Virtual Spaces

Activity Box 3.5
Module 3: Different VENUES

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Key Facts

- Some say that there will be more people watching esports than the NBA in 2022 (Goldman & Sachs study) (136)
- Esports in 2019 generated 433 million viewers (137)
- There are over 7,950,000,000 mobile phones in the world, which is more than the total population (139)
- Internet users are growing at an annual rate of 5.7 percent, equating to an average of over 700,000 new users each day (139)
- Over 94 % of young people in the EU (16 to 27) used the internet daily, 9 out of 10 accessed the internet from cell phones when away from home or work (138)

Specific Virtual Venues this Activity Box applies to:

All devices and technologies with the capacity to replace traditional venues:

Esports and gaming
- Conventional mainstream Sport played virtually (e.g., EA FIFA 21)
- Video games that permit physical activity (e.g., Wii)

Gamification
- Cycling simulators
- Support devices (e.g., Dribble up, which is a smart soccer ball)
- Augmented and virtual reality devices (e.g., Hado)

Apps
- Work out routines
- Finding players/coordinating casual pick-up games
- Online solutions

Social media
- Tik Tok challenges
- Youtube tutorials

Why is it so important

Contribution

- In times of crisis (pandemic, extreme weathers, among others), the use of technology is an important alternative to promote Sport
- Virtual resources such as Esports are relevant for finding new ways to engage with potential Sport club members, especially youth (136)

- Although not every Esport may contribute to increasing physical activity it may bring other benefits associated to mental wellbeing
- Innovation of Sport (For All & For Development) ranges from new sporting methodologies to unique new fundraising mechanics and alternative delivery models (137)
- Esports can be the "hook" to disseminate messages of physical activity promotion
- Esports and gaming are popular as it opens the possibility create a 100% level playing field where for instance, women can compete equally against men (140)

International endorsement

EU WORK PLAN 2021-2024
Socio-economic and environmental dimensions of Sport should focus on innovation and digitalization in every dimension and on all levels of the Sport sector (including the local Sport clubs)

Barriers to Sport that should be overcome

- Technology, for example, simulators or augmented reality, has high costs and also require expensive accessories
- Connectivity also has costs and there are areas with limited coverage
- As most of these innovations are recent, there is a lack of knowledge of the vast possibilities (free and paid) to have access to Sport and physical activity
- Scepticism in the effects these resources may produce

Tips and key success factors

Virtual solutions and well-being
- Technology should be encouraged insomuch the resources create well-being, both mental and physical. If not, its application remains on a leisure level.
- Virtual resources should be used as complement to normal physical activities. Conventional forms of Sport such as trekking, swimming, participating in group Sport should be encouraged at the same level.

Preventing injuries and other damages associated with high exposure to virtual/mobile devices
- Postural care: it is recommended to use gamer "chairs" and other ergonometric criteria
- Warm-up: It is also important to include warm-up routines especially in neck, fingers and legs
- Eyes: Find adequate times of exposure in screens and use when possible
- Wrists: can be affected in case of long exposure to electronic devices

Events

- When planning a virtual Sport event, consider the technical capacities that may be required as organiser and also for users, e.g., operative system, connectivity, hardware costs, etc.
- When thinking about these events is recommendable to also offer physical activities

Other tips:

- As already occurs, ISO should increase efforts towards creating virtual settings for each Sport. This may include: Egames, simulators, exchange with other fans
- Managers interested in the increase of virtual Sport should prevent targeting children
- When choosing a device that replaces a venue (e.g., cycling simulator) remember that technology evolves fast

Available Resources

- Cycling simulators. Click Here
- Zwift. Click Here
- 5 best apps to find gaming friends instantly. Click Here
- Find Me Football Easy Soccer Game Planner. Click Here
- The Best Fitness and Exercise Apps of 2021. Click Here
- Gamification: 9 powerful reasons gamification of Sport matters a lot. Click Here
- Augmented reality. Click HereFree to Play project, Sport potential for social

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Sample Case

Refugees eSports Cup: the first eSports tournament in refugee camps (Libraries Without Borders and the UEFA Foundation for Children)

- The camp is located east of Mafraq and has today 60 000 Syrians who fled from the civil war
- Women, men and children from the camp of Zaatari can connect with the world again, overcome boredom, find the assets to foster their resilience and think about their future.
- Video games, vector of social cohesion.
- By promoting access to Sport, education, information and culture, we are committed to giving everyone the capacity to be autonomous, free and to achieve fulfilment.

More information:
Article covering the project Click Here