

Life and Peace Project

Introduction

Initially this project is directed towards children and teenagers between the ages of five and 18 though currently we are expanding our mission to work with adults as well, including the elderly, teaching them the benefit of this sport.

The project contains programs of intervention and prevention of drug addiction and crime for children and young people, orienting them and recuperating their self-esteem so that they adopt good morals and so that they can find a place in their homes and in society. We also concern ourselves with how to provide numerous people with a basic level of nutritional support and basic moral principles and social norms of good behavior within the legal framework of a society organized by and respectful of human rights.

Our philosophy

As a martial art, apart from the physical and technical development, the group Capoeira Colombia has a moral and philosophical base which differentiates it from other sports and recreational activities. The practice of Capoeira entails a way of life, a permanent attitude which is taught in the studio and becomes part of the daily life of the Capoeirista, being evident in all of their actions.

Our philosophy is based on five principals:

Courtesy
Integrity
Perseverance
Self Control
Spirituality

Capoeira inculcates moral values that have been lost in our society, such as respect for one's elders, love of nature and our country. Capoeira has been oriented with the aim of making better human beings, and it is wrong to think that it is about attacking other people. On the contrary our main purpose is to help to create a more peaceful world with justice and equality.

Historical context

Capoeira is a cultural and sports activity that has been maintained through the years and has been a strong and popular face of Brazil (as much as soccer). It was among the black slaves that Capoeira began to develop, to be used in disguise as a form of struggle and resistance as they did not possess arms that they could use against plantation owners and foremen on the farms. With the flight into the *kilombos* (settlements by outlaws slaves) blacks actually began to use Capoeira as a vital instrument for fighting against the life of oppression and slavery.

With the enactment of the Aurea Law blacks migrated to large urban centers starting a new form of struggle for survival in the cities where they were discriminated against and

marginalized. There, they had no alternative but to serve as bodyguards for the powerful of the era and in some cases formed rebel group called *maltsas*.

Despite these difficulties blacks continued to maintain their traditions and expressions within some cultural activities (e.g. *maculele*, an African dance with machetes and *batuque* a form of melee fighting).

Capoeira remained present in all its enchanting beauty and pride to anyone who attended Capoeira demonstrations and gatherings known as *rodas* (wheel or circle of Capoeiristas where they practice their martial skill and technique). On this issue it is worth mentioning the states of Rio de Janeiro, Bahia and Pernambuco, which are together the home of these traditional cultural events that today are widespread throughout the world.

The development of Capoeira throughout its history was subject to a sequential order through the mid thirties when it experienced its great changes. At this time it was being practiced in schools (suitable for this purpose) while people continued to attend the *rodas*, the very popular street exhibitions.

Capoeira was putting aside its marginalization along with the many cultural events that president Getulio Vargas freed at that time. Even Law 487 prohibiting Capoeira was annulled. This decree was in the penal code under the following language: "... It is forbidden to practice the exercises of skill and bodily agility in the streets and public squares commonly called Capoeira under penalty of imprisonment for 2-6 months." The law was lifted and Capoeira took on new directions, with great acceptance in the various segments of society and in all states of Brazil.

It also began to be practiced in several countries, in institutions of learning. It is true that Capoeira is done with a basis in theory, but it is in *rodas* where the practice of it lives, as they were and continue to be the best setting to provide exchange with other Capoeiristas (from beginner to master), and this practice in the *rodas* is the purest form of understanding and living in the world of Capoeira.

Objectives

Based on this history we can highlight the fact that Capoeira contains all the power of developing values in youth and adults, as education, culture, sport and study are the best tools for forming useful members of our society. Moreover it is also important to note that in a suitable setting we can get the most benefit from our classes.

Support staff (Monitors)

For running our workshops we have trained staff in all areas of Capoeira and the support of graduates of the group Capoeira Colombia which guarantees the same quality in all classes.

Part II

Classes in Action

To understand Capoeira as a means of education it is necessary to take a brief look at our martial art and launch an attentive and humble eye towards people who we would like to integrate into our group by visiting the places where almost no one knows about this unique Latino martial art.

They are now also the focus of our interest!

We want members to express their knowledge by saying what they already know and what want to know about Capoeira, life, growing as people, loving, suffering, smiling and berimbau playing.

Members and dialogue

Since many people tend to be charming, intelligent and complex as an *Angolero* (practitioner of the oldest style of Capoeira) we might be relaxed or confused, thinking that the athlete will learn by playing with martial arts. As a Capoeirista and educator I think that in order to work with our children and youth, skill, knowledge, and even the Don are essential to achieve a good dialogue and communication. It may seem easy, but it is not. We know that for a dialogue at least two people are required, but two Capoeiristas can make a horrible *jogo* because they simply can not communicate through their physical actions, whereas good Capoeiristas can not be lacking either the technique or the knowledge essential for a good dialogue. A teacher who fails to exchange ideas with his or her students is far from reaching a high level and thereby becoming a good educator. It is necessary to know how to speak, hear and always be willing to talk while respecting others without feeling inferior or superior.

Games and activities

The energy which is transmitted from teacher to pupil is very important, as is the desire to convey positivity towards others, because if we do not radiate our philosophy, everything would become a big mess and nobody would understand what others are talking about, which would be ignoring what is outlined above.

Our language will be implemented in a clear way through games, integrations, skits, visual arts, music and lots of human feeling, which is important for the development of our classes. All the more important is knowing what is taught in each class – why and for what –as well as their characteristics and objectives.

Applied Education

It is important to note that the teacher is familiar with the activities and that s/he likes to teach via whatever will convey this appreciation to others, making sure that each lesson is well explained and supported.

Whom to Teach?

We will take into account that not all activities are suitable for all people, and thus we will note each student's progress, skills, interest, discipline, and behavior in relation to the group

(agitated, calm, united, aggressive, etc.). Through this we will know more about their social, economic and psychological level.

For What?

The answer to this question is composed of the objectives that the teacher wants to achieve through this project, and we realize that the first things that the teacher will think of are the activities with whom s/he will be introduced to the group.

The question of “For What?” is of great importance.

An excellent activity can be very pleasant in theory, but if it is not appropriate the group it can cause big problems, hence the importance of respecting the rules of the group.

Where to use our work plan

As already explained the space must be suitable for the proposed activity, and it is important that the materials required in each class be present, that the safety of the students be prioritized, and that the use of materials that may cause cuts, injuries and anything that might produce irritation or allergy be avoided. Anywhere we work, by using Capoeira as an activity we will have as an objective to develop in each person their own potential, self-esteem and confidence, encouraging them in their development in this case by the sport of Capoeira.

Medium term

We want to go to schools, involving students in our art by way of classes and lectures (a class devoted especially to Capoeira) and culture in general using as media: theater, books, screenings, classes and practices and so on. We will also use lessons in singing and playing instruments with the thought of sensitizing every member to the importance of folklore and music.

Long term

We wish to give our members the opportunity to get professionally involved in the area of Capoeira, training as Masters or Instructors who can do anything from make instruments to giving lectures. In this field, they will then acquire a possibility of a form of livelihood, recovering or keeping our students away from the scourge of drug addiction and crime that unfortunately afflicts our country.

Infrastructure

For the optimal development of our project it is important to have a basic infrastructure, which consists of having components necessary for achieving our objectives.

Materials

For a class to be excellent it needs the following tools:

-*berimbaus* (composed of a wooden arc and sounding board, it commands the pace of Capoeira. They can come in categories of *gunga*, *medio*, and *viola*.)

-*atabaques* (a drum of African origin which is necessary within the battery of Capoeira and in teaching dance, *toques* and Afro-Brazilian culture)

-*pandeiro* (a special tambourine which develops agile hands and an especially great auditory sense)

-*agogo* (African bell which accompanies 92% of Brazilian and African rhythms and music)

Training locale

The location should be spacious and have adequate facilities for the group help in its maintenance, according to the rules of hygiene and health, so that our members understand the importance of caring for and preserving supplies and the facility itself.

Creativity

It is important that the teacher and the monitors give free rein to their creativity and ingenuity, always developing new and better ways of teaching, encouraging their students through music, singing and bodily expression.

The form of the classes

Classes take place according to the rules that have been crafted by the teacher and upon satisfaction of these conditions, the physical work can be started in a disciplined, harmonious, and pleasant way.

-At the start of class: begin with stretching the body to move gradually from a resting state to a state of physical work.

-In the second part: Move from warm-up to martial exercises conducted via the movements of Capoeira (until calm returns at the end)

-In the last stage: we will use activities that are not very intense but require a good level of breathing and elasticity.

Bodily training

This phase contains exercises and activities that aim to teach gaining flexibility, agility, speed, balance, psychomotor coordination, cardio-respiratory capacity, strength, balance and rhythm, and the incorporation of natural gymnastics helps that the classes to be even more attractive.

Fundamentals

Fundamentals are the elements that make up a certain activity.

In the case of Capoeira we can divide them into three groups:

1. Fundamentals of martial arts:

Ginga (rocking back and forth)

Beating (with feet, hands etc.).

Openings and retreats (tactical positions of the body)

Defenses and dodges (techniques of blocking and evading blows etc.)

Acrobatics (complex movements to unsettle the opponent.)

2. Cultural fundamentals:

History of Capoeira.

Famous Capoeiristas

Old *mestres* (maestros)

Important rituals and traditions

3. Rhythmic foundations:

Instruments

Songs

Toques (*berimbau* rhythm)

Dances.

By the end of the class we will lead breathing exercises for relaxation and making the body return to its resting state, so that they will assume, full of energy and harmony, their normal activities in optimal conditions.

Presentations and events

Our group also prepares individuals to work in groups as artists for shows such as:

Samba shows

Capoeira shows

Private exhibitions

Exhibitions for public events

Courses in self defense

Classes in dance, Portuguese, percussion, etc.

Besides this, our group participates in Capoeira sporting events at national and international levels, representing our country and our institution.

Sincerely, Capoeira Colombia