

## FUCoPA (Football for Community Participation)

**FUCoPA** is an initiative of Asociación Civil Estudios y Proyectos (EyP). It is a strategy and an educational tool that aims, through a football/soccer game with adapted rules, to enhancing the skills of children and young people to build a life plan without violence, to ensuring their development and to promoting integration, inclusion, participation, cooperation, constructive criticism, dialogue, peaceful conflict resolution and gender equality. This methodology was conceived into the framework of the Project *Strengthening of local actors for the protection of rights*, carried out by EyP in four Provinces of the Northeast Region of Argentina, supported by UNICEF, local governments and private firms.

It's called Football for Community Participation (FUCoPA ) because:

- It takes as its starting point the football/soccer, the best known sport in Argentina, which is played all over the country.
- It aims to involve local communities in activities to promote social change.
- It assumes that participation is a right that has to be built and that can be learned. The exercise of this right is reinforced to the extent that more people participate and get involved.

FUCoPA proposes a new way to play soccer, with integrated teams of boys and girls, with interchangeable roles, allowing to all group members to participate in the game inside and outside the field. In a participatory way boys and girls have to reach agreements about the rules or "cohabitation commitments" to be implemented during the game, which will be evaluated immediately after. Adults, teachers, parents, local authorities are invited to join the game.

In the period 2011-2013 more than 13.000 children and adolescents have participated in the initiative, and 1.764 officials and technical staff members of 247 municipalities have been trained by EyP as trainers of FUCoPA, and they are multiplying the experience in their own territories by themselves.

Given the interest and motivation that FUCoPA arouses among children and adolescents, government officials and local organizations have considered the experience as a very useful strategy to reinforce local capacities to protect and promote their rights. Provincial governments have expressed great interest in incorporating this methodology in their own social and educational programs to improve their social policies in the field.

At present, it is implemented in many other regions of the country, and has aroused interest in other countries.

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