

Workshop: „Play the game - learn the rules”

Date, Time: 01.10.2009, 10.00 – 13.00 and
01.10.2009, 14.30 – 17.15 (workshop duration in both cases 2,5 hours)

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Workshop content/theme

Reflection on games children play by discussing hidden rules, hidden obstacles for equal participation and gender issues.

Aims

- to create awareness of hidden rules
- to understand what children do REALLY learn by playing group games
- to discuss what society teaches us about tasks of women and men, about good and bad, about right and wrong, about minorities, about enemies, about strategies to succeed, about competition and more.

Method(s)/Approach

1. WELCOME TO THE WORKSHOP:

- Sitting in a circle, short description of aims, methods, time frame and a personal statement why discussing these topics is meaningful to ME (as a workshop leader)

2. NAME AND MOVEMENT (name game):

- Big circle: People stand in a big circle. Everybody says his/her name and makes a typical movement for him/her. All participants repeat name and movement. It starts with the first person at the right hand side of the facilitator and goes round the whole circle.

- "Advanced" version: One person says his/her name and than name and movement of another person. The so announced other player says his name and movement and calls a new person (and so on)

3. ONE NIGHT AT THE FARM (game for dividing the group in subgroups)

Big circle: WS leader goes around and whispers animal names in the ears of the participants. For example: If you want to have 4 groups, you have to chose 4 animals (duck, sheep, cow, dog). You go around and whisper one animal/person (nobody else should hear what you say!). First person: "duck", second person: "sheep", third person: "cow", fourth person: "dog" and from the beginning - fifth person: "duck", and so on and so on.

After that you explain that it's night at the farm, no moonlight at all, electric light broke down and the animals want to reach there "families".

It is important to tell your participants that

- they can chose if they want to close their eyes, or would prefer to cheat a little bit
- that they have to quak, muuh and bark until the end of the game (in order to help all animals to find their home)
- that they should use their arms and hands as "tactil eyes" in order to feel if somebody or something is approaching
- that you will take care of them and watch that nobody will get lost or bump into furniture

After a lot of chaotic and loud animal noise you will have 4 nice groups: Let's hear what animals we have at our farm!

4. GROUP BRAINSTORMING. WHAT DO GIRLS; WHAT DO BOYS PLAY AT KINDERGARDEN?

All groups make 2 lists - one for boys and one for girls.
After a short presentation of all groups we collect in the plenary

....."What do boys learn (by playing those games)"?
...."What do girls learn (by playing those games)"?

The discussion leads us to the question if girls could also need some of the competencies we found for the boys? And if boys would need some of the competences that we found out at the girls list?

This discussion shall raise our awareness for the playing and the learning environment that we adults create for our children.

5. Break

Than outdoor session

6. BRING YOUR GAMES

The four groups are asked to bring a game (one/each group) that 8 - 10 years old children play in their region. After a short phase of discussion and preparation each group brings a game:

- The "offering" group gives a short explanation of the game, prepares the play field with the help of the facilitator. All other participants can decide if they want to participate or prefer to watch. After the game everybody joins the circle and we discuss what kind of rules we found.

This gives us the chance to play four different games together!

7. "NEW GAMES"

In the third phase of the workshop the facilitator offers some "NEW GAMES". These games were collected, developed and heavily played in the USA of the 70ties. They were seen as a (harmless and non-violent) reaction to a more and more restrictive society. The slogan was PLAY HARD, PLAY FAIR, NOBODY HURT, The idea was to bring all kind of people together (of every age, social background, body constitution, skin colour, weight, status,.....) to have fun together and play together. All "New Games" work without competition, without loosing and thea are really fun!

What we played:

8. CATCHING AT THE BOULEVARD

All participants walk (or stand) in pairs, arm in arm (like tourists at the boulevard).
Person A tries to catch person B.
But if B grabs the arm of one of the "pair" people he/she is safe!
Now the other partner of the pair is the new catcher and has to follow A.

The game has no "natural" end - the facilitator has to watch the group and decide when to stop.

9. Yin & YANG

All participants sit in a circle on the floor. They want to be accepted in a ZEN monastery and therefore they have to proof their ability of concentration and contemplation with the Yin & Yang ritual.

For the ritual there are only three movements/words allowed:

- first: hand palm on the head. Word: YIN
- second: hand under the chin. Word: YANG
- third: without any word pointing at another person

These three movements shall now be done by three different people:

- First person says YIN and puts at the same time his/her palm upon his/her head. Now attention! Next person will be the neighbour to whom the fingertips of the first person (still with the hand on his/her head) are pointing to. So if I say YIN and put my right hand on my head my fingers will point to my neighbour at the left! He is now the one to say YANG and to put his/her hand under his chin. Where his fingers show, this neighbour has now the task to point with his/her stretched arm to another person in the circle without saying a word. This person is the next to start with the YIN (hand on the head...) and so on.

If now somebody makes a mistake he or she will be sent ack to the nasty and noisy outer world. This person can run around, call the others by their names, tell them that somebody is on the phone for them, and so on. The outer world is growing, because many people will make mistakes and it becomes more and more difficult to concentrate.

10. GAMES with the PARACHUTE

The "parachute" is a typical tool for playing new games. It is fascinating to play together with this big round piece of fabric and it is fun for children and adults! To play these games it is not necessary to have a "real" playing parachute. All games can be easily played as well with fabrics of 5 to approximately 7 meters (square). (See the pictures)

