques and children's participation (11)