

# “IFA’s Methodology Works, It Transforms Lives”: An Overview of Instituto Fazer Acontecer’s Sport 3 Methodology Design and Impact



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The purpose of this research was to explore Instituto Fazer Acontecer’s (IFA) Sport 3 Methodology.

*The research specifically focused on:*

1. The cost-sharing design IFA utilizes for their work in Brazil.
2. The design and key components of IFA’s Sport 3 Methodology.
3. The impact of IFA’s Sport 3 Methodology on youth.

## Data Collection Methods, Participant’s Background, and Overview of IFA



27 semi-structured interviews were conducted with IFA staff members (n=11) and youth who participate in IFA programs (n=17) in **seven municipalities** in the state of Bahia. Staff members included **organizational leadership** (e.g., Executive Director, Institutional Coordinator) and **socioeducators** from IFA municipalities. Youth participants were **ages 12-17**.



IFA’s office headquarters are based in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. The organization currently implements their Sport 3 Methodology in **29 municipalities in the state of Bahia**, mostly in the semi-arid region.



Participants also engaged in photovoice activities, capturing **photos that hold meaning** to them regarding their experiences with the Sport 3 Methodology.

\*This study was approved by The University of Minnesota’s Institutional Review Board (IRB).\*

\*To protect confidentiality, pseudonyms are used in this report.\*

# Key Findings



## **1. IFA as a Mediator Using A Cost- Sharing Design**



## **2. The Design and Adaptability of the Sport 3 Methodology**



## **3. Meeting Youth's Needs Through Teaching Methods**



## **4. The Social Impact of the Sport 3 Methodology**



## **5. Challenges of the Sport 3 Methodology**

# Key Finding #1: IFA as a Mediator Using A Cost-Sharing Design

## “*IFA-Municipality Partnerships*”

- IFA receives funding from a wide array of international and Brazilian donors.
- The organization approaches municipalities in close proximity to each other to offer equipment, uniforms, training, and monitoring and evaluation of the Sport 3 Methodology for youth (approximately 30 youth in each municipality).
- The municipality offers a second class using their own funding to enhance the reach of IFA and also provide the public infrastructure for IFA sessions to take place.
- Socioeducators are trained in the Sport 3 Methodology by IFA.

When we secure funds from somewhere, it's money usually, it's funds that is enough for, like, 3 or 4 municipalities. So **we try to choose other municipalities closer together to make it cheaper, to supervise and monitor.**

(Miguel, leadership staff)

**The cost-sharing design reduces operational costs for IFA and IFA has built a reputation in Bahia to the point that municipalities approach them for partnerships and support.**

For me, it's amazing, is [that] municipalities where **we don't put any classes really, they [are] looking for us**, and then they [municipalities] said, **we want be part of the network**, what do we have to do.

(Pedro, leadership staff)

# Key Finding #1: IFA as a Mediator Using A Cost-Sharing Design

## Socioeducator Training

Once an agreement is made between IFA and municipalities, a two day training session is scheduled to educate socioeducators about the theory behind the Sport 3 Methodology and practice its implementation. The training ensures socioeducators understand:

“What is IFA, what is our strategy, what is our mission, what is our vision. We also tell them about sports education. Because they think that the only thing that exists is sports as we know it, is competitive sport. ”  
(Miguel, leadership staff)

The training emphasizes the use of sport for educational means, which is different compared to traditional sport in Brazil.

Oh, it's possible to work with sports in another way, not the way that you are working now, like a high level competition and championship.  
(Pedro, leadership staff)

**Multiple socioeducators commented that they ‘fell in love’ with the Sport 3 Methodology once receiving training.**

I was hired by the Secretary of Education in 2012-13, and at that time, the Secretary of Education asked a bunch of people who wanted to go to [IFA training location]. That's where we're gonna sleep today, to take part in a training session from IFA, **and then when I arrived at the training session, I just fell in love with IFA's [methodology].**  
(Daniela, socioeducator)



# Key Finding #2: The Design and Adaptability of the Sport 3 Methodology

## *No Competition*

IFA's Sport 3 Methodology goes against traditional forms of sport as based on competition and instead is based on having fun, games, and play.

This reduces pressure on youth to have the technical abilities to 'win' and drives an emphasis on education rather than competition.

The idea of IFA is for them to **just play and have fun without the pressure** that sports many times, give to participants.

(Gabriela, socioeducator)

Because **competition always discriminates** against if you don't have the abilities.

(Afonso, socioeducator)

Having no competition within the Sport 3 Methodology reduces prejudice according to technical abilities and promotes inclusion of all regardless of abilities and identity.

We don't talk about technical abilities. We don't prejudice, **we strengthen whatever they have.**

(Lucas, participant)

Participants reported how, in comparison to traditional sport, the Sport 3 Methodology promotes inclusion of all regardless of athletic abilities and identity.

**Outside of IFA, it's competition, and in IFA, you can make friends.** In IFA, there's no difference between men and women. **Everybody has the same right. Outside, no. It's very competitive.** There's a lot of cursing. IFA's different because of that. You get educated through IFA. **Inside of IFA, you make friends. Outside of IFA, you make enemies.**

(Bernardo, participant)

# Key Finding #2: The Design and Adaptability of the Sport 3 Methodology

## Three Halves

The Sport 3 Methodology has three halves which socioeducators and youth participants partake in during each IFA session.

**1** First Half: Discussion of themes, values, and agreements (rules) that are the focus of the session.

We have a **circle of conversation** where we **debate a theme**, a theme for social value, and then **we build our agreements**. The kids **build their own values for the game**, they don't need to follow the traditional sports rules. After bringing up the agreements, they divide the teams. Always mix between boys and girls.  
(Gabriela, socioeducator)

**2** Second Half: The playing of the sport with the values and rules of the session integrated.

**3** Third Half: A conversation amongst the socioeducator and youth to evaluate whether the rules and values were abided by. Discussions of what was learned takes place and in some cases, points are awarded based on following values and rules.



IFA works with **values**. Before the game, the kids get in agreement with, and after the game, they **evaluate the rules and values that they set forth at the first**. And each one of the participating students **talk about what they learned during the game**.  
(Ana, participant)

# Key Finding #2: The Design and Adaptability of the Sport 3 Methodology

## *Adaptability*

While the Sport 3 Methodology has three halves, socioeducators and youth have the ability to adapt the methodology based on their local context, enabling them to discuss community social issues, histories of their municipality, and to choose which games and sports to play.

How you could use the method, the methodology, in **any context that you may want, regarding culture, regarding place, regarding the situation of the kids.** [...] But at the same time, **allowing the autonomy of each social educator to build upon the methodology**, so that those educators individually have **the freedom to bring extra stuff into the methodology.**

(Francisca, leadership staff)



I have the same autonomy to bring whatever I want to IFA's class, to adapt.  
(Iara, socioeducator)

Having autonomy in the design and content of the Sport 3 Methodology enables socioeducators and youth to prioritize discussions of what is important to them, in their local context.

If there is a issue that is going on in town, this is something that we discuss and we discuss whether this issue can be solved, suggestions to improve it or whatever it is that we are discussing regarding this issue that occurred in town.  
(Carla, participant)

## Key Finding #3: Meeting Youth's Needs Through Teaching Methods

### *Peer Learning and Teaching*

Peer learning and teaching is a vital component of the Sport 3 Methodology. Youth lead sessions, teach each other values and rules, and provide input to socioeducators about content and improvements that can be made for the sessions.

And then as time goes by and **you make friends, you start learning from the friends and we all learn together.**

(Catarina, participant)

**When they [participants] stop the activity and they try to solve the issue. So the one that didn't understand initially start to realize, oh, that's supposed to be that way.**

(Abilo, socioeducator)

Youth feel a sense of agency and amplify their voices by expressing their viewpoints with one another and the socioeducator.

And then at the end of the class, **I always ask everyone, what can we do to improve our class?** And at this moment they have also, at this moment, they've been talking about everything that went on during the first two phases, although in the first moment, in the second moment, **they are also free to express whatever they want to express, regarding the values, regarding the rules.**

(Gabriela, socioeducator)



## Key Finding #3: Meeting Youth's Needs Through Teaching Methods

### Socioeducators as Facilitators

Socioeducators act in sharp contrast to traditional sport authority figures, such as coaches, by acting as a facilitator of the Sport 3 Methodology.

We talk about not being a competitive sports environment, and **they are the protagonists, and I'm here just to help them out.**

(Abilo, socioeducator)

They use a collective approach rather than a 'top-down' structure, guiding conversations but offering youth opportunities to lead, and mediating games and any conflicts only when needed.

Now they're gonna play the game. I'm just watching maybe they're gonna play by themselves. **There's no whistle, no red cards, no yellow cards, easy.** I only intervene when it's extreme, extremely necessary. **If there's problems, they have to resolve the problems themselves.**

(Marcos, socioeducator).

It's collective, it's not top-down approach, it's same-level teaching. They respect the hierarchy and always working as a mediator and not as the owner of universal knowledge. Because the kids always have something to bring to us and I'm always learning. We don't learn in college everything that we know in order to teach the kids, we learn on a daily basis how to deal with the students.

(Flavio, socioeducator)



This approach builds strong relationships between youth and socioeducators, with multiple youth commenting on socioeducators as a parental figure who they trust and discuss personal issues with.

# Key Finding #3: Meeting Youth's Needs Through Teaching Methods

## *IFA Values*

IFA's Sport 3 Methodology is focused on using sport for education, including the teaching of values such as respect, solidarity, cooperation, equality, honesty, commitment, teamwork, and empathy, amongst others depending on the municipality.



Values are built into the three halves of the Sport 3 Methodology, and youth learn such values to apply them within their lives outside of the IFA setting.

**Beyond respect and empathy is caring for each other.** Whenever there is an event at the game that **someone falls, the game stops.**

They [participants] go in a circle. And **they check up on the person that fell to see if everything is okay. And if it's not okay, everybody waits for it to be like resolved.**

And after everything is okay, then they start going back and play.

(Bernardo, participant)

Every time, every class, when they arrive, there's a list of values that they want to talk about. And they sit on a round table but sitting on the floor, where **they discuss the issues, and they choose one value. For each day of the week, they choose three human values to talk about. And the teacher talks about those three values.**

(Isabella, participant)

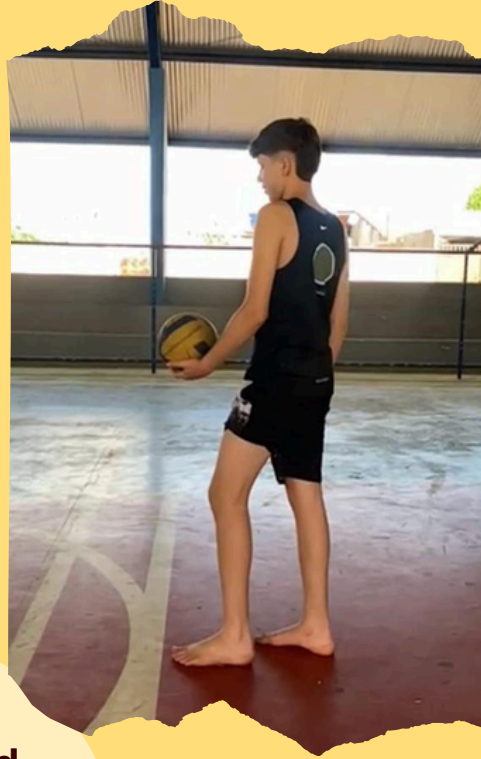
## Key Finding #4: The Social Impact of the Sport 3 Methodology

### *Building Character*

Youth's participation in IFA's Sport 3 Methodology impacted their lives in multiple ways. Both youth participants and socioeducators emphasized that the teaching of values combined with sport supported the building of character in youth.

If I'm a good person in IFA, I'll be a good person outside of IFA. And **if you are a bad person outside of IFA and you come to IFA, you're naturally going to go out of IFA [as good]**. That's why I think **IFA cures people because they come with bad behavior, and they are transformed in good behavior.**

(Isabella, participant)



Building character involves the development of positive traits and values of youth, contributing to how they interact within and outside IFA and in Brazilian society.

What I want from them is that **they become better as a person, that he's a better person for society, that they learn values that are important for them to become men and women.** And I use the sport, I use sport as a tool to achieve this.

(Flavio, socioeducator)

## Key Finding #4: The Social Impact of the Sport 3 Methodology

### ***Social Inclusion and Cohesion***

The Sport 3 Methodology brings together youth with various identities, including boys and girls, Black, White and Mixed races, all of whom hold varied abilities.

You don't have to know anything in sport, they can teach you. **It's a place where you can have fun, joke around, and be who you are. Doesn't matter your size, your race, age, sex, it's a place of inclusion, right? Everyone.**  
(Gabriela, socioeducator)

**The IFA methodology is a methodology of inclusion, not exclusion.**  
(Afonso, socioeducator)

**It's very nice because we know everyone, even if the ones that started it, we didn't know, we end up knowing them. [...] but that's the thing that come to my mind. There's a family feeling.**  
(Ademir, participant)

**The emphasis on fun and play contributes to youth having a sense of belonging and feeling welcome in IFA spaces.**

**And I was able to play sports that in [municipality], there is still a little prejudice for women playing soccer or play sports and IFA is not like that, it includes everyone. So I play with my girlfriends, the boyfriends. And they opened my mind, not only mine, but also the other ones, especially the boys that now are allowing the girls to play.**  
(Carla, participant)

## Key Finding #4: The Social Impact of the Sport 3 Methodology

### Youth Consciousness Raising

The flexibility of IFA's Sport 3 Methodology enables socioeducators and youth to engage in discussion about social issues in their municipalities, including gender inequalities, race, politics, and their own identities.

The Black culture is intrinsically tied to the community. So they talk about their history not only during November, they talk about it every day, there's always occasions to talk about this. And they start at a very young age with kids his age, so they already know everything that went before that.

(Lucas, socioeducator)



And also teaching, not teaching, but **talking to them about politics, because this is something going to be part of their lives.** It is something that they're gonna have to decide in the future that affects their lives. **So they have to know early about politics.**

(Gabriela, socioeducator)

Such discussions raise youth's awareness about current and historical social issues and spur reflection, dialogue, and action.

## Key Finding #5: Challenges of the Sport 3 Methodology

### *Lack of Municipal Support*

There are other projects that the mayor's office shows up to see what's going on and the secretary of education. **But I never saw them come to IFA's activities to give the support that I feel they need from the mayor's office.** Yeah. If it wasn't for **the teachers that sometimes buy stuff with her own money**—and whatever IFA donated in terms of balls and equipment, **the mayor's office never really helped with this type of equipment and materials for the project.**  
(Isabella, participant)

### *Equipment and Facilities*

If you can imagine 30 kids playing indoor soccer twice a week, sometimes **the balls escaped in certain way that hits certain places that it just flattens out. So there is [a] need to be having substitute balls to replace** the ones that gets, not lost, but they get ruined because of the practice.  
(Daniela, socioeducator)

### *Municipalities Feel Distanced From IFA*

**Because it has been so long that [IFA has] been visiting us, we feel like alone.** We feel like left out and **don't know if what we are doing is actually the right way of doing, because there is no supervision of the actual class being held.** I think that the girls that do the supervision could **come here more often, to actually see what we are doing, if we're doing something wrong, to improve it and to correct it.** It's fundamental that the local court, the local assistant, we used to call them monitored. Now it's local system. Come here to help us out, figuring out whether what we are doing is right.  
(Iara, socioeducator)

# Recommendations

## Continue to Promote and Strengthen Context-Driven Adaptions

One of the strengths of the Sport 3 Methodology is having youth and socioeducators decide on the design, games, values, and topics discussed. IFA should continue to train and encourage socioeducators to adapt the Sport 3 Methodology as they see fit for their context.

” I believe that [contextual adaptations] can lead to IFA's growth as an organization, understanding all the different cultures and all different aspects of life that we are interacting with. (Francisca, leadership staff) ”

Multiple participants emphasized adaptations, including new sports (e.g., board games), capoeira, and adding music into IFA sessions.

## Expanding Spots and Pathways for Youth

IFA should consider if there are any municipalities that have capacity to open 5-10 additional spots for youth to join the Sport 3 Methodology. Multiple youth expressed they had friends wanting to join IFA. However, this should be at the discretion of the socioeducator.

” I think there needs [to be] more spots with the new kids, they want to go join even there's no space for new kids. (Carlos, participant) ”

In addition, multiple youth asked for internship opportunities with IFA upon graduation from the Sport 3 Methodology. IFA should consider adding an internship or volunteer opportunity for exemplary youth in municipalities.

# Recommendations

## Consider Increasing Discussions About the History of Municipalities and Social Issues

IFA should consider encouraging socioeducators to bring in teaching and education about municipalities and social issues within the Sport 3 Methodology. While this occurs already in some settings, some youth and socioeducators suggested this could be furthered.

” Maybe talk a little bit more about the municipality. [...] I have seen or heard a little bit of history in the following years of elementary school, but I think at IFA, if it could be more.  
(Davi, participant)

While increasing discussions may be important for some municipalities, other youth and socioeducators felt that IFA was primarily a time for fun and relaxation. IFA therefore should let socioeducators and youth themselves decide the extent to bring in discussions.

## Schedule Monthly or Bi-Monthly Check-in's for Each Municipality

Given challenges raised by participants, IFA should schedule regular check-in meetings with each municipality using Zoom, Whatsapp phone calls, or other remote means. IFA should seek to involve leadership staff in such check-in meetings, to make socioeducators feel that their work is being reviewed from IFA leaders. These check-in meetings should also include representatives of municipalities to discuss lack of support with IFA.

# Acknowledgement

I would like to extend sincere thanks to Michael Jonas, Renato Paes de Andrade, and all of the leadership staff, socioeducators, and youth participants who took part in this research project. I look forward to future opportunities to work together. Thank you for your support and for welcoming me in your lives!

