

Blue Bahay: More than a Place to Play

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Abstract

How can we enable disadvantaged youth, whose past and present are unstructured, to (re)build themselves and start thinking about their future? The incredibly effective solution developed by the Delépine Foundation is to let them play! Playing is most often downgraded to a mere form of entertainment. However, it has proven to be essential for education. With a limited budget, the Delépine Foundation (through Aurore Prudent-Roiland) created Blue Bahay, a play center for street and slum children in the Philippines. Through play, young people heal their psychological wounds and increase their resilience. They discover the joy of learning with results that often surpass those of school systems. And they develop their sense of living together, especially through free play.

Keywords: *Blue Bahay, Delépine Foundation Inc., Education, John Dewey, play, play center*

For hope to be born in them,

Let them play.

- Aurore Prudent-Roiland

In the twenty-first century, what should play's role be in the education of the most disadvantaged children? The perceived and accepted emergencies are always health, food, and housing. Without a doubt, these necessities must be met. And education is undeniably an important point of consideration for all donors who support humanitarian actions. Calls for solidarity in the form of child sponsorships thus include, for all large NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) and IGOs (Inter Governmental Organizations), participation in the education of children. But what education does this pertain to? At a time when sustainable development—attempts at managing manmade consequences of our actions toward the planet and for future generations—is reasonably the center of attention, it is rather curious to note that the urgency in helping disadvantaged children focuses on immediate natural needs without sustainable anticipation of what these young adults of the next generation will become. When the focus is on education, the discussion revolves around added aid for schooling in public schools. Moreover, the emergency aid provided is not essential aid.

The reversal of the priority of an emergency and what is essential will highly result in ineffective long-term action with underprivileged children. Why do street children so often run

away from shelters? Why do poor children and adolescents have so much trouble at school—absenteeism, school failure, and low performance levels? What relationship do these young people have with their elders? How do they envisage their participation in the life of the city? Isn't the idleness to which young people and adolescents are driven to, a source of delinquency or at least a source of their inability to play a civic role? In the end, one question brings together the previous ones: How do we allow all these young people with a disorganized past and present to (re)build themselves and start thinking about a future? It is this manner of questioning that led a humanitarian volunteer to propose an innovative project: Blue Bahay, the world's first toy library or play center for street and prison children.

Playing as Learning in Itself

As early as 1995, a small NGO was struggling to develop an unusual project. While all international NGOs directed their donations toward three areas—medicine (hospital and pharmacy), food aid (actions against hunger or malnutrition), and education (construction and renovation of schools for the greatest number of people)—a play center for street children and squat areas was born. This play center is a space that provide games and toys (on site or through loans) as well as advice or training regarding these objects. Open to everyone, these centers aim to give people the opportunity to play, to accompany the games, to spread the playful culture,

and to preserve the game—highlighting the act of playing above everything else.

Blue Bahay was established in 1998 in Manila by Aurore-Prudent Roiland. With the creation of the play center, hundreds of children swiftly came running and even gladly returned! For the founder, the goal was and continues to be children’s education—the main difference from educational structures being the absence of a sign saying “school” posted on the front door. What makes these children regular visitors of a play center with 100 rules of life? These out-of-school children (between 5 and 17 years old) are usually left to their own fate. Some of these children have never even been to school. Yet, they agree to follow many precise rules. Gradually, children transition from sitting on the floor playing games to sitting on a chair creating a new space to listen and respect the rules (of the game) through which they discover colors, numbers, and geometric shapes. But in this play center, they also (re)discover game teams, schedules, timetables, and more.

After a month of life at the center, the children run toward games (such as Monopoly, Master Mind, chess, puzzles, Lego, or a wooden assembly). They succeed in following the rules of the game: respecting each other’s turn, accepting when one is the “loser” but starting a new game anyway, counting points or moves, anticipating an opponent’s moves, being logical, concentrating, and finally, taking care of the materials at the end of the game by putting them away. These are the

things highlighted in the play center. Along with playing, the children are engaged in workshops (periods of practical work or practical discussion on a subject) where they share their experiences or their knowledge. Literate and illiterate children are engaged in activities that require focused attention. Despite not knowing their colors or being labeled as unruly, why do these children spend as much time as possible at the play center, which at the onset imposes rules of politeness, order, and more?

Children at the Blue Bahay learn with a smile following numbers, colors, shapes, and strategies through a simple game of Uno. In this simple game, they are doing math! If you give these children a piece of paper and a pencil to develop the same skills in a classroom, the joy of learning becomes irrelevant for the vast majority. What is true for children is also true for teenagers: Some students favor learning about the inner workings of the United Nation and its general assembly through a lecture. But in order to further understand the full range of political issues, it is more effective to ask each student to represent a country and launch a major public speaking contest for more fruitful results. This role-playing is also commonly implemented among adults in training to understand the dynamics of a company.

Games have often been taken lightly and seen with contempt. “These things were not merely trivial and childish because done by children, they were essential factors in

their growth.”¹ Despite the negative reputation of games, it became evident inside Blue Bahay that the whole educational scheme needs to be reviewed to allow pedagogues and parents to change their discourses and practices. At a school ceremony, a student’s mother expressed to other mothers that she thought it was completely inappropriate for her 5 or 6-year-old son to receive a diploma at the end of the cycle when he only had fun during all those early years at home and at school. This mother and the ladies who nodded along were unaware that the certificate symbolized that her son had just learned the basics of being a good student in higher education. Thanks to the game and to all these playful activities, the child had developed motor skills and effective communication. He had even socialized. His curiosity and imagination were sharpened. And of utmost importance, a desire to continue learning had been aroused. Beyond the mere appearance of a game of solitaire, tag, or dodgeball, it is always about learning individual and collective rules. “There is, then, nothing mysterious or mystical in the discovery made by Plato and remade by Froebel that play is the chief, almost the only, mode of education for the child in the years of later infancy.”² At the play center, you do not hear remarks of: “It’s great! He learns by playing.” There is nothing surprising or great because playing is always learning.

¹ John Dewey, “Froebel’s Educational Principles,” *The Elementary School Record* 1 (June 1900): 146.

² John Dewey, *How We Think* (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1911), 285.

An A Posteriori Comparison

Aurore Prudent-Roiland and a team of specialists, volunteers in the world of education, created this project in 1998 based on numerous references—that did not include John Dewey, one of the proponents of progressive education. The exclusion of Dewey in their project owes to the fact that Dewey’s writings were only recently translated and widely distributed in France. The American philosopher strongly criticized the European philosophical tradition “that throw[s] a fog on things and ordinary experience[s].” In return, he suffered a hint of disdain from the French academic community for many years. Now it has become possible to make comparisons, to the point of noting with surprise that the latest school reforms carried out by the French Ministry of National Education are largely inspired by the ideas of the philosopher of education of Chicago and Columbia University.

Aurore Prudent-Roiland, with her project Blue Bahay, shares several common points with Dewey, making the validity of Dewey’s analyses observable. Like Blue Bahay, the centers created by the foundation are not intended to be schools. However, all the implemented projects have led to a partnership with surrounding public schools. The valorization of the game, as well as the workshops, resonate with the needs of the schools.

Dewey’s mission was to enable young people to grow emotionally, socially, and intellectually in a way that is consistent with their past experiences and current lives. To

enable active and joyful learning, various measures are proposed by the philosopher. “Experience has shown that when children have a chance at physical activities, which bring their natural impulses into play, going to school is a joy, management is less of a burden, and learning is easier.”³ Thus, in the laboratory school, founded by Dewey at the University of Chicago from 1886 to 1904, teachers assumed the role of the group leader and created a caring environment conducive to learning. The school has facilitated self-activity and self-expression by allocating time and resources to enable individual and collective projects to be carried out, particularly in areas outside the classroom: the garden, kitchen, studio, laboratory, and workshop.⁴ Dewey repeatedly emphasized the importance of engaging children.⁵ Today, we easily talk about the importance of stimuli at the beginning of activities to captivate children and motivate them to continue the course with increased interest and concentration: “I believe that these interests are neither to be humored nor repressed. To repress interest is to substitute the adult for the child, and so to weaken intellectual curiosity and alertness, to suppress initiative, and to deaden interest.”⁶

³ John Dewey, “Play and Work in the Curriculum,” in *Democracy and Education*, 228.

⁴ John Dewey, *School of To-morrow*, New York: R. P. Dutton & Co., 1915.

⁵ John Dewey, “The University Elementary School,” *MW1 (The School and Society)* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1976), 318.

⁶ John Dewey, “My Pedagogic Creed,” *The School Journal* LIV, no. 3 (January 16, 1897): 77–80.

Dewey's approach is very similar to what is experienced in the Delépine Foundation's centers. What better way to enable active and joyful learning than through play? The caring environment is understood as that of a loving family or the management team. The staff of volunteers are all close relatives. In the Philippines, the diminutives usually used within families are also used to qualify the different team members. The staff call each other as "Ate" or "Kuya" and "Tito" or "Tita" in place of honorifics of Ma'am and Sir. The children have several projects to keep themselves busy. Sometimes, these projects are requested by their teachers and others are carried out individually or in groups within the toy library. With play, passivity is almost non-existent! This position allows each young person to enter a special dynamic where they are empowered. Here we find a similarity between Dewey's pedagogical thinking built around "occupations"—namely, the practical problems and activities that reproduce typical situations of social life⁷ and the Delépine Foundation's projects that always prioritized games in their centers for street children and detention centers. Through playful activities, children build fields of knowledge. They deploy treasures of imagination that enable their group to overcome practical and technical problems allowing the game to continue.

⁷ Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed," 77-80.

Les Oursins-Enfants des Trottoirs and the Delépine Foundation Inc.

The Blue Bahay would not exist and be in operation without Les Oursins-Enfants des Trottoirs and the Delépine Foundation Inc., two structures for the same project. The French association, Les Oursins-Enfants des Trottoirs (Urchins-Street Kids Association) raises funds mainly through individual donors and events with French-speaking communities in France and several Asian countries. The Delépine Foundation Inc. in the Philippines is the active structure. With a team comprised of approximately fifteen permanent staff and twenty volunteers, a dozen projects have been carried out for the benefit of hundreds of children in the past twenty years. In 2020, about 2,000 children discovered the joy of multiple games and became beneficiaries of the foundation for a month, a year, and even a lifetime of childhood and more. The foundation also sets up sponsorships to facilitate schooling until the university level. Nutrition, construction, social assistance, health, and hygiene programs are also organized. The Delépine Foundation grounds children through games. And when the essentials are in place, emergency actions can be carried out in a profitable way.

The beneficiaries are poor children from the capital's informal settlements (more commonly known as squatter's areas), new poor districts built on the outskirts, and isolated rural areas (Pasay, Parañaque, Makati, Calamba, Ilocos, Basud,

and more). Projects are regularly launched with children in detention centers in Metro Manila. The Delépine Foundation works with the Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Department of Education, from which it obtains the necessary approval for its work.

A Play Center

The play center is a therapeutic, preventive, educational and recreational space. Recreation therapy allows each child to express what they carry within them, their obsessions, their psychological traumas. Play is the expression of his condition, the witness of his development.⁸

The first principle in the centers created by the Delépine Foundation in the Philippines is to create a space in which the child feels happy and can play. In a reality where (underprivileged) children mature too early in life, the foundation's aim is to return to the child his place as a child. This play space is an entire house dedicated to play. It is a room reserved within a public school or a circle drawn on the ground in a field or on a street. Education professionals and volunteers are present to propose materials and activities: construction materials, dolls, balls, board games, musical

⁸ First communication brochure of the project launched in 1998 by the French association Les Oursins-Enfants des trottoirs. Cited as Educational Project (1998).

instruments, plastic arts, dances, theatre, storytelling, “philosophical discussions” (philosophical discussions), and outdoor recreational spaces. All the games are available to allow each child to discover what is currently suitable for the child. Free play is a priority: A child or a group of children can always isolate themselves to give free rein to a game. Adults will not impose a game related to their desires or skills (as is often the case in many NGOs, both to benefit from the skills of this or that adult and to pass the time). Children have the choice to decide on participating in a particular activity. Supervised activities are offered, but prior observation is made to align with the child’s expectations and level of understanding.

Why impose an activity that would not make sense to the child? Sometimes, children in NGOs make the “newbie” volunteer believe that the introduced activities are new to them. For example, the children pretend that they haven’t tried their hand at making bracelets, even when the previous volunteer offered them the exact same activity within the last six months. It should not be up to the children to adapt to volunteers and teams; it should be the other way around. Any activity or game proposed by the staff or a volunteer must be thought of within a more inclusive educational logic. The playful projects are co-constructed by the management, volunteers, and youth.

In its educational project, the foundation places an emphasis on the therapeutic value of play. According to Aurore Prudent-Roiland, playing is “an ideal tool to enable

children with a traumatic past, often unstructured, to rebuild themselves harmoniously. Play is essential to the creation of personality and communication between the child and his or her environment.”⁹ Sociologists and psychologists are called upon to confirm the extent to which play makes it possible to observe the child but above all to give him the means to heal his wounds.¹⁰ This emphasis on the therapeutic aspect of play is explained by the very specific context of play centers.

Play centers are opened by NGOs with limited budgets, but nevertheless manage to address as many children as possible. The best use of these funds lies in this answer:

Children wait for, hope for, and savor the slightest ludic activity or hint of a toy. This is an extremely powerful method for healing these children’s wounds: through games, books, and music, they can escape for a few hours, instead of staying alone in a foundation home, waiting for time to pass, and erase all those years of prostitution, drugs, blows, hunger and violence . . . Individually, what they need is personal attention. Yet, from the point of view of finances, time, and human resources, this is impossible for the Foundations. What is needed then, is [a] global method.¹¹

⁹ Educational project (1998), 11.

¹⁰ Donald W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, (London: Routledge, 2005), Jacques-Marie Lacan, “Note sur L’Enfant.” In *Autres écrits*. (Paris: Seuil, 2001).

¹¹ Educational project (1998), 10.

It is not a question of providing children with activities on a case-by-case basis: an art therapist comes, the children do art therapy; a sportsman proposes football, and the children train; then it is the turn of a musician and everyone starts playing guitar. It is impossible to provide each underprivileged child with a specialist—psychologist, art therapist, remedial teacher, shadow teacher, and others. But NGOs cannot provide such services because of the lack of time and money. This restriction leads to novel and effective remedies. It is from games that a whole development strategy is thought of to integrate the different moments of life, especially the emergencies to which we must respond.

The days are built around the game. And very quickly we started to offer breakfast to the children according to our budgets, then showers according to the availability of water in the centers. We give them the time and opportunity to accomplish their homework before they have to go home where they have no lights and no dictionary. And at the same time, always [*sic*] playful activities are available. Then lunch, then a nap, then other activities.¹²

With a global method, the founder of Les Oursins-Enfants des trottoirs then intends to provide a space in which each

¹² “In the footsteps of humanitarian aid,” interview with Aurore Prudent-Roiland.

child can choose among a variety of games and playful activities that suits them. After two decades of operation, this global method has proved its worth.

The Experience at the Heart of All Learning: Free Play and Unsupervised Play

A child who plays is a child who builds himself!
Each age group corresponds to an [sic] intellectual
and emotional development that must be
exacerbated. Play is an ideal way to achieve this.¹³

All the facets of play are concretely developed when we highlight the dimension of psychological development within the foundation's projects. However, one of the most striking original features of this project is the place given to free play. John Dewey attached great importance to playgrounds where children can express themselves at will and set up their own rules of play. It gives a space to games and activities that allow children to have personal experiences within their own environment. By giving free play a place in Dewey's education, it opened a new pedagogical field.

For some critics, this new pedagogical field is an example of the dangerous drifts of modern pedagogical trends because it focuses too much on education around the child. For Dewey, it is perceived as an opportunity to offer the child the means to appropriate knowledge and to empower himself.

¹³ *Les Oursins-Delépine News* (2017), 5.

However, this position is not widely accepted, and has even been and continues to be questioned. This becomes particularly dangerous when one considers the weight of the activities offered, and the passivity with which children are immersed in for most of their days. The Delépine Foundation Inc. is grounded on the same observation: The child forges his own points of reference through experience and gradually builds up a whole field of knowledge. It is by being active that he discovers and rediscovers himself. In the case of traumatic situations that several underprivileged children are susceptible to, it is through play that they have a chance to heal these psychological wounds. Playing makes resilience easier.

The Delépine Foundation team does not talk about free play, but about non-directed play. It aims to provide children with an appropriate and safe space complete with play equipment at their disposal. What children experience in their daily lives is difficult, harsh, and often violent. Delépine's play centers give children a new framework: a playground where adults are present but only to ensure that their harsh reality does not interfere with their safe space of learning.

Simple benevolent rules are put in place to open a space for free play that considers respect for others and the materials. With the establishment of these rules, games are set up to lead teenagers, very young parents, or a gang leader in a young child to discover an activity, starting with the simplest LEGO and dolls, to reproduce moments of daily life and gain self-confidence as one's imagination unfolds. These games can lead these individuals to discover an activity that allows

them to momentarily escape their reality and to provide a light at the end of a dark tunnel. The very moment one's imagination is let loose is always magical. But it is also a difficult reality to grasp. The imagination is very easily caged in environments where the questions asked only concern immediate situations.

In an emergency, all we do is react. Anticipation disappears and imagination is reduced. It becomes a luxury. Yet anticipation and imagination are two qualities of the mind necessary for any type of reflection. Playful activities develop these qualities, as well as others, that allow the individual to project himself and to finally give birth to hope. Aurore Prudent-Roiland adamantly insists on the hope that appears for her through the different playful activities, especially in free play.

What appears to be paradoxical, supervised but non-directed play, is only a reconfiguration of the freedom experienced in society, as defined by Rousseau in *The Social Contract*.¹⁴ Those who play in groups are quickly conscious of the advantages to be gained from adopting simple and effective rules. They recognize that rules must be observed for them to improve in the game and utilize different skill sets. This allows the group to achieve more with the given activity than a single child can.

¹⁴ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. Maurice Cranston (Penguin: London, 2006).

Outside the school and the family circle, the education acquired within the playgrounds created by the Delépine Foundation brings significant added value. Individualities are respected. The collective is constantly present. Education, which is often, if not exclusively, experienced as constraining children and adolescents, becomes a necessity. Strictly speaking, it is the rules of the games that impose it. Children and adolescents who benefit or have benefited from play spaces find a personal balance that allows them to strive for a worthwhile future.

From Game to Society

The Delépine Foundation is apolitical and non-sectarian. This choice, made from the onset, does not mean a withdrawal of political commitment. On the contrary, it is a position that facilitates tolerance and triggers discussions.

The first example that comes to Aurore Prudent-Roiland's mind when it comes to citizenship is the issue of theft. The temptation to take this or that toy with them is great for children who have no money. However, individual interest immediately gives way to what belongs to the group. Newcomers are led to empowerment through a simple discussion during their arrival. Peer observation and a little team vigilance are enough. Everyone becomes aware of the importance of this good, which only has meaning collectively. In Blue Bahay 2, located in the middle of Parañaque, virtually no games have been stolen in its ten years of activity. There

has never been any deliberate destruction of the equipment, only instances of natural wear and tear. Respecting the different play spaces, as well as the center as a whole (including the toilets or the kitchen), becomes everyone's concern. Caring for others, especially the newcomer who discovers how the center works, is rooted in the children's habits. All these actions and habits stem from sports activities and others that lead young people to co-exist within a group by respecting and enforcing the rules.

Cooperation, punctuality, and honesty require everyone's participation in the life of the center. From storing the equipment to distributing the meals, these actions are carried out collectively in order to benefit the whole group. Punctuality allows group activities to start on time. If a child tries to cheat, the spirit of the game is ruined. Through frequent discussions and planned sharing times, the children quickly understand the wrong in their actions and the necessity of right behavior. Discussions are frequent, and sharing times are planned exactly for this purpose.

Games transform into avenues for children to have a taste of philosophy. The philosophic themes games can tackle are as varied as the opportunities for play—setting rules, preventing and regulating conflict, addressing social issues, creating relationships, and developing independence. These themes tackle issues regularly discussed, such as friendship, love, and freedom. For a range of different ages, the theme of independence is relevant to the child. Departing from a stage

of dependence on a third party and having the ability to take responsibility is key to becoming a good player for a child gradually maturing in life. Discussions, justifications, and arguments become commonplace and give everyone the opportunity to express themselves through games.

The attendance rate at the play center is indicative of the transition from passivity to activity, of renewed motivation, and of the desire to participate in the interests of the group. The children come and go. They regain their childhood place and feel refreshed. But after a few weeks in the centers, the teams lead the children to face their school responsibilities. As the child is capable of coming to the center, he or she must now be capable of going to school on a regular basis. Every time the situation is the same, the children who come to a blue bahay are always the most assiduous in class. It is what we learn every day that allows us to progress. Play centers reactivate this principle. And so, the commitment to school life from the young beneficiaries of the foundation is thus valued in return.

For a good number of young people to enjoy a play center, the rules are always strict but are nevertheless respected. Among the amusing anecdotes, in the beginnings of the Blue Bahay 2 in a district of Parañaque, the meter remained stuck at 40 children for a month. Apparently, some children had spread the rumor that there was no more space available! How many people can the center accommodate? The team's answer was as follows: whether there is a child or 10

teenagers, the quality of learning must remain the same. From a stagnant accommodation of 40 children, it increased to 70, then 100, and even 150 children daily. This way, children self-regulated the volume.

Understanding the Logic of Play Centers

“You have to take the time to set up new activities, teach each child not to destroy, to tidy up, to discover other games, to motivate them, to put them at ease . . . and especially to listen to them even when they are not talking.”¹⁵ The founder reminds us that it is enough to let a child play to know how he is doing. The mere observation of the game choices, the strategies implemented, the use of mimicry or imagination, the stories created—all this—allows us to have a detailed perception of the child’s situation from the psychological point of view, the point of view of psychomotor development, and his or her ability to integrate into group life. Leaving the child alone in front of the games can be very revealing, so accompanying him in his first steps is necessary to establish the rules of life in the center. We must allow the child to gain confidence, to (re)learn to play! This is increasingly obvious if a child has remained in a passive situation for long periods of time. For the child, discovering a game will require significant efforts in the same way that getting out of your comfort zone is challenging.

¹⁵ *Les Oursins-Delépine News* (2017), 5.

Aurore Prudent-Roiland also observed the regular and almost constant repetition of the same phenomenon: Among the children who regularly participated in the play activities of the various centers, several received first honorarium at the end of the school year. Indeed, in the different locations of the play centers—in Manila, in a slum, in the far suburbs of the capital, or in the provinces—the children found reasons to study because of their participation in the various activities in the center! By providing these children with a new motivation, the feeling of belonging to a group, and a new facility to learn, these children are not only having fun at the center but studying better at school.

Through the efforts of countless individuals, the game became so much more than a pastime. The oldest beneficiaries of the foundation are now adults, parents, and individuals who have taken their place in society. Every year a few days filled with fun, laughter, and games are dedicated to them! These various facts and achievements of the children all make the very essence of Aurore Prudent-Roiland's project and foundation tangible. The game is the vector that makes it possible to boost all the other activities. By restoring the child's place as a child, it is then possible to provide effective and sustainable responses to the various emergencies that the group and/or individuals face.

An End in Itself

Playing to play! The game is an end in itself. Even if the play center itself pursues its own goals, it is particularly

interesting to offer children this invaluable opportunity to break out of the cycle of production and utility; to enter a sphere of creation and empowerment. Not giving any other purpose to the game than the game itself is precisely the best way to offer the child the opportunity to experience the game and then to go beyond this single sphere and prepare for individual and social goals.

Creating a place to play is promoting the notion that the best way to learn is to play. The child who also plays builds himself and his future. The game then becomes the best vehicle for empowerment, the ability to define by oneself the rules necessary to become a free man and an active citizen. This evidence is still not reflected in the facts. Play is still perceived by most adults as mere entertainment. Is this a result of a projection made on children, where adults have a habit of playing to distract themselves from their daily lives?

When the play centers were created, Aurore Prudent-Roiland defended a unique project. Her ideas were clear and despite the many reservations about the importance of play in the development of the most disadvantaged children, she was able to create the first play center. The educational, psychological, and pedagogical values are all there. In settings as unique as detention centers, slums, and remote provinces, the game brings all its allure and strength and proves that, if it is entertainment at first sight, it is above all the most formidable way to learn. Not only can it lead to the acquisition of knowledge, but above all, it opens up to the knowledge of being.

More than a Place to Play

A society that knows how to take care of the poorest by educating them gives itself the opportunity to build a quality political system. Considering that play is essential in the child's development for his or her education as a citizen, how can we effectively fight against the extremely limited access to play? The Delépine Foundation Inc. has taken up the challenge of creating play centers for street children in the Philippines. The results of twenty-five years of work show that regulated and free games bring real added value to the harmonious development of the individual and the citizen. Not only do children and adolescents heal psychological wounds on their own through games, but they also regain the desire to learn. The recreational activities offer them the opportunity to become masters of the game and therefore masters of their destiny.

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