

Olympic education in museums: An experience report

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Based on the idea that museums are non-formal education places and therefore play an important role in the collective memory of their respective societies, this paper aims to examine the Olympic Education Program realized in the 'Olympics through Media Exhibition' organized by the Qatar Museums Authority departments in Doha, Qatar in 2012.

The phrase 'olympic education' (OE) was first used by Norbert Muller in 1975. Muller based his studies on Pierre de Coubertin's (founder of the modern Olympics) writings. Naul explains that the writings of Coubertin were interpreted by several authors and all these studies were included in the framework of an OE. Thus, the OE became a complex topic used in a multidisciplinary field connecting different areas of knowledge and having the main focus on the Olympic sport, the multiculturalism and the fair play. Based on that, formal and non-formal educational institutions develop programs of OE.

Olympic and sport museums can be considered non-formal educational institutions where OE can be developed through exhibitions. Education in museums can be defined "as a set of values, concepts, knowledge and practices aimed at ensuring the visitor's development; it is connected with the notion of awakening, which aims to arouse curiosity, to lead to questioning and develop the capacity to think". Following this approach, the educational program of the 'Olympics through Media Exhibition' was planned.

The program was based on the values of Qatari society and the Olympic values. The staff was trained to promote interactivity in a dedicated area for children. There the activities included drawing, painting, video-gaming, quizzes, puzzles, guided tours, etc. The exhibition took place during school vacation; therefore an exclusive Holyday Program was organized with more than seventy children of different ages.

The formal teaching of OE is still under development in Qatar. However the non-formal initiatives, such as cultural exhibitions, are already contributing to this process. The places of non-formal education, once they are connected with the local culture, are able to transmit important values from sport to society.