



Holiday Camp Report – April 2017

by
**United Through Sport for
Go Ahead**





Reporting Dates: 10th to 13th April 2017

Location: Schauderville, Port Elizabeth

United Through Sport
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Summary

During the second week of the April holiday, United Through Sport conducted a Holiday Camp for children to participate in. This holiday camp is one of the four holiday camps organized in collaboration with Go Ahead. This partnership has been going on since 2010. The purpose of the holiday camps is to reach the kids during the period in which they get exposed to risky situations. Due to the lack of resources in the townships, most parents are unable to keep the children entertained in safe environments over the school holidays, and as a result the children can find other means of entertaining themselves. It is particularly over these school holiday periods that children, specifically teenagers, are exposed to at-risk behaviors and negative influences from peers, such as crime, drug and alcohol abuse and child abuse, hence the need to provide a safe environment for the children to play and learn.

In the second week of the April holiday, from the 10th until the 13th of April, UTS has held a holiday camp at the Moore Dike Field in Schauderville. Schauderville is an inner city neighborhood made up of a disadvantaged 'coloured' population. The area is renowned for drug abuse and linked to this, gang violence. It is also a hot spot for teenage pregnancy. This is because the children get bored during holidays and try and entertain themselves. The holiday camp makes sure the kids are occupied during these times. Also life skills is a part of the Holiday Camp, which addresses the struggles the kids endure like dealing with a lot of violence, sexual education and self-confidence.

The program was organized by UTS with the financial support of Go Ahead. The setup of this holiday camp was to invite four schools whom each bring four sports teams (football, rugby,



netball and hockey). Each team would consist of 10 kids, age between 10-12 years old, which adds up to a total of 160 kids which would participate in the camp.

Unfortunately the targeted number of participants (150) was not quite reached during the week. The total number of children reached was 147 (including children from the crèche) children. The age range of the participants was between 8-15 years old, meaning that the age difference was larger than expected. Dealing with these variable factors is always part of the difficulty of running out of school programmes as the number of children and age ranges can never be predicted, especially when working in a new area.

Setup of the camp

The holiday camp consisted of five different activities: football, rugby, netball, hockey and life skills. Within the sports coaching the children got taught how to pass, dribble, shoot and what tactics come into play. Fair play and teamwork were the most important aspects during every drill and game. But mostly the holiday camp was to make sure the kids had fun. For the first three days every team attended to all five activities. This way the kids don't only focus on their favorite sport but also get coaching in different sports, developing their motor skills and getting them out of their comfort zone. With the life skills the kids also got educated in social problems specific to their age and environment. The topics which have been discussed are rights, choices and communication. With rights they discussed the rights every single person has and the way you should handle those rights. An example the kids learned was that every person has a right to eat, but when you do make sure you abuse that right by throwing food away. Choices was all about being serious when making a choice and think it through because every choice you make has its consequences. Just like making a choice to smoke has a lot of negative consequences. The third one is communication. This was about the way you should communicate with people around you; in a kind and respectful way. On the fourth and last day a tournament day was organized for the schools to compete against each other, every team practiced their own sport against the teams from the other three schools.

Across the road from the sports field is a crèche for neglected children from the area. These are children between the age of two and six years old. We decided to incorporate these children into the programme also as we had some spare volunteers and equipment, so for two hours each day we conducted a special programme of informal sports skills and gross motor development with a total of 36 children in this age group. This programme was really appreciated by the young children and the carers at the crèche who are very understaffed and as a result the children rarely get access to physical activity and young, active and passionate coaches.

For conducting the camp eight UTS staff members and 22 international volunteers were available. We also had the pleasure of receiving assistance from a volunteer from Go Ahead; Michael Cordes. He helped out with coaching one of the teams during the week and was very helpful during the running of the camp. We were very happy to have him with us during the holiday camp and he added a lot of value



to the volunteer group during the week. Michael also arranged a big donation of soccer jerseys from Germany that we could use as prizes at the end of the week for all of the camp participants.

Every team of kids had one or two personal coaches to coach them and make sure every group was on the right place. Every sport had two coaches to conduct the drills and the games. This way every group got a lot of personal attention throughout the camp and the sports are taken care of by sport specific coaches. At the end of the tournament day we chose not to give prizes for the winning teams because the camp was not about winning but rather about the positivity of participation. There were four main prizes, one for the most dedicated player of each sport: a football for football, a rugby ball for rugby, a netball for netball and a hockey stick with ball for hockey. After these prizes there was a big surprise for the children. Every kid got a football jersey which Go Ahead achieved through fundraising. The kids were very excited to receive the jersey since this is a very big thing for them. Most of the children do not have much sports kit to play in, so to receive a proper football jersey was a big moment. They immediately put them on and showed them to everyone who would look.

Challenges

To avoid some challenges UTS experienced with other holiday camps the decision was made to make the holiday camp a closed event, just for the schools which got invited. Unfortunately also this way of organizing the camp had its flaws. For the planning and preparations it was perfect because teams, timetables and schemes could be made. But a big part of the teams which were invited didn't show up. The fluctuation and lack of participants, was mostly due to the poor weather during the week, as when the weather is bad, the children tend to not come outside. During the camp itself the organization had to put in a lot of effort to make sure the teams were big enough to properly run the camp. Kids who came out of curiosity were allowed to join in teams which weren't complete or completely not there. For the first three days this worked fairly well. But for the tournament day this was a big challenge. It was impossible to predict what number of kids would be there so the whole tournament had to be managed on the day itself. This didn't go as quick as hoped which meant that fewer games could be played. Eventually, after quick management on the spot, the day was on track and the kids had a lot of fun. This meant that the organization of the camp overall was challenging and did not function entirely as planned but ultimately the children who participated still had a great time and learned a lot.

Conclusion

To conclude, the holiday camp was a success. The kids had a lot of fun at the holiday camp, which was one of the goals. They developed their skills within football, rugby, hockey and netball through the broad variety of exercises, the personal coaching of the volunteers and the practicing during the matches. This also improved the childrens self esteem and emotional well being during the week as they



received a lot of personal attention. The coaching was focused on the mental aspect of the sport like dealing with losing, working together to achieve a common goal and having respect for others. The life skill coaching has made a big impact on the kids because it confronts them with the difficult situations they experience every single day, helping them to deal with them or even avoid it. The holiday camp started as an initiative to make sure children don't get involved with bad influences or negative situations, and this holiday camp has done that in an educational but mostly very fun way.











