



Sport-in-a-Box is a decade-long educational program developed by the United Nations Association in Canada to encourage children and youth participation in physical activity, healthy eating and cross-cultural interaction through the universal language of sport. Youth are equipped with leadership and facilitation skills to serve as mentors and role models to community children. Together they learn how sport is a vehicle for physical health and how it builds bridges of understanding among different peoples, communities and countries.

Through **Sport-in-a-Box**, the Edmonton Branch engaged youth from multi-ethnic, Indigenous and underprivileged communities through various local activities, including:

1. **Sport-in-a-Box Days** in partnership with local elementary schools and the [Boys and Girls Big Brothers Big Sisters](#) of Edmonton ([see our Facebook page for recent photos](#));
2. **Workshops** with rural and urban Indigenous youth on healthy living, diversity/inclusion, and leadership development in partnership with the [iHuman Youth Society](#);
3. An **interactive information booth** during the Canadian National Track & Field Championships, TrackTown Classic, and Junior Pan American Games in Edmonton.

UNA-Canada was funded by the [Albert Human Rights Education and Multicultural Fund](#) to expand **Sport-in-a-Box** to youth and communities in Edmonton and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray). UNA-Canada seeks to reach out to like-minded organizations to explore ways **Sport-in-a-Box** can be escalated to engage a cross-section of youth from diverse backgrounds to tackle racism, discrimination and intolerance through sport and experiential learning approaches.

Resources

The United Nations Association in Canada has developed some resources for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and for people interested in engaging youth and their communities in healthy living.

The **Sports UNites Youth Leadership Manual** offers activity ideas to help youth think about healthy eating and living. The **National Sport-in-a-Box Resource Guide** help readers explore healthy living in their communities and provides resources and templates to organize events.



Tips and Tricks – Talking about Racism

Racism and discrimination are tough issues to address. As a peer mentor, authority figure, or role model to youth it is difficult to offer an effective solution to an issue that is so large in scope. The following are a series of tried and tested tips on combating racism and discrimination with youth.

1. Recognize your own implicit bias

It is important to recognize that generalizations are a natural occurrence and biases are socially engrained in all of us. Be honest with your own attitudes to avoid becoming accusatory when incidents may happen.

2. Focus on the bigger issue, rather than the individual

Singling people out often creates a reverse effect on finding a solution. Looking at the larger problem rather than the individual incident not only turns the problem into a learning opportunity, it allows for greater reflection for youth members to reflect and connect with the issue at hand. Example: If one student said a racist comment on the other, try to focus on the negative impacts of discrimination, ask the youth if they have ever felt discrimination against and if they felt it was fair. This encourages youth to use their own realities to relate to issues of racism, and giving them the empathy needed to take ownership in ensuring future fair behaviour.

3. Set up guidelines and take care in creating a safe space

Take constructive steps to show your commitment in creating a safe space. Setting ground rules and organizational policy on how to prevent and address incidents of racism will help hold you accountable for maintaining an inclusive environment.

4. Celebrate diversity

Ignoring differences is not the way to acceptance. Our diversity should be celebrated. Creating positive experiences with different cultures is the best way of replacing negative judgements about them. Within your group, celebrate all the holidays relevant to your youth. Host a potluck with dishes from different cultures. Make diversity fun.

5. Understand Micro-Aggressions

Micro-aggressions are small, many times unintentional, actions which are received as offensive and hurtful. It is important not to minimize or trivialize the feelings of others, even if you do not initially understand why they would be insulted. Actively listen and learn from other people's experiences.

6. Inform yourself on the subject to educate others when incidents arise

Congrats, you are already succeeding in this by being on this webpage! Educating yourself about issues and advocacy surrounding racism will leave you better prepared to confront prejudice with confidence. Targets and as well as offenders may not be knowledgeable about the subject of discrimination and may benefit from the knowledge you share.

Tips and Tricks – Creating a Safe Space

1. Set it in stone!

Create organizational policies that include a commitment to inclusion of minorities and make it part of your mission statement! Emphasize on your website and event invitations that discrimination against minorities will not be tolerated.

Recognize your history. Acknowledge the land on which you walk and play by recognizing the First Nations territory on which your event is being held. Paying respect to the cultural history of our environment is not only important in the current Canadian context, but also sets a positive tone for diversity and inclusion.

2. Be an open door

Regularly give the group an opportunity to anonymously express concerns or tough questions. To do this offer group members a piece of paper to express comments, and require that each member fills something in even if it's to say, "I have no questions or concerns." Tell members they may offer positive comments as well.

3. Look at the big picture

Address the problem as an issue rather than an incident. An issue has the capability of being resolved through a learning experience whereas an incident is seen as a one-time problem. Encourage youth to relate discriminatory comments towards other groups that face discrimination, putting the incident in a different lens may help them relate to the victim. For example, "Isn't saying 'it's because you're black' very much like saying 'it's because you're a girl'?" Emphasis that all types of discrimination (racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, ableism, ethnic discrimination, etc.) are all bad, not just the form that affects us.

4. Staying positive

Encourage educational moments. When incidents happen, try to remain positive about the situation. Rather than to single out the student that delivered a discriminatory remark, recognize that they are a product of environment and upbringing; pointing a finger will not help expand their perspective.

The core of discrimination is making negative generalizations about people, and their opinions and beliefs. Remind youth that their own personality, experiences, talents and beliefs are not defined only by their skin color, sexuality, ability, etc. Therefore, they should not assume the same about others.

5. Promote Diversity

Diversity should be seen as an opportunity to learn rather than a reason to be nervous or fearful. Be sure to celebrate all holidays which apply to your group. Not only is this good practice for inclusion, it also provides a learning opportunity for the other students to gain interest and understanding of the cultural differences of their peers. Hosting potlucks are an excellent way of promoting diversity!

6. Empower youth to be diversity champions!

Task youth to join the cause. When youth have shown leadership in promoting an inclusive environment within their peers, recognize them for it! Nominate that youth member as a

United Nations Association in Canada Diversity Champion. Find the Diversity Champion form builder here!