

Youth Empowerment through Sports in Brazil

Tess Jackson
University of Michigan School of Social Work

Location

Brazil is the largest country in South America, and the 5th largest country in the world. It has a population of over 205 Million people, and is considered the 'other melting pot.' The official language is Portuguese, but almost 200 other languages are recognized in various states.

Rio de Janeiro, or The Marvelous City, is the second most populous city in Brazil. Rio is known for its lively night life, beautiful beaches, and the beautiful views from the Christ the Redeemer Statue and Sugarloaf Mountain.



Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Office of Global Activities for giving me the opportunity to do this independent study. I appreciated the hospitality from International Volunteers HQ, as well as Rugby é Nossa Paixão

Agency and Placement

My volunteer placement was with Rugby é Nossa Paixão, a rugby organization with teams of all ages. I observed and participated in youth rugby practices on Ipanema Beach, and in Rocinha, the largest favela in South America.



For the youth teams, psychology students from a local college come and do activities with the teams. These activities are meant to help teach respect, responsibility, teamwork, communication, and help work through conflicts or issues the team is facing.

Advice

Learn Portuguese! Knowing more than the basics is necessary in Brazil, especially when working with people.

Embrace the way of life in Rio, but take extra precautions to stay safe, visitors are susceptible to being robbed in Rio, given the economic climate

Connections

Classroom

SW 650 Community Development

In this course I further examined organizations that empower youth and build community through sports. I was able to draw comparisons, but also see how each community has unique needs.

SW 503 Social Work and Sport

This course showed me the many ways that sports and social work can intersect. It emphasized the importance of youth development training for coaches because millions of youth are engaged in sports every year.

Career

I believe sports can unite communities, and create a positive influence in people's lives. I hope to pursue a career in social work and sport and continue to make sports a great experience for those who participate in them.

