



Sport opens school doors to children with disabilities

Before the 2016 Paralympics, FC Barcelona, UNICEF and the Rodrigo Mendes Institute highlight the importance of ensuring the right to sport and education for all children.

Guaranteeing the right of children with disabilities to learn is the goal of the project Open Doors to Inclusion – Inclusive Physical Education, which begins its third edition in 16 Brazilian cities. Conducted by the Rodrigo Mendes Institute in partnership with UNICEF and with the support of the FC Barcelona Foundation, the initiative involves about 500 public school professionals. The meetings with educators have started, and the activities take place until the end of this year. Participants in the new edition of the initiative include the following States' capitals: Belém, Belo Horizonte, Brasilia, Cuiaba, Curitiba, Fortaleza, Maceio, Manaus, Natal, Porto Alegre, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Sao Luis and Sao Paulo, and Belford Roxo, a municipality from the State of Rio de Janeiro.

"Through sport and play, we want to promote the right of children with disabilities to be in school, learn, and develop with others," emphasised Rodrigo Fonseca, the Sport for Development specialist to UNICEF Brazil. "We believe that this year in which the Paralympics take place in Brazil, we have further incentive to ensure that sport is part of the life of every child," he added.

During the project, the participants of Open Doors to Inclusion are encouraged to rethink the physical education classes at their schools by creating new activities, tailoring materials, and overcoming prejudices. By assessing the situation of each school, professionals create new educational proposals and exchange experiences with each other.

Since 2013, the project has involved 782 teachers, school managers and technicians of Municipal Education Secretariats. In all, nearly 60,000 students were impacted. "In different cities, we find very exciting and motivational results. Often, from the change in physical education classes, we have managed to change the way the whole school understand and relate to human differences, overcoming inequalities", added Rodrigo Hübner Mendes, superintendent of the Rodrigo Mendes Institute.

With the certainty that these practices can be expanded and reinvented by other schools, a guide to inclusive physical education practices drawn from the experiences of the participants will be released later this semester.

Further information: <http://institutorodrigomendes.org.br/portas-abertas/>

Information for the press

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