

## Introduction

Based on interviews with Onno Raadsen and Suzan van Doorn, Todos

### Cooperation Todos and ARCA

ARCA, a Brazilian NGO, receives assistance from Todos, a Dutch organisation that raises awareness and disseminates information in the Netherlands about the lives of young people in slum neighbourhoods. Todos demonstrates that sports and games may contribute substantially toward improving their quality of life. While both organisations encourage a playful approach, their objective is to raise awareness and provide information. ARCA and Todos work together closely and complement each other in knowledge exchange and financial support (Todos campaigns for ARCA in schools). Both organisations use a Sports van. The one in Brazil is packed with excellent equipment for sports and games and the one in the Netherlands with alternative gaming materials to enable Dutch children to see and experience that young people in slum neighbourhoods are highly inventive in finding creative ways to satisfy their urge to play.

### ARCA

ARCA is a Brazilian NGO dedicated to informal teaching approaches for children and young adults ages 6 to 18 who live in the slums (favelas) amid high-risk situations. In the Brazilian favelas, unemployment rates are high, schools are unable to provide support to students; and crime, drugs and armed violence are rampant. Providing education about sports and games serves to reinforce self-esteem and social values that help them build a life and make their community function better.

ARCA runs an intensive programme for children and young adults in two slum neighbourhoods, has opened community centres in each of them and reinforces the educational role of parents and schools. In both neighbourhoods, sports and games further the cognitive and social/emotional development of the target group. Values that improve the employment prospects of the target group are pivotal in these efforts.

ARCA also features a programme of sports and games that moves to a different slum neighbourhood every week and highlights sports and games as the right of all children. In both programmes ARCA supports hundreds of children by raising their awareness of social values and citizenship, tries to improve the employment prospects of young adults, enhances the parental role of many parents and enriches neighbourhood activities.

The rights of young adults and their surroundings are also brought to the attention of municipal and other authorities, along with proposals for improvement. ARCA runs a VW Sports van, which is filled with useful equipment for sports and games. This is a fast, convenient way to reach out to the target group. In summary, the preventive approach of ARCA provides young adults and their parents with the inspiration and means to break out of the downward spiral of poverty, drugs and violence.

### Capacity building

ARCA is fully involved in capacity-building and offers courses, both for ARCA staff members and for children and their parents in the districts where ARCA operates. The young adults at the surf school, for example, learned kite surfing last year and are now

using this knowledge to teach tourists. In child-rearing workshops, parents are offered skills to enhance their parental roles.

## Method

ARCA's method is generally as follows:

First stage - three studies are conducted at the start of a project:

- one to demonstrate the needs and opportunities for a project within a slum neighbourhood
- one to explore opportunities for cultivating foundations for the project
- and one to assess the initial situation in the areas where the project is expected to contribute.

Second stage: getting the project off the ground

Third stage:

educating assistant sports trainers, young adults from the neighbourhood who attend a course with a view toward teaching these classes in the neighbourhood themselves later on setting up courses to improve the employment prospects of young adults; remaining involved in sports is compulsory forming child-rearing support centres to advise parents about issues related to raising their children working with the schools to remain abreast of the school performance of the children and young adults.

In this overall context, the principle of development with the community prevails over the principle of development for the community.

Additional information and contact data appear on [www.todos.nl](http://www.todos.nl) and [www.arcafortaleza.org.br](http://www.arcafortaleza.org.br)

## Lessons learned

- The quality of an organisation depends on their people. In the past year, ARCA has commissioned a special agency to recruit people for positions within the organisation.
- Try to involve the neighbourhood in the activities from the outset.
- Carefully plan each new initiative. Avoid impulsive actions. Use a logical framework.
- Consider whether the initiative fits with the vision and mission of your organisation.