



# Sports as an Equal Playground

A COLLECTION OF GOOD PRACTICES AND TOOLS TO FOSTER SOCIAL  
INCLUSION AND EQUALITY IN AND THROUGH YOUTH SPORT ACTIVITIES

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**FOREWORDS**

This publication was produced as part of a project called Sports as an Equal Playground (SPED)\*, which was a joint initiative of four European organizations to encourage social inclusion and equal opportunities in youth sport activities.

The aim of the project was to share good practices and find new ways to engage young people from different cultural backgrounds and with fewer opportunities by using sport as a tool for youth work.

The outcomes of the project include a small survey, a training, two podcast episodes and this manual of good practices.

The main aim of the manual is to introduce examples of good practices—referring to an applied model and a methodology—from different countries to promote social inclusion and equal opportunities in sports.

The manual also includes ideas and thoughts that came to the fore especially during the training but also in some other occasions while carrying out the project.

We expect the manual will offer insights on how to encourage social inclusion, equal opportunities and youth participation in sports, and to guide you to benefit from or use the tools and ideas presented in further developing of your own activities.

This manual is addressed to all interested in promoting social inclusion through sport activities: all types of sport organizations and clubs, trainers, and instructors.

**Youth Academy**

**AICEM**

**Active Youth Association**

**Budapest Association for International Sports**

*October 2022*

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*\*SPED was a 24-month long Erasmus+ Sport Small Collaborative Partnership project carried out in 2021–2022.*



## Introduction

Besides being a tool for promoting health and personal development, sport has proven to be an effective tool for social inclusion. It is a universal element in different cultures and for people around the world. Sport also plays an important role in promoting common European values and increasing intercultural understanding.

By social inclusion we refer to the process of improving the terms of participation, so that everyone—regardless of their background or status—has an equal opportunity to participate in society.

Through sport, it is possible to create and foster a sense of belonging, help people to socialize and boost people's confidence. Sport can promote tolerance, solidarity, inclusiveness and many other European and universal values.

Marginalised and vulnerable groups—such as migrants or people at risk of discrimination—can have an opportunity to interact and integrate with other social groups through sport. Sport can also provide persons with disabilities an opportunity to increase their participation in society.

Additionally, sports can help tackle challenges for example related to socioeconomic obstacles or security. These can include for instance unemployment, unhealthy lifestyles, social exclusion or radicalisation.

The social benefits of sports do not always achieve their full potential. Many marginalized groups are underrepresented amongst both hobbyists and professionals in sports, volunteers and members of committees and governing bodies. This occurs at all levels, whether local, national, or European.



### RECOGNIZING THE CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

In the beginning of the project we carried out a small survey to better identify the needs of the target groups. We also asked the training participants to share their thoughts on what kind of obstacles come to their minds considering social inclusion and equality in sports.

The aim was to increase understanding of 1) what kind of challenges sport instructors or associations do encounter in their daily work and 2) what exactly is needed to foster social inclusion in sports. Below you can find a summary of the challenges and needs, for which (or at least for some of them) the following chapters of the present manual try to respond to.

## 1) WHAT KIND OF CHALLENGES ARE THERE RELATED TO SOCIAL INCLUSION IN SPORTS?

- lack of young people participating in planning the activities
- challenges related to physical accessibility
- lack of support to low-income families
- weak support from parents' part
- gender stereotypes
- gender specific activities
- difficulties in reaching people who live in rural areas
- long/inconvenient distances
- difficulties in including young people with disabilities
- lack of money
- lack of equipment
- mental health issues
- low engagement levels
- covid-19
- lack of skills to engage young people from diverse backgrounds (for example socioeconomic, migrants, LGBTI+, refugees, persons with disabilities, people with special needs)
- language barriers
- lack of emotional or social skills of coaches

## 2) WHAT IS NEEDED TO FOSTER SOCIAL INCLUSION IN SPORTS?

- more sharing of good practices between different actors
- more cooperation between organizations
- deeper knowledge about young people with diverse backgrounds
- trainings on how to face people with special needs
- trainings on how to reach people from different cultural backgrounds or with specific needs
- increased presence of sport ambassadors
- trainings on emotional intelligence
- ideas on how to use non-formal and interactive activities and practices



## Good practices and tools

This chapter introduces examples of good practices and tools—referring to previous projects and their outcomes—to foster social inclusion both in and through youth sport activities. The examples and tools were collected during the project from each of the project partner countries. You can replicate them or apply them as a source of inspiration to promote social inclusion and equal opportunities in your activities.



## ► Finland: Introduced by Hobbies

The project "Introduced by Hobbies" (Harrastaen tutuksi in Finnish) aimed to make free-time activities—including sports—more accessible for young people from immigrant backgrounds.

The project sought to promote their integration to the local community, for example through getting to know the locals and the culture. The idea of the project was to promote two-way integration, inclusion of immigrants, equality and develop inclusive practices in the youth field.

The main product of the project's brainstorming workshops was a unique accessibility manual, which serves as a tool for those who want to be involved in making their free-time activities more open and accessible for everyone. The tools can also be applied for other kinds of services.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

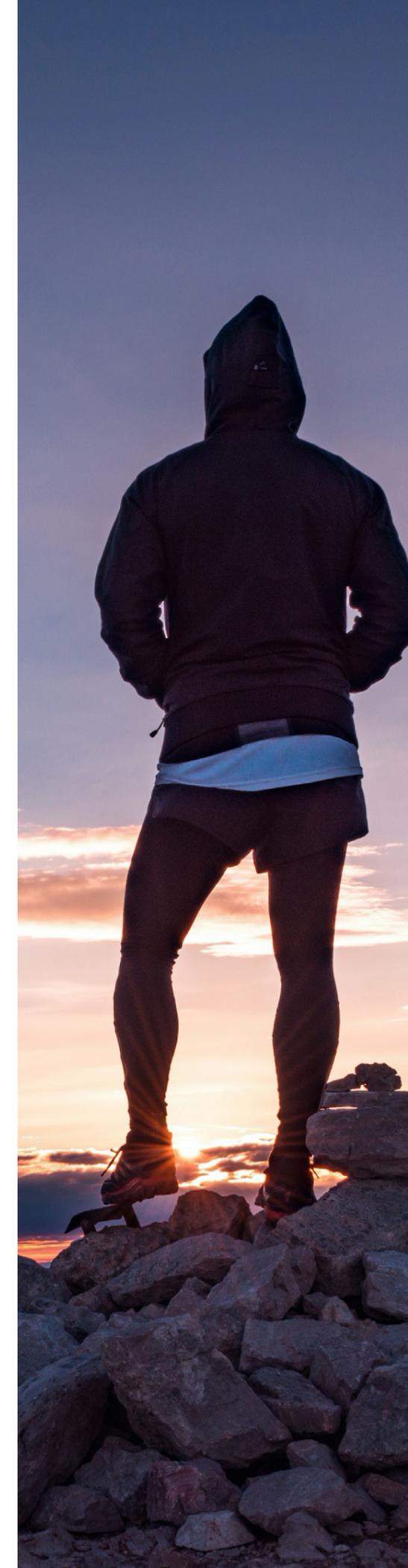
- to identify the needs of young people who have moved to Finland and channel them into the actions of those who organize free-time activities
- to involve new ideas and volunteers in the youth field and support the development of equality and accessibility of their own activities

### ACTIVITIES

- participatory workshops
- trainings
- hobby projects
- modeling the results

### TO WHOM?

- young immigrants looking for free-time activities
- youth 15–29 ages old
- youth clubs, sport clubs, non-profit sector
- workshops carried out in 7 different cities in Finland



## Good practices / tools identified in the project

One of the main outcomes of the project was a manual on inclusive youth free-time activities (Saavutettavan vapaa-ajan toiminnan askeleet in Finnish).

It identifies five obstacles to inclusive youth free-time activities from young immigrants' perspective: lack of knowledge and communication, lack of networks and contacts, socioeconomic obstacles, thresholds related to time and area and insecurity and feelings of discrimination.

Below are the key take-aways of the manual on how to overcome these obstacles:

### LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATION

→ Young people in the area are not aware of all the opportunities available for free-time. What are the adequate channels to reach young people with a migrant or minority background?

#### HOW TO OVERCOME?

- use different languages
- remember diversity in visual communications material
- head on the spot to communicate with young people (eg. schools)
- get in touch and cooperate with NGOs
- visit events where young people spend time
- communicate about your activities also through schools
- invest in clear and high-quality materials
- use plain language and multichannel communication
- produce short videos (eg. to introduce your activities)
- active use of social media channels, for example Instagram



### LACK OF NETWORKS AND CONTACTS

→ It is often a challenge to find the right contacts. Going to an activity without anyone you know feels difficult. There is a lack of tacit knowledge and networks.

#### HOW TO OVERCOME?

- pay attention to the diversity of coaches and instructors and offer support to young people interested in coaching; this lowers the thresholds to participate and strengthens connections with different kinds of families.
- involve people from different backgrounds in developing your activities at all levels; ask the young people in your association for advice and encourage them to develop the activities.
- offer mentorship activities or similar kinds of support

### SOCIOECONOMIC OBSTACLES

→ Lack of both economic and social resources are repeated in the experiences of young people again and again.

#### HOW TO OVERCOME?

- organize low-threshold activities in eg. low-income areas
- make sure it is visible if your activities are free of charge
- communicate your activities also at the municipal level
- arrange free trials for young people to get to know the sport
- contact the municipal youth services and ask for information or support for applying grants
- find out what kind of grants are available to young people
- develop projects in cooperation with other actors
- create a list of free leisure activities in your area

### THRESHOLDS RELATED TO TIME AND AREA

→ Young people have a lot of commitments in life. They have to be at school, attend courses and/or work. Transport connections must be good enough so that participating in free-time activities is possible.

#### HOW TO OVERCOME?

- collect feedback and ideas from young people
- schedule your activities for evenings and weekends or to take place at the school after classes
- locate your activities along good (public) transport connections
- organize joint transports to free-time activities (eg. carpools)



### INSECURITY AND FEELINGS OF DISCRIMINATION

→ Free-time activities lack the means to talk about prejudice and the tools to intervene in exclusion. It would be good to have more awareness and tools.

#### HOW TO OVERCOME?

- coaches and instructors should better understand culturally sensitive activities
- demand/provide training and materials for coaches and instructors
- create a code of conduct together with the group
- pay attention to taking different kind of people into account in planning and carrying out your activities; eg. ask for participants' opinions
- create common guidelines to tackle discrimination
- pay attention to the transparency of everyday activities
- ensure participants know who to contact in case of discrimination/other inconveniences
- offer also non-competitive free-time activities



## ► Lithuania: Sports Together

"Sports Together" was a one-year project initiated in order to encourage collaboration between locals and refugees.

In consequence of the refugee crisis, the Lithuanian media, government and ordinary citizens have voiced concerns about refugees using up "scarce" resources or creating security problems.

Bearing this in mind, the main idea of the project was to reduce prejudices and tackle stereotypes about refugees, as well as to develop a long-term program for refugee integration through sports\*.

*\*Find the original version of the publication here: [Refugee integration through sports: Guidelines for actions, events, methods involving refugees and local youth into sports](#)*

### OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

- to identify good practices for refugee integration through sports in the EU
- to connect local sports organizations and organizations/institutions supporting refugee integration in Lithuania
- to facilitate creation of new initiatives to support refugee integration through sports in Lithuania and beyond
- to train sports and social workers (working with refugees) in Lithuania on how to effectively support the integration of refugees through sports
- to promote cooperation between local youth and refugees

### ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

- researching good practices for refugee integration through sports and creating a replicable methodology
- connecting local sports organizations and organizations/institutions supporting refugee integration to combine their efforts
- trainings for people working in the fields of sports and refugee integration on how to involve refugees in sport activities
- organizing 20 grassroots sport events for refugees and local communities in Lithuania
- running an online competition for young people to create initiatives for refugee integration through sports
- creating guidelines and a recognition badge for organizations promoting refugee integration through sports
- launching an open access platform where all the project results are stored

### TO WHOM?

- refugees (and local communities)





## Good practices / tools identified in the project

### METHODOLOGY GUIDELINES ON REFUGEE INTEGRATION THROUGH SPORTS WITH CONCRETE EXAMPLES

- **Football / basketball / volleyball**

→ Good ways to connect refugees and locals who share a similar interest in the sport. Many people like these sports, thus allowing them to meet, socialize and make friends with people outside their social groups.

- Tip: Small group meetings after each training can strengthen the team spirit and help people get to know each other!

- **Dance**

→ A particularly recommended way to break the ice among shy refugees, as this can also create a space for cultural exchange.

- **Workout and athletics**

→ Based on our experience, it is best to organize a couple of sessions with local sports volunteers, sports clubs and sports communities, and create a long-term collaboration with them so that refugees can have an opportunity to continue practicing independently.

- **Social bowling**

→ Events like this can be used as key elements of social integration programs. They can be organized with the help of social centers that have closer contact with refugees, so that they can be invited by people familiar to them.

- **Table tennis lesson**

→ Table tennis clubs usually offer training for everyone (eg. adults and seniors, women-only, children). Therefore, this can be a great tool to promote equality, women empowerment and social inclusion.

### SPORTS TOGETHER BADGE

- A recognition tool designed for organizations or individuals working towards togetherness and openness for everyone. The criteria to fulfill to get a badge include the following aspects:

1. Employment of refugees
2. Service/product creation for refugees
3. Awareness raising, stereotype breaking, and promoting refugee integration
4. Response to the basic needs of refugees

### SPORTS TOGETHER CONTEST

- The contest participants designed their own sports initiatives to promote refugee integration through sports, and the winner got an award that helped them to implement the initiative. The contest was held to ensure a continuation of refugee integration through sports initiatives.

### WORLD REFUGEE DAY (JUNE 20)

- Held every year, World Refugee Day marks a key moment for the public to show support for refugees and their families. Organizing events especially (but not only) on World Refugee Day is recommendable. These events can benefit both refugees and sports' instructors through expanding their social networks. Social organizations can help foster connecting people with each other during the events.

### OTHER REMARKS FROM THE PROJECT

- Many refugees did not speak fluent English, so we faced some language barriers while carrying out the project.
- It was difficult to get in contact with refugees who live outside reception centers/ other institutional services.
- State-owned institutions were not always willing to cooperate.
- The people who came to the project events were mostly younger men.
- We also faced some challenges related to lack of knowledge about the countries or cultures refugees come from.



## ► Italy: In the field, different but equal

The project "In the field, different but equal" (In Campo Diversi ma Uguali in Italian) aimed to increase respect for gender diversity, tackle gender stereotypes and foster the fight against all forms of gender-based violence.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

- fostering social change
- fighting all types of gender-based violence
- tackling stereotypes related to women and men's roles in sports
- creating communications campaign with high-school students on the topic
- promoting values of respect, acceptance and equality

### ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

- The project consisted of workshops organized in four different Italian high schools.
- The students from these schools were encouraged to reflect on gender-based discrimination and gender-based violence, both inside and outside the world of sport.
- The students also created communications campaigns on the topic.

### TO WHOM?

- youth from 14 to 19 years old in Roma, Sciacca, Florence and Caserta

## Good practices / tools identified in the project

One of the main outcomes of the project was a toolkit\* for educators and parents to address gender issues in sports. During the workshops, the youth identified a number of tips they considered as good practices:

Below are the key take-aways of the manual on how to overcome these obstacles:

### TIPS FOR EDUCATORS FROM THE YOUTH

- advocate for active promotion of sport among young people
- develop new approaches and models to involve young people in sports
- promote the idea that there are no "girls' or boys' sports"
- promote young people's awareness on diversity and its value
- avoid sexualizing sports (and other activities)
- recognize and bring out potential of both males and females, tackle stereotypical gender images in sports
- be also open to discussions with young people and offer them support in difficult situations

### TIPS FOR PARENTS FROM THE YOUTH

- pay attention to listening to young people and their opinions
- create spaces where young people can feel comfortable to express and share their thoughts and fears
- reduce distances in communication to allow a freer dialogue between generations; treat young people as equals
- do not question your children's choices/preferences in the area of sport

\*Find the original version of the publication here: [In campo diversi ma uguali: toolkit per genitori ed educatori \(in Italian\)](#).



#### TIPS TO PROMOTE COMMUNICATION DYNAMICS BETWEEN ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- brainstorm together to define key words such as diversity, discrimination or stereotypes
- use games and group works to promote socialization, collaboration and discussing opinions
- use storytelling to facilitate learning new perspectives
- encourage young people to share their own experiences
- encourage young people to analyze different points of view
- use "role playing" activities in which people have to put themselves in someone else's shoes (lead the participants to explore situations from different points of view and promote empathy)
- problem solving: to present a typical scenario in sport that young people might face to make them reflect on how they would act in those situations
- use audios, videos and other kinds of information and communication technologies
- art activities to make certain themes more appealing and encourage creativity of the participants

#### OTHER TIPS

- always put the participants at the center of the activities, preferably in an interactive manner, so that they actively participate in discussions and content creation
- create a safe space in which participants can ask questions; give possibilities for young people to express themselves
- establish common values and principles to foster the creation of a "shared identity" and a sense of belonging to a group/community
- theory is important but focus on the practical side of trainings too; help participants to recognize competences they acquired/developed
- show confidence: let the participants take responsibility, ensure that they develop/take ownership of processes and are able to also innovate new projects or actions
- remember to give recognition to achievements

#### OTHER REMARKS

- The toolkit also includes a list of films and books for children and for adolescents that can help parents and educators to start a conversation with them on such a delicate and important topic as gender equality.



### ► Hungary: Roma Inclusion through Sports in Europe

RISE was a 18-months long joint initiative of European sport and civil society organizations to tackle discrimination, social exclusion and marginalization of Roma youth.

The project partners included Budapest Association for International Sports (BAIS/Hungary), Together Advancing Common Trust (TAKT/North Macedonia), Champions Factory (Bulgaria), Association for Development, Education and Labour (ADEL/Slovakia) and Scout Society Association (Romania).

Through sport-based educational activities, the project aimed mainly to promote social inclusion, equal opportunities and an increased awareness of the Roma minority and challenges they face.



#### OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

- Promoting social inclusion, equal opportunities and sport-based education for underprivileged young people, especially Roma youngsters
- Raising awareness of the importance of physical activity
- Strengthening the capacities of sport clubs, youth organizations and educational institutions to develop and organize sport-based educational activities for underprivileged people, especially Roma youngsters
- Collecting, classifying and promoting European good practices in the field of social inclusion through sport
- Creating a sport-based educational methodology toolkit\*
- Providing trainers, coaches, youth leaders and NGO staff with the necessary knowledge to carry out sport-based educational interventions to underprivileged target groups

#### ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

- Exchanging good practices
- Promoting sports and careers in sports within the Roma community
- Supporting Roma athletes competing in tournaments
- Providing coaches the necessary skills to organize sports events and sport-based educational activities for Roma youth.

#### TO WHOM?

- Underprivileged youth, especially Roma youngsters, in the project partner countries
- Organizations focusing on the target group

\*Find the original version of the publication here: [Roma Inclusion Through Sport in Europe](#).



#### Good practices / tools identified in the project

- Having locations such as sport facilities for conducting the activities in the regions where Roma people live is highly important and makes the process much easier.
- Building a trustworthy relationship between the organizers and the children is very important and sometimes more effective than the activity itself.
- Including the parents helps them move forward smoothly with their projects.
- The children will always be happy to participate and are excited to be part of such activities.
- Even though sports have been seen as a very effective tool it is obvious that the educational system has to support them as well for overall support.



**During the project, the partners visited some organizations from their countries, had interviews with them and compiled the best practices into one toolkit, including but not limited to:**

THE SPORT CENTRE OF THE NATIONAL ROMA COUNCIL (HUNGARY)

- Sport is a useful tool for empowering young Roma people, it was a guarantee that all the kids would want to participate. However, education was more important. The main output was the values youngsters were taught like discipline, perseverance, and respect for rules.
- Participation in sports can support disadvantaged children to develop their social network, trust others, break out from their isolated environments and show a life perspective.
- Do not try to control the situation fully. By trusting the participants' skills to come up with solutions when facing difficulties, you teach them the right attitude to develop a solution-oriented mindset and leadership skills.
- Do not make the participants feel like they are receiving aid. Instead empower them by making it seem like they are the ones who are volunteering and helping others in need.
- Giving out love to Roma kids had a very big influence. The kids said what they appreciated the most from the camp and team-building sessions was love.
- Knowing your target group beforehand is very important. Learn the cultural differences so you would be able to relate to and understand them better.
- Sport can support those youngsters who struggle with verbal communication. Make sure to give attention to those who face difficulties expressing themselves.

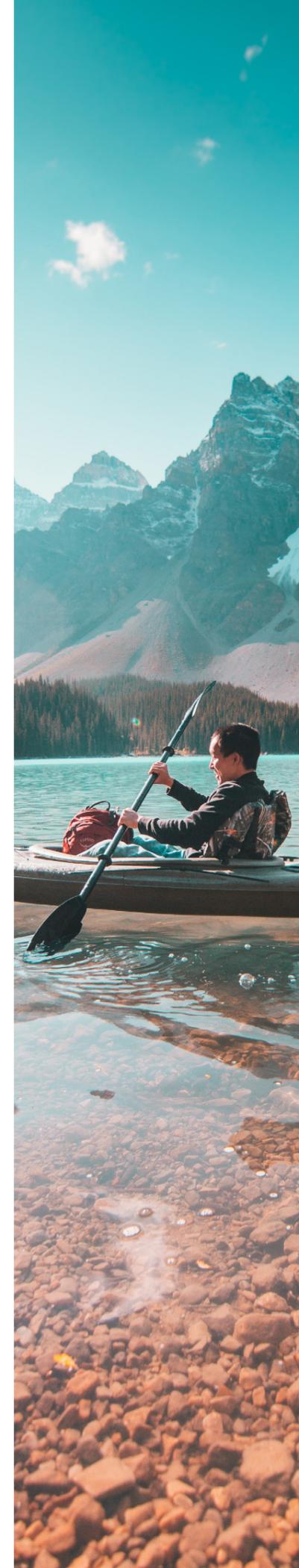
- The challenges encountered while working with Roma youngsters are the same as working with youngsters from poor and vulnerable environments despite their ethnicity. They are not that different, they are just marginalized and need more attention and care.
- Be prepared to connect, your interpersonal sensitivity will be tested, and you will need to listen, understand, and respond to the concerns, interests, and feelings of children and young people for any activity to succeed. Building a trustworthy relationship between the organizer and the children is very important and sometimes more effective than the activity itself.
- The role of parents is very important. Consider planning some meetings with the parents, try to talk to them, and praise their child. Including the parents helps the kids move forward smoothly with the projects.
- Another important factor for the project's success is the cooperation with the people that know the community and the kids. The collaboration with the social workers (mayor, teachers, etc.) helped to reach to kids and access their bubbles
- Lastly, to truly succeed in this project, a lot of patience and hard work are required.

POLICY CENTER FOR ROMA AND MINORITIES (ROMANIA)

- PCRM supports the Roma community through direct intervention, eg. sport activities and alternative education programs for both Roma and other children in underprivileged communities.
- It also creates opportunities for dialogue and sensitization of public opinion on diversity related topics.

PREROD (SLOVAKIA)

- The aim at Prerod (the Slovak organization) is to offer the opportunity and the space for kids from a challenging background to show their talents, skills, abilities, and hobbies through the organization of summer camps, holiday camps, after school spaces and local tournaments.





## Shared patterns and lessons learnt

The previous chapter introduced good practices and tools from previous projects carried out across Europe.

The idea of this chapter is to resume some shared patterns of these projects, as well as some lessons learnt during the project experience of Sports as an Equal Playground. This way we aim to provide some inspiration to support new initiatives to promote social inclusion and equality both in and through sports.

**The following points can serve as a guideline in applying the good practices and tools within your environment, as well as when planning and implementing new actions and projects:**

### DEVELOP THE ACTION/PROJECT TOGETHER WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

- All the projects and good practices presented in the previous chapter were developed and carried out together with young people (from different target groups).
- Offer your support, but let the youth take responsibility. Promotion of participation should be integrated into every stage of developing an action/a project aimed to foster social inclusion and equality. Participation gives the young people a possibility to influence decision making regarding the action/project, as well as experience belonging and a sense of community. By incorporating young people into the process, you can also assure that it fits the needs and desires of your target group.

### PAY ATTENTION TO COMMUNICATION DYNAMICS

- This is strongly related to the previous point and the aim of facing young people (from diverse backgrounds) as social actors and equals, which was highlighted in all the project experiences.
- Concentrate on empowering instead of making the participants feel like they are receiving aid. Pay attention to reciprocity. Find a common language or way of speaking everyone feels comfortable to use.

### PROMOTE A SAFER SPACE

- Despite that the projects and good practices focused on different target groups, they in one way or another all include the idea of promoting a safer space. It refers to a place where no one is discriminated against and everyone can be themselves. The aim is to ensure that people from any background can feel safe, including marginalized people.
- Create and make use of safer space principles in your activity. In the next chapter you can learn more on the concept of safer space and find some practical examples on how to apply it to your activities.

#### COMBINE RAISING AWARENESS AND SPORTS

- All of the projects presented in the previous chapter highlighted the importance of getting to know and increasing knowledge on the target groups. Knowledge reduces uncertainties and misunderstandings, as well as can bring people from diverse backgrounds closer to each other. However, keep in mind that educating others is not a duty for anyone; treat people as individuals per se, not representatives of social groups. We are all different with different kinds of views and opinions.
- It is crucial to start by educating yourself. Try to for example recognize the prejudices/bias you might have against the issues concerned. Find learning opportunities for example about the issues facing your community, the special needs of minorities and terms to use not to be offensive or insensitive.

#### COOPERATE WITH OTHER ACTORS

- All the project examples were carried out with many different partners and stakeholders. It is easier and more efficient to act together, as well as to apply for fundings. Increase the impact by acting together.
- Search for ways to cooperate with other actors and/or associations that are targeting similar issues and audiences. Sometimes it's also good to go creative and think outside of the box. Find common ground and develop ways to respond to the needs concerned.

#### DON'T BE AFRAID TO FAIL

- Keep an open mind. Some of the good practices and tools introduced in the previous chapter may not work if applied directly in different contexts. It does not make them useless.
- Have a mindset of trial and error, conduct experiments and modify practices based on your experiences. Consider failures as learning opportunities
- *Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light bulb whose first attempts at a lightbulb did not work, is quoted to have said "I have not failed. I have just found 1000 ways that won't work." Whether Edison has really said this is not certain, but it can remind us of the importance of experimentation. We hope you find many ways that won't work and eventually many that will!*

## Creating a safer space

The concept of safer space came up on many different occasions and discussions during the project experience of Sports as an Equal Playground, so we decided to dedicate it to a chapter in the manual.

Safer space refers to a place where no one is discriminated against and everyone can be themselves. The aim is to ensure that people from any background can feel safe, including marginalized people.

Safer space—instead of a safe space—implies that no place is ever 100% safe, but together we can aim to make spaces safer than before.

They have become more and more popular in recent years. Many organizations both in the public and private sectors, as well as civil society, make use of some kind of safer space principles in their activities. Their main idea is to increase consciousness, not to be a strict set of rules.

Based on the project experience, so far safer space principles have not been applied much to sports contexts, but their use could be a key in promoting social inclusion also in sports.

Might sound complicated, but in fact applying the concept of safer space in your activities is fairly simple!

## HOW TO CREATE AND IMPLEMENT SAFER SPACE PRINCIPLES?

- You can either use a ready-made model—such as one below\*—and add your own ideas to it or craft entirely new principles together with the participants.
- When everyone is happy with the principles created, write them down and place them in a visible place for everyone to see—time to get creative! It might be helpful to add a brief opening paragraph to explain what are safer space principles and why you wish to use them as a guideline in your activity.
- Read through the document, approve and commit to it as a group. Make sure to leave space for discussion and emphasize everyone's responsibility in implementing the principles.
- Agree together on what to do, if the principles are violated in any way. It can be helpful to name a person whom to contact in case one experiences or witnesses discrimination within the activity.

→ *Tip: Create your own set of safer space principles together with the youth! What kind of principles do they consider as the most important ones?*

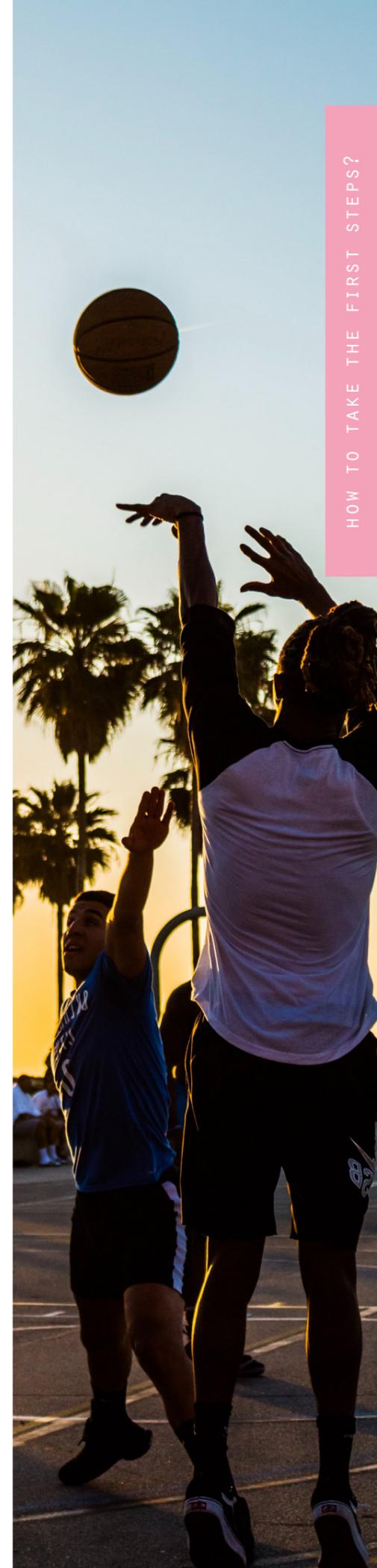
### \*SAFER SPACE PRINCIPLES TYPICALLY INCLUDE GUIDELINES SUCH AS:

- do not make assumptions about anyone
  - eg. related to their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, state of health, ability, religion, culture, socioeconomic position
- try to be aware of your social position in relation to what is being discussed
- engage in a respectful way with speakers, moderators and other audience members
- respect people's personal, physical and emotional boundaries
- give space for everyone to participate (eg. to speak)
- avoid repeating stereotypes (whether positive or negative)
- feel free to provide constructive feedback regarding inappropriate behavior and/or language
- be open to feedback and constructive critique being given to you

## How to take the first steps? Create your own action plan!

Are you eager to innovate and plan new actions to promote social inclusion in or through sports? Starting by creating an action plan can help you detail your goals, critical tasks and their deadlines, the stakeholders and their needs.

One part of the Sports as an Equal Playground project was an international training held in Vilnius, Lithuania. Towards the end of the training, the participants got to apply the shared good practices and tools, as well as all other discussions and learnings, to create their own action plans to innovate on how to take the first steps.





We wish to share the formula used, to also encourage you to apply the good practices and tools and contribute towards making sports as an equal playground:

#### 1. Choose an obstacle and a target group

What obstacle(s) do you wish to overcome with your action and why? To whom is it aimed for and why?

→ Remember to ask and include the target group in planning!

#### 2. Propose a trial to solve the obstacle

How can you overcome the challenge(s) in practice? What type of activities are needed and best fitted to do this?

#### 3. Benefits of the trial/solution

What are the long- and short-term advantages of the activities for the target group and others involved? What could be the benefits of the action at the societal level?

#### 4. Relevant parts/components of the trial/solution

What are some more concrete building blocks of the action? For example: Do you need any specific facilities, equipment, marketing or communication to execute it?

#### 5. Other relevant issues related

For example: Which people or organizations would be involved? How much would the action cost and how would the money be spent? Are there any other issues to take into account?

→ Write down your ideas!



## Terminology

The idea of the chapter is to explain briefly a few of the main terms used in the manual.

### Accessibility

The measure of something's usability by persons with one or more disabilities. For example self-opening doors, elevators for multiple levels, raised lettering on signs and entry ramps.

### Equality

Equality is the condition under which every individual is treated in the same way and is granted the same rights and responsibilities, regardless of their individual differences.

### Equity

Equity ensures that individuals are provided the resources they need to have access to the same opportunities. While equality indicates uniformity, where everything is evenly distributed among people, equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

### Gender

A group of people in a society who share particular qualities, roles or ways of behaving which that society associates with being male, female or another identity. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.

**Immigrant**

A person, usually in a less privileged position, who comes to a different country in order to live there permanently.

**Inclusion**

Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

**Social inclusion**

The process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society. It inquires that everyone could reap the benefits of prosperity and enjoy minimum standards of well-being, improving the ability, opportunity and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity.

**Participation**

At the most basic level, participation means that people are involved in decisions that affect their lives. Through participation they are able to identify opportunities and strategies for action and build solidarity to effect change. Participation challenges oppression and discrimination, particularly of the poorest and most marginalised people.

**Safer Space (n.)**

A space in which an individual or group may remain free of blame, ridicule and persecution and are in no danger of coming to mental or physical harm in any way.

**Refugee**

Refugees are people who have been forced to leave their country due to war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country.

**Roma people**

Roma people are an ethnic group of traditionally itinerant people who originated in northern India but in modern times live worldwide, principally in Europe.



THE FOUR PROJECT PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS WERE :

**Youth Academy, Finland**

Youth Academy is a non-profit organization that builds bridges between young people and society. Youth Academy works with partner organizations in Finland and internationally to support young people's own projects, ambitions, learning and participation, and provides tools and training for adults who work with young people. The participatory process and youth engagement are at the core of everything the organization does. Youth Academy has a large network of partners in the field of youth work and its member organizations include the largest Finnish youth and sport associations, such as Finnish Olympic Committee, "Working Peoples' Sports Federation", "School Sports Federation" or Finnish Scouts. Youth Academy is a member of European Confederation of Youth Clubs (ECYC), so it also has access to a European youth work network and partners' know-how.

**AICEM, Italy**

AICEM is a non-profit organization created by a group of active young people aiming to promote participatory forms of cooperation benefitting from partnerships between civil society and local, national, European and international organizations. It is also a venue for young people to share ideas and competencies with their community to foster youth participation and civic integration. AICEM promotes volunteering as a form of social inclusion and an instrument for self-development. The main purpose is spreading a culture of cooperation, active citizenship and social inclusion through the active involvement of youth. Organisation's regular activities include volunteers' involvement in processes of information sharing regarding youth policies, youth opportunities and good practices. The organization also promotes activities aiming to provide social assistance and to enhance the inclusion of disadvantaged young people within their communities.

### Active Youth Association, Lithuania

Active Youth Association (Asociacija "Aktyvus jaunimas") is a non-profit organization based in Kaunas that unites young leaders from Lithuania willing to work on a voluntary basis to facilitate an intercultural dialogue and enhance competence of the European youth. Active Youth Association relies on over 1000 volunteers and potential partners to ensure that the implementation of any project goes smoothly and the dissemination efforts reach the specified target groups. They cooperate with organizations of similar profile from all over Europe (more than 70 partnerships) to organize events and trainings using non-formal education (including sport) as a powerful instrument to encourage youth to take an active part in society. By doing this they help young people to improve their skills and social awareness, share experiences and ideas, integrate them within the multinational environment of the EU, facilitate cooperation, create new joint initiatives and promote healthy lifestyle. In particular, they concentrate on youth (18–30 years old) that have fewer opportunities and/or disadvantaged backgrounds.

### Budapest Association for International Sports, Hungary

A volunteer based, youth lead non-profit sport association with the mission of promoting physical activity, healthy lifestyle, intercultural understanding, active citizenship and participation through sport-based non-formal education and in grassroots sport activities. The organization has two branches, one focuses on local activities and the other one is working on international cooperation like Erasmus+ projects. Its target group includes young people in general: international and Hungarian students as well as young professionals. Through the organization of recreational activities, youth exchanges and training courses, BAIS aims to create sport-based educational opportunities for young people and to strengthen mutual understanding and friendship among them. The secondary goal of the organization is to connect local sport clubs and grassroots initiatives with internationals living in Budapest and to provide them information about sport related events taking place in the city. BAIS has a strong professional network in the field of youth and sport policies and it regularly cooperates with sport entities based in Budapest, for example the Budapest Sports Union.



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