



# FUTURE ++ HANDBOOK

Sport and Social Inclusion: Future for Children ++



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

# FUTURE ++ HANDBOOK

Sport and Social Inclusion: Future for Children ++

622533 – EPP – 1 – 2020 – 1 – ES – SPO - SCP





Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

#### Disclaimer:

This project has been co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Copyright © FTR++ Consortium, 2021-2024

### **Authors:**

Gonzalo Flores Aguilar (3), Ingrid Hinojosa Alcalde (1), Hande Hofmann (4), Júlia Leonart Garcia (5), Antonio Muñoz Llerena (3), Valentin Nußer (4), Meritxell Ocaña Llanes (5), Aaron Rillo-Albert (2), Pedrona Serra Payeras (1), Judith Solanas Sánchez (1), & Susanna Soler Prat (1)

1. Institut Nacional d'Educació Física de Catalunya (INEFC), U. de Barcelona (UB)
2. Institut Nacional d'Educació Física de Catalunya (INEFC), U. de Lleida (UdL)
3. U. de Sevilla (US), Department of Physical Education and Sport
4. TUM, Technical University of Munich, Department of Sport and Health Sciences
5. GEDI, Cooperativa d'iniciativa social

### **Design and Edition:**

Marina Huete (5)

### **Partners of the FUTURE++ Project:**

Barça Foundation (Spain)  
CEIPES, non-profit European organization (Italy)  
CRE.THI.DEV., Non for Profit Company (Greece)  
GEDI, Cooperativa d'iniciativa social (Spain)  
INEFC, Institut Nacional d'Educació Física de Catalunya (Spain)  
Municipality of Lousada (Portugal)  
NEFINIA, Innovative consultancy company (Netherlands)  
TUM, Technical University of Munich, Department of Sport and Health Sciences (Germany)

### **FUTURE ++ Handbook Sport and Social Inclusion: Future for Children ++, 2023**

This project has been co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union (622533-EPP-1-2020-1-ES-SPO-SCP)

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

ISBN #: 978-3-9824084-2-2

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **1. The Future++ Project**

- 1.1. Why a coach and manager education programme for social inclusion is needed?
- 1.2. Parts of the handbook
- 1.3. Partners

## **2. Pedagogical background**

- 2.1. Sport and Physical Activity as Tools for Social Inclusion
- 2.2. Education Programs for coaches regarding social inclusion
- 2.3. A Pedagogical Model for youth coaches and sport organization managers
- 2.4. References

## **3. A European-based Coach and Manager Programme**

- 3.1. Module 1: Conceptual framework of an Inclusive Sports Organization
- 3.2. Module 2: Practical Strategies and Guidelines
- 3.3. Module 3: Communication
- 3.4. Module 4: Group dynamics in young athletes
- 3.5. Module 5: Social Justice and Critical Pedagogy

## **4. Developed Tools**

- 4.1. The e-Learning Platform
- 4.2. European Network for Coaches

## **5. Conclusions**

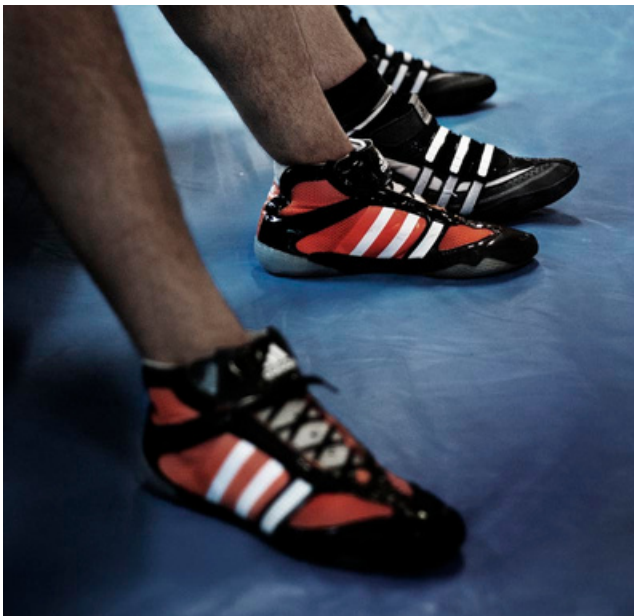
**1**

**THE FUTURE++  
PROJECT**

## 1.1. Why a coach and manager education programme for social inclusion is needed?

What happens in the mind of a child who is struggling to feel accommodated in our society? What do they feel living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods? Where do they get stuck? The inclusion process remains invisible to us as citizens but it is vital to build up a better society. In order to address the needs of children who have a difficult time to feel included and engaged in society, **over the years we have turned to sports to help make children's inclusion process viable.** That is, participation in sports in an adequate way can play a valuable role in the development of children and to channel social integration. For that, it is necessary to create the adequate conditions.

A paper for the Council of Europe argued that:



The point is that sport has the potential both to improve and inhibit an individual's personal growth. The futility of arguing whether sport is good or bad has been observed by several authors. Sport, like most activities, is not a priori good or bad, but has the potential of producing both positive and negative outcomes. Questions like 'what conditions are necessary for sport to have beneficial outcomes?' must be asked more often. (Patriksson, 1995, p. 128)

In this line and in the attempt to answer which conditions are necessary for sport to have beneficial outcomes, the project "**Sport and Social Inclusion: Future for Children - FUTURE +**" that received funding from the European Union in the framework of the Sports + Programme (590496-EPP-1-2017-1-ES-SPO-SSCP) identified that in this task **coaches make a difference.** Coaches play an important role in the delivery of such a sports-based social inclusion intervention. **Nonetheless**, an important gap was identified to succeed in this intervention:

**Coaches' lack of adequate preparation remains a critical impediment to the enhancement of inclusive practices.**

Furthermore, the research developed in the project “**Future++**”, that received funding from the European Union in the framework of the Sports + Programme (622533-EPP-1-2020-1-ES-SPO-SCP) identified that in this task, **sport managers are also a key actor to promote inclusive sport organizations.**

It is worthy to point out that there is a limited amount of knowledge on the conditions for and structural characteristics of sports clubs that promote social inclusion:

Evidence, to date, is limited with regard to the processes by which children and young people might become ‘socially included’ through sport, but there are some clues (see, for example, Donnelly & Coakley, 2002). First, access is a necessary condition of inclusion: if sport is to be involved in the process of social inclusion, it is essential that children and young people have opportunities to participate; without access, any discussion of social inclusion is moot. Second is the issue of **agency**: arguably, inclusion is not possible unless institutions allow it to be so, hence the importance of projects that involve excluded young people in decision-making (Long et al., 2002). Third, a substantial body of evidence suggests that the development of basic physical competence, such as is developed through a quality physical education programme, has a powerful effect upon self-esteem, confidence and peer acceptance (Bailey, 2000a), which may be necessary conditions for social inclusion. Finally, sports programmes seem to be most successful when they have effective, preferably local, leadership (Coalter et al., 2000) (Bailey, p.79)







Hence, it is well known that a quality physical education program can make a difference in terms of confidence and competence, which in turn can help the process by which sport facilitate social inclusion. Therefore, this project can contribute to provide evidence on how grassroots sports promote social inclusion by the shaping of an appropriate coach programme able to address the challenges of children living in deprived areas.

Unfortunately, the experience indicates that coaches and managers sometimes feel unprepared to carry out based sports programs with children in deprived areas. This unpreparedness has been commonly associated with the following factors: 1) lack of knowledge (e.g., lack of subjects in undergraduate programs or limited time devoted to physical education with social inclusion purposes, individualised education programs); 2) lack of skills (e.g., ability to manage behaviors, make instructional modifications, and assess student learning). The coach and manager trainings are a priority for the enhancement of program opportunities.

According to that, **the general aim** of this project is to **promote, develop and share a European evidence-based coach and manager education programme that could help coaches and managers foster quality motivation and make sport not only engaging, empowering, and enjoyable but also a tool of added value for social inclusion.**

This is achieved by proposing a comprehensive and appropriate training related to inclusion allowing coaches and managers to have knowledge and become skilful in delivering quality services to their students.

## 1.2. Parts of the handbook

This handbook is one of the important results to the efforts and activities undertaken in the project Future++. to help coaches and managers to promote sport as a tool for social inclusion. It is targeted for all sport clubs, associations, federations or public authorities in charge of sport that take the subject seriously, using sport, especially with young people, as a tool to fight against exclusion throughout society as a whole.

The handbook is structured in three main parts:

- The pedagogical background
- The European-based coach and manager programme
- Developed tools: the e-learning platform and the European network for coaches

Meanwhile there are other interventions, this is the first time that a project tries to improve coaching and manager knowledge and skills through European co-operation to promote social inclusion. In this sense, this project goes beyond previous studies which have been specific to individual countries to draw implications for policy and practice.



## 1.3. Partners



GEDI is a non-profit and social initiative cooperative association, registered in the Cooperatives Register of Catalonia with number 4577 since 1990. GEDI's social objectives are socio-educational, educational and training actions aimed at children and youth, actions to stimulate groups of groups of children and young people through courses, excursions, camps or trips, workshops and cultural leisure activities etc.



The National Institute for Physical Education in Catalonia (INEFC – Institut Nacional d'Educació Física de Catalunya) is the center of higher education established by the Government of Catalonia in 1976, whose mission is the training, specialization and improvement of graduates in physical education and sport, and scientific development of and the dissemination of their research work or studies.



The Technical University of Munich (TUM) is one of Europe's top universities. It is committed to excellence in research and teaching, interdisciplinary education and the active promotion of promising young scientists. The university also forges strong links with companies and scientific institutions across the world. TUM was one of the first universities in Germany to be named a University of Excellence.



The Barça Foundation has a clear mission: to support children and youth from the most vulnerable groups through sports and education, for the purpose of contributing to a more egalitarian and inclusive society. The 3 pillars are: 1) prevention of the violence, 2) promotion of social inclusion, 3) access and reinforcement of education.



NEFINIA, a Dutch innovative consultancy company, founded in 2007, continuously offering an increasing range of added value products, services, solutions, best practices, commercial business developments, promotion of entrepreneurship for everyone. NEFINIA aims at serving as a best example of bottom up Institution Building effort towards EU Integration and regional competitiveness, playing a key role, contributing in the implementation of EU Regulations and Directives through its participation in EU funded networks & projects, at inter-regional level.



CRE.THI.DEV. is a Greek Non for Profit Company that actively promotes youth, cultural and entrepreneurial projects and the dissemination of information on specialized subjects that promote equal opportunities, quality of life and strengthen social cohesion.



CEIPES is a non-profit European organization with antennas in more than 8 European countries. CEIPES' work is inspired by the principles and values of peace and nonviolence, equality in diversity, human rights, democracy and active participation, respect for the environment, cooperation, communication, solidarity, social inclusion, respect, tolerance and interculturality. CEIPES works at local, European and international level with more than 40 organisations and public bodies that work in synergy to reach identical goals.



The Municipality of Lousada is an institution of local public administration. It aims to pursue the interests of the population in the territorial space of Lousada Council. The city assumes itself as the center of the region denominated Vale do Sousa since it is situated in its geographic center. It has approximately 50.000 inhabitants that are distributed within the 25 parishes of Lousada.

2

PEDAGOGICAL  
BACKGROUND

## 2.1. Sport and Physical Activity as Tools for Social Inclusion

### What is Inclusion?

First and foremost, it is important to clarify the term “inclusion” when we talk about sport and inclusion, as well as the terms that are often linked to it, such as integration, social cohesion, or social coexistence, as opposed to exclusion, segregation, discrimination or vulnerability. There are many definitions and practices associated with the term “inclusion”, which makes it a multidimensional and complex concept with strong ideological connotations. According to the narrowest and the most widely used definition in society, social inclusion occurs when people who are considered excluded adopt the norms and the standards of the community or the organization in which they find themselves. This understanding has been criticized as the dominant groups might be a threat as they can take over social control.

A broader and wider definition of inclusion understands it as a collective and a bidirectional process which involves all citizens. This way, it implies the readjustment of all parts which jointly develop a new model of coexistence. In fact, it is not a matter of changing, correcting or adapting the difference of the person, rather than enriching the entire community with it.



This requires a dialogue in which everybody takes part on an equal basis, as well as in overcoming the existing differences between the hegemonic or the majority group - which has the dominant position- and the rest. Then, inclusion is also understood as an integral process considering several aspects such as legal, economic, political, educational, social, cultural and ideological, among others. In addition, if the interaction between stakeholders takes place equally and holistically, there will be a greater chance of success with the inclusion process. The result of this process would be the development of an organization (school, club, company, etc.) and an inclusive society which are in a continuous process of transformation that guarantees the full involvement and participation of all groups in the social, economic, cultural and political level.

## Identifying the problem

The White Paper on Sport developed by the European Commission in 2007 (European Commission, 2007) promotes the development of measures to improve social inclusion through sport, by using European Union's programs and resources. In this context, political bodies recognize the potential of sport as a tool to foster social inclusion.

Sport and Physical Activity as Tools for Social Inclusion: Despite the potential of sport and physical activity (PA) to contribute to the process of social inclusion, several theoretical approaches and empirical studies indicate that sport and inclusion do not happen spontaneously (Balibrea & Santos, 2011; Maza, 2009). Although it can improve individuals' living conditions and reduce vulnerability levels, it cannot solve structural problems that generate inequality, nor the basic needs of vulnerable groups (Kelly, 2011). Moreover, social inclusion through sport in the context of social vulnerability is not a mechanical process. Sport and PA aimed at groups at risk of social exclusion is without doubt a powerful tool for social inclusion, but as with any other activity, it has its limits and its effects depend on how it is used (Balibrea & Santos, 2011; Lecumberri, Puig, & Maza, 2009). Therefore, the role of sport coaches is key to promote social inclusion (Van der Veken, Lauwerier, & Willems, 2020). In this context, sport coaches need some guidance and support when working with children from marginalized and underprivileged groups (Devis-Devis, 2006; Future+, 2019; Soler Prat, Flores Aguilar, & Prat Grau, 2012). Several studies show that there is a lack of training of sport coaches and PE teachers to address the needs and interests of different underprivileged groups, such as women (Serra et al., 2016), immigrants, people of low socioeconomic status (Soler, 2004), refugees (Cseplö, Wagnsson, Luguetti, & Spaaij, 2021; Duran, 2018), or inmates (Soler et al., 2020).





## Low-SES children and Sport

It is well established that PA has a beneficial effect on overall health across the lifespan (Hallal, Victora, Azevedo, & Wells, 2006). In this context, we need to distinguish between general PA and participation in sports. The former describes PA which occurs throughout daily life (e.g. playing, means of transportation, domestic work), while the latter addresses participation in organized sports at school or in clubs. In pediatric literature, PA often includes all forms of activity, which depicts an overall level of PA, yet it does not distinguish between different domains of activity. However, this differentiation becomes relevant when discussing social inclusion of children from under-privileged families and neighborhoods. An extensive review of scientific literature on the topic has shown that there is no significant association between SES and overall PA (Henchoz et al., 2018), which means that the PA level of children is independent of their SES. Of course, this does not imply that interventions to get low-SES children to participate in sports would be wasted efforts. Quite the contrary is the case, as PA and participation in sports is important for the development of any child. Children should be encouraged to participate in organized sports, because research has shown an association between sports participation and health-related quality of life in children, regardless of SES (Moeijes et al., 2019).

Furthermore, findings suggest that sports participation during youth can promote healthy habits later in life (Howie, McVeigh, Smith, & Straker, 2016; Palomäki et al., 2018). Those who participate in sports during childhood and youth tend to smoke and drink less, have a healthier diet, and/or are more physically active during adulthood. From a long-term and preventive perspective, this underscores the importance of the role of organized sports for children.

In addition to the beneficial effects of general PA and sports participation on the physical health in children and adolescents, scientific evidence also shows a benefit of PA on mental health, especially during adolescence (Rodriguez-Ayllon et al., 2019). More specifically, an inverse relationship is often observed between PA level and mental ill-being as well as between sedentary behavior and satisfaction with life and happiness. And again, the type of PA (e.g. sports participation or outdoor play/commuting) has differential associations with mental health. Sports participation, especially during adolescence, in team sports without aesthetic implications - but not overall PA - seems to be associated the strongest with mental well-being (Brunet et al., 2013). Unfortunately, the scientific evidence in younger kids (e.g. preschoolers and elementary-school children) is rather limited.

Nonetheless, the importance of participation in organized sports is once again manifested and leads to the assumption that other factors besides the mere physical exercise – such as social interaction with peers, experience of accountability responsibility, resilience, and self-esteem – may play a mediating role. In fact, there is a link between the perceived self of an individual and mental health (e.g. self-esteem) (Lubans et al., 2016) and it has been suggested that increasing low-SES children's self-esteem should be a goal as much as providing them with access to sports in the first place (Veselska, Madarasova Geckova, Reijneveld, & van Dijk, 2011). In addition to these mediating factors, sleep onset, duration, and efficiency may be behavioral factors that have the potential to explain the effect of PA on mental health. However, no sound and definitive conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the current scientific evidence.

In summary, children can benefit immensely from sports participation - during their upbringing as well as later throughout adulthood. As evidence suggests, SES does not influence the efficacy, yet low-SES children might have more difficulty finding access to organized sports in the first place. This can be due to certain barriers of either personal nature (e.g. bad experiences, peer disapproval, self-consciousness, competition) or practical nature (e.g. cost, time, and location). Furthermore, children who live in low-SES conditions often find themselves socially isolated and lack adequate health services and eating behaviors (Buonomo et al., 2019).

Therefore, it seems plausible to provide low-SES children with access to organized sport offerings as a first step. Secondly, once initial engagement is established, long-term participation and strong engagement should be encouraged (Eime, Charity, Harvey, & Payne, 2015). Thirdly, in the attempt to make sure sports participation does not merely lead to an alleviation of symptoms, children should be provided with the opportunity to gain knowledge on health related topics outside of exercise (e.g. nutrition), in order to counteract malnutrition, for instance.

## Coaches, Sports Clubs and Social Inclusion

Social justice education recognizes the discrepancy in opportunities among disadvantaged groups in society. According to Knijnik and Luguetti (2020), education on social justice and critical pedagogy in Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) enables future teachers and coaches to create a sense of social agency and community purpose in their teaching or coaching. Fostering this sense of social agency and community helps position them with more certainty when facing the political and professional hurdles embedded in their careers.

Training PE and sport professionals is not merely about acquiring new knowledge or resources, but it is above all about encouraging a change in attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, etc. that influence them on a daily basis. The role of the coach is in fact much more complex than it may seem at first sight. In a consensus statement by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) published in 2015, the authors described the coach's role as a unique mixture of competences and knowledge, combining pedagogical competence with the ability to teach sport-specific skills, knowledge in pediatric physiology as well as the ability to create and maintain relationships with others (Bergeron et al., 2015). As Freire (2005) proposed from his critical pedagogy theory, it is about providing future educators and coaches with political tools so that they can face the challenges of today's society and build a better world for the next generations (Knijnik & Luguetti, 2020). Furthermore, in order to deliver truly useful and transformative training for coaches and educators, it is not just a matter of collecting and describing activities. Instead, it is about challenging PE teachers and coaches to „discover, address and change their own personal biases, contradictions and misinformation, as well as to identify and modify educational practices that do not challenge racism and other institutional discrimination or prejudices“ (Sabariego, 2002, p. 188). Within this paradigm, a teacher or a coach is considered to be a reflective practitioner who recognizes the mechanisms of social control, the power of structures and social institutions, and is further able to develop skills for social action. Therefore, training PE teachers and sport professionals for social action should be both theoretical and practical.

This way, they will acquire the resources they need to adapt their teaching and pedagogical practices to the diversity of students by focusing on cooperative learning.

In the specific field of PETE and coach education, a surge of research has emerged that has examined the teaching practices of PETE programs concerned with social justice and critical pedagogy (Carter, López-Pastor, & Fuentes, 2017; Marques, Sousa, & Cruz, 2013; Ovens et al., 2018; Philpot, 2016; Schenker et al., 2019; Soler, 2004; Walton-Fisette & Sutherland, 2018), which serve as key references for the Future++ project.

In practice, coaches in youth sports mostly work within a sports club where they are responsible for the development of young athletes through training and competition. They are the primary persons of contact for athletes within a sports club aiming to cultivate their athletes' competence, confidence, connection and character. Prior research has examined the coach-athlete relationship and has shown that perceived coach support and the athletes' self-esteem are significantly associated with their subjective well-being (Peng, Zhang, Zhao, Fang, & Shao, 2020). We also know that self-esteem is a mediator of positive outcomes through sport participation. Therefore, it is crucial to keep up the motivation and self-confidence of the athletes in order to yield the desired results. Recent research has also explored the connection between physical literacy in children and adolescents and coaching efficacy, showing significant associations between the parameters (Li et al., 2019). The concept of physical literacy combines several domains related to exercise and PA and is not restricted to improving physical skills, but also incorporates cognitive and affective elements, which in turn develop physical competence. Of course, physical literacy applies to all children regardless of SES, with a need to address person-centered barriers to participation, which any child might have. However, it is important to acknowledge that access to sports can be more difficult depending on SES and, as explained in Section 2, the most impactful barriers faced by low-SES children are time, cost and location (Somerset & Hoare, 2018, see Figure 1).

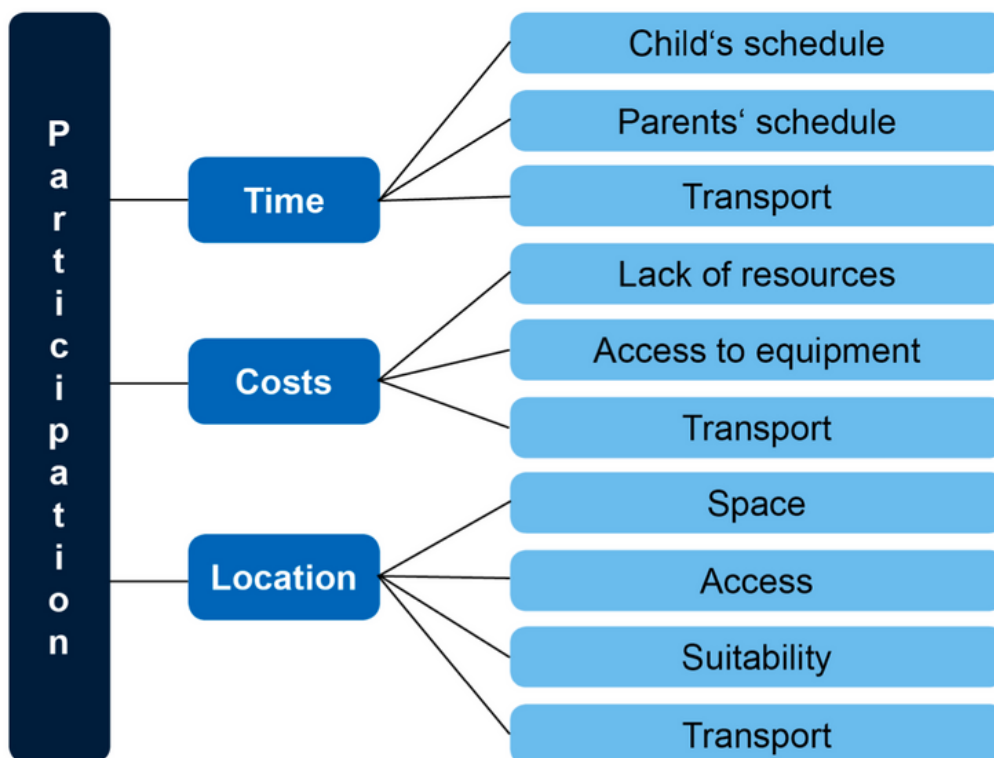


Figure 1: Practical barriers to participation in sport for children (Figure from publication by Somerset and Hoare (2018))

Children may wish to participate in sports, but cannot do so because of their own or their parents' schedules (including working hours), a lack of resources, or the location of the sports offering. Unlike the personal barriers, these practical barriers can hardly be addressed by the coach. Instead, this is where the sports club can make an effort to facilitate the access for low-SES children by addressing these barriers specifically. An example outlined in a journal article describes the provision of free access to local pools for children living in a deprived local authority in England (Higgerson, Halliday, Ortiz-Nunez, & Barr, 2019).

When compared to a similarly deprived local authority that did not provide free access to pools over the same time frame, the authors could show an increased rate of participation in swimming activities. In this specific case, free-of-charge access to pools was enabled by funding of the local authority, although this is not necessarily a sustainable strategy in the long-term that can or should be employed by all sports clubs. It does show, however, that pricing strategies may lead to an increased participation in organized sports.

Alternative strategies could include subsidized fees, phased-in fees after free trial period, adding a low-fee category, or equipment/uniform loan schemes. Regarding transport, possible strategies to increase participation of disadvantaged kids could include the provision of car transport by volunteers, the use of community busses, or locating activities in close proximity to public transportation (Smith, Thomas, & Batras, 2016).

Strategies as listed above are extremely dependent upon the specific context and may have to be revised and adapted accordingly. It therefore makes sense to consider other alternative strategies, analyze the group of interest and the local circumstances, and cooperate with the local schools and authorities.

## Outlook

Children can benefit tremendously from being physically active, especially in an organized context. In order to tackle inequity in children, this matter should be of concern to policy makers, local authorities, parents, schools, and sports clubs alike. Underprivileged children often times face barriers excluding them from participation in sports. Practical barriers (e.g. time, cost and transport) should be addressed by clubs and/ or local authorities in order to provide children with access to organized sports. Once access and engagement is established, personal barriers (e.g. self-esteem, athletic ability, peer disapproval) should be addressed by the coaching staff in order to ensure sustained participation and increase the likelihood of its beneficial impact on children. Therefore, in the development of an education program, it is logical to consider and address all barriers children and everyone involved in organized sports might face by including the sports club as well as the coaches.

In this context, the coaches have to recognize the structural and social conditions that influence the participation in PA and sports of the children, and they need skills for social action. Therefore, training PE teachers and sport professionals for social action should be both theoretical and practical.



## 2.2. Education Programs for coaches regarding social inclusion

### From theory to practice

The role of a coach in youth sports is extremely complex (Bergeron et al., 2015), particularly as the children are still very much developing, both physically and personally. On the one hand, this requires a profound knowledge of human physiology, especially of children during their development. Further, children of the same age vary in their developmental status, which also may require additional consideration. Aside from physiological awareness, there is also a requirement for high pedagogical competence, as the coaches are also responsible – at least to some extent – for the children's development of confidence, connection and character. In an ideal scenario, the coach essentially creates situations and experiences for the children, from which they can grow upon and learn. However, we must acknowledge that in practice, participation in sports has led to deleterious physical and psychological consequences in children through authoritarian and abusive behavior, disrespectful treatment and mockery, overtraining and excessive physical demands, physical and emotional abuse, and/or serious and sustained sexual assault and abuse (Alexander, Stafford, & Lewis, 2011). While we firmly condemn the abuse of power to mistreat and abuse children, we believe in the potential positive impact organized sport can have on children's lives and emphasize the importance of the coach's role.

As established previously (Future++ deliverable 2.1), sport and inclusion do not happen spontaneously, with its effects very much dependent on its implementation (Balibrea & Santos, 2011; Lecumberri, Puig, & Maza, 2009). The intentional inclusion of children from low-SES households therefore requires training of coaches, adaptation of existing processes, and investment of resources. In the following paragraphs we outline, on the basis of a few examples, how the topic of inclusion is introduced to coaches, athletes, executives, physical education teachers, and other stakeholders. We also aim to examine the structure of such further education programs, in order to draw conclusions on how to design a program that specifically tackles the inclusion of low-SES children.

## Current situation in Europe

What if certain barriers within the structures of organized sports keep underprivileged children from benefitting from the positive impact sport can have on their lives? Inclusive Sport Design in Australia specifically tackles this question by providing sports organizations with strategies to become more inclusive (Woods, 2021). This is achieved by providing resources, advice and education programs to all stakeholders involved, true to the mission to make sport accessible to everyone.

We have conducted partner research involving all project contributors, in order to screen Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal and Germany for similar education programs and provide an overview of what is currently available in Europe. The overarching goal was to see whether there is a lack of educational opportunities for coaches and other stakeholders regarding social inclusion of underprivileged children. In the following paragraphs, existing education offerings are discussed under consideration of several sub-categories (target group, organization, modality & duration, price).

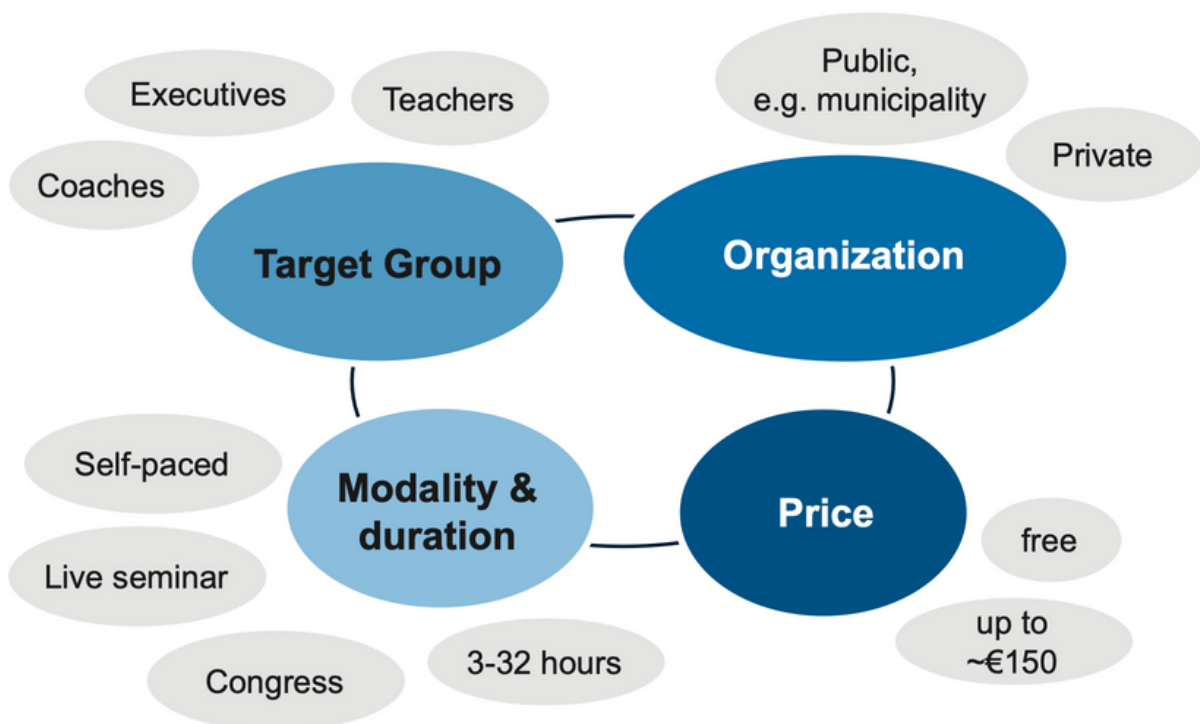


Figure 2: Subcategories of further education programs across Europe



**Target group:** Programs all across Europe address a multitude of stakeholders. Coaches are the primary target group, which also extends to teachers and students more often than not. The National Council of Associations of Physical Education and Sports Professionals in Portugal (CNAPEF) specifically targets youth coaches and physical education teachers in order to educate them on social inclusion (CNAPEF, 2021). In this specific case, social inclusion of children in sport is discussed globally, independently of the kind of sport or discipline. Other offerings are designed for coaches in certain sports, such as the further education program on inclusive and diverse sporting practice developed by the German Judo federation (DJB, 2021). Both offerings aim to increase inclusiveness, whether it is specifically driven to a particular sport (e.g., German Judo federation), or instead whether it can be extrapolated across disciplines to all sport at large (e.g., CNAPEF). The target group will then have implications on the content of the education program, of course, while the target group may also be predefined by the organizing party itself (e.g. a sporting federation).

**Organization:** There are several stakeholders who show interest in the inclusion of children in organized sports. First and foremost, as shown by the result of our partner research, the public sector provides the majority of offerings – to the children, parents, teachers, coaches and other parties. Municipalities provide education and sports programs to coaches and children, respectively, to increase inclusion of children of Roma or refugee background, children with disabilities and children from families of low socio-economic status.

**Modality & duration:** More recent education programs tend to be performed online due to the global pandemic. The online dependence occurs more frequently when focus is primarily on information being shared rather than skills being taught (e.g. inclusion of people with disabilities). The duration of the different programs ranged from 3-35 hours, depending on the extent of content and on the framework in which the topic of inclusion is discussed. Stand-alone presentations, for example, may require less time than a coach licensing program. CNAPEF, for instance, created a three-part online presentation with contributions from different speakers lasting one hour each. Conversely, there are also Master's degree programs, such as the program on sports and psychosocial interventions at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan, Italy, which lasts 15 months (60 credits) or the Master's degree of physical activity and education at the University of Barcelone (60 ECTS), both of which cover a wide range of topics, including social inclusion.

**Price:** Pricing also differs tremendously between offerings. Most public organizers, however, go with a low-price strategy (€3-€40) or do not charge anything at all, as they do not pursue any economic goals. This may also increase participation rates considering that youth coaches often are voluntarily involved in coaching and other sports club activities. On the other hand, less barriers for future club members and facilitated entry may also increase number of club members and club revenue in the long term. This will in turn only benefit the club and its members by improving health and well-being of the community and this is also the rationale behind private organization providing help to sports organizations, such as Inclusive Sport Design (Woods, 2021) or CONI.

## Implications for a future education program

Our Europe-wide investigation has shown there are plenty of initiatives engaged in the promotion of social inclusion of children, social sub-groups (e.g., refugees or Roma), underprivileged families and/or people with mental or physical disabilities. Researching specifically for further education programs for coaches addressing the topic of social inclusion of low-SES children has not yielded satisfactory results.

The content of the education programs covers motivation (BizPoint, Lda), psycho-motor development, ageing, scouting, social inclusion of children with and without disability, bullying, and sport as a general tool for social inclusion. This broad range of topics picks up many aspects that touch on inclusion and addresses a multitude of stakeholders. Nonetheless, social inclusion of low-SES children is only thematized in a few examples: CNAPEF hosted an education program that was developed in the scope of an Erasmus+ project, aiming to promote good practices in social inclusion of children and young people in and through sport. While this course specifically targeted coaches, physical education teachers and physical therapists, “Sport e Salute” sports school in Rome, Italy offers a program particularly aimed at executives, sports managers, public officials and students to discuss the management and organizational structures of various sport realities. These different approaches and target groups show that there are several stakeholders who can benefit from more inclusion in organized sports and especially the inclusion of children from less privileged families. Potential benefits include a greater number of members enrolled in sports clubs, which in turn may lead to increased revenue, after an initial investment of resources. Furthermore, we know that participation in organized sports positively impacts the physical and mental health of children and adolescents. Hence, increased participation in organized sports can lead to greater health and quality of life in children and their families as well as a strengthening of community (Pate et al., 1995).

Despite the positive impact that more inclusiveness may have on children, adolescents, their families and the community in general, becoming more inclusive poses several challenges to the coaches and sports clubs. First of all, an initial investment of resources will be necessary for a multitude of reasons, including but not limited to providing children with the necessary gear, offering reduced admission fees, or providing additional means of transportation to the venue. Furthermore, additional knowledge and competence is required. Coaches may have to increase their pedagogical competence to work on the children’s personal barriers (see figure 2).

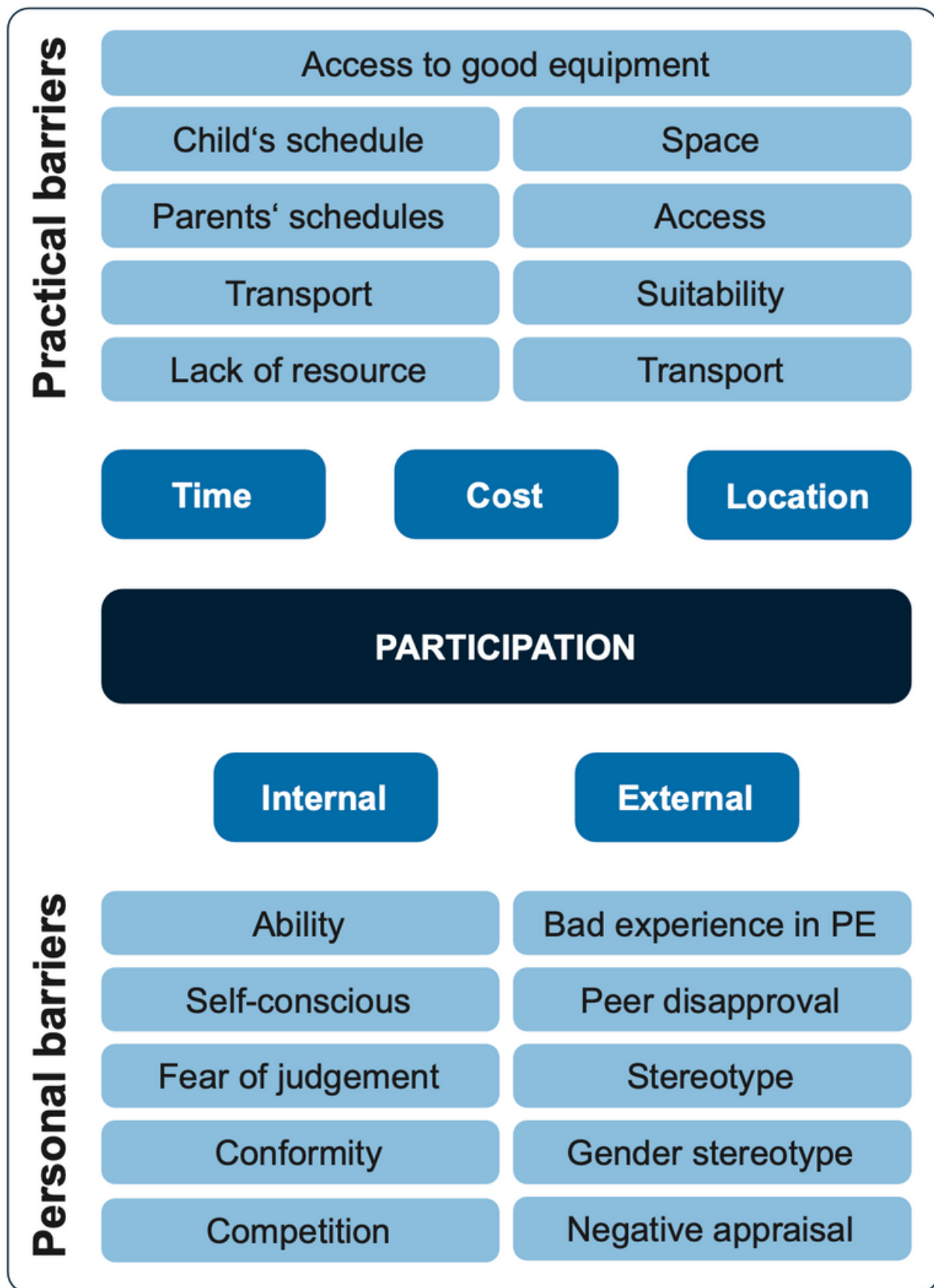


Figure 3: Personal and practical barriers of participation in organized sports (Figure adapted from publication by Somerset and Hoare (2018)).

## Appendix

Name (incl. web-link)	Organization	Country	Language	Duration	Modality	Price	Target Group	Prior training
<a href="#">Social inclusion through sport</a>	CNAPEF	Portugal	Portuguese	3 hours	online	€3/€6	PE-Teachers, coaches & Sports students	no
<a href="#">Different courses on sports related topics</a>	Cidade Social	Portugal	Portuguese	11 weeks / 5 credits	online	free for residents / €25	General population	no
<a href="#">Motivation for success</a>	BizPoint, Lda	Portugal	Portuguese	5 hours	online	€35	Coaches, athletes, PE-Teachers, TD's	no
<a href="#">Psychomotricity: Encouragement of child-parent sports</a>	Municipality of Lousada	Portugal	Portuguese	4 hours	online	free	Parents and their children (3-6 years)	no
<a href="#">Sports and ageing</a>	BizPoint, Lda	Portugal	Portuguese	9 hours	online	€40	Coaches, athletes, Physical therapists, TD's	yes
<a href="#">Scouting</a>	BizPoint, Lda	Portugal	Portuguese	32 hours	online	€25 per module / €150	Everyone interested	no
<a href="#">Sports games with distance</a>	Fundació Barça	Spain	English, Catalan	--	online	free	Everyone interested	no
<a href="#">FutbolNet Diversity</a>	Fundació Barça	Spain	English, Catalan	--	face-to-face	free	Coaches	no
<a href="#">Prevention of Bullying in Sport</a>	Fundació Barça	Spain	Catalan	--	face-to-face	free	Coaches	no
<a href="#">Physical Activity and Education</a>	University of Barcelona	Spain	Spanish	360 hours/ 60 ECTS	face-to-face	€1660	Social ed students or workers, PE teachers	University degree
<a href="#">Sport, education and coexistence</a>	University of Vasque Country	Spain	Spanish	200 hours/ 20 ECTS	mixed	€600	PE teachers, sport coaches, sport managers	Univ. degree or trainer licence
<a href="#">Educational leisure and socio-cultural action</a>	Fundación Pere Tarrés	Spain	Spanish	90 hours	online	€1875	Social ed students or workers, PE teachers	University degree
<a href="#">Basket Beat workshops</a>	Basket Beat	Spain	Catalan/ Spanish	20 hours	face-to-face	--	Social ed students or workers, PE teachers	no
<a href="#">INSERsport</a>	UFEC	Spain	Catalan	--	face-to-face	free	Adolescents at risk of social exclusion	no
<a href="#">Programes esportius d'integració social</a>	Esportsalus	Spain	Catalan/ Spanish	--	--	--	City councils, managers and coaches	no
<a href="#">Modelo ISSOK</a>	ISSOK Institute	Spain	Spanish	8 hours	online	€80/110/50	Coaches, PE teachers	no
<a href="#">Football for Roma kids</a>	Municipality	Greece	Greek	--	face-to-face	free	Everyone interested	no
<a href="#">Inclusion of refugees</a>	Ministry of culture and sport	Greece	Greek	--	face-to-face	free	Refugees	no
<a href="#">Fit for all</a>	Heraklion municipality, Crete	Greece	Greek	--	face-to-face	free	Everyone interested	no
<a href="#">Sport and psychosocial interventions</a>	UCSC, Milano	Italy	Italian	15 months/ 60 credits	both	€5.000	Master graduates of related disciplines	Master's degree
<a href="#">Sport as a tool for social inclusion</a>	CONI	Italy	Italian	8 hours	online	€100	Executives, sports managers	no
<a href="#">Further education for coaches - Inclusion</a>	DJB	Germany	German	8 hours	face-to-face	€55	Judo coaches	Valid trainer license
<a href="#">ISD Academy courses</a>	Inclusive Sport Design	Australia	English	--	online	\$0 - \$249	Sports clubs, executives and sports managers	no

Table 1: Excerpt of further education programs addressing social inclusion offered in Portugal, Spain, Greece, Italy, and Germany.

## 2.3. A Pedagogical Model for youth coaches and sport organization managers

### Theory and background

As the partner research presented in D2.2 shows, coach education programs focussing on social inclusion of children of low socio-economic status (SES) are scarce, yet exist in varying shapes and formats. Existing programs across Europe are offered either online, face-to-face or in a blended learning format. Especially more recent education programs have switched to an online format, when applicable. Education offerings also show great variability in their duration and the extent of their content. Here we can distinguish between stand-alone programs for further education purposes and larger scale education programs, such as university degree programs, discussing the topic of social inclusion in much more depth and detail. A larger framework of such an education offering comes, of course, with increased time and financial costs.

For youth coaches as well as people involved in sports organizations (also referred to as managers), it seems much more feasible to receive additional education to improve their competence from a stand-alone education program specifically focussing on social inclusion of low-SES children. Low financial costs and specifically catered contents to keep time consumption at a minimum are assumed to be key for the development of the education program. Therefore, we suggest a blended-learning format combining online and in presence teaching, which will facilitate access to the information and the implementation of such a program.

As presented in D2.1 and D2.2, practical and personal barriers, which prevent children of low-SES from participating in organized sports, can arguably be counteracted best by both the coaches and the managers. Therefore, it seems plausible to offer topics that address both target groups and both areas of concern (see Figure 4).

### Target Groups

The proposed program is aimed at everyone involved in organized youth sports. As mentioned above, the primary target groups are youth coaches and sports organization managers. Furthermore, this offering can also be open to anyone else involved in youth sports, such as physical education teachers, physical therapists working with children or groups of children, or youth councillors.



Figure 4: A display of topics to be discussed as theoretical input. Clusters of topics primarily address either youth coaches or managers within the sports organization.

## Implementation

In Figure 5 we present an exemplary draft of an education program in a blended-learning format. The offering consists of three sessions of four hours of training each. The first session is an online training with varying topics, whose focus can be shifted depending on which audience (coaches or managers) is addressed. The second session involves an exercise that is to be completed by each individual. This exercise is specific to the involvement of the individual within the sports organization and can include e.g. the analysis of opportunities for more inclusion in a certain setting (for managers) or the preparation of a training intervention (for coaches). In the third session, the results of the exercises are to be discussed and implemented in a real setting.

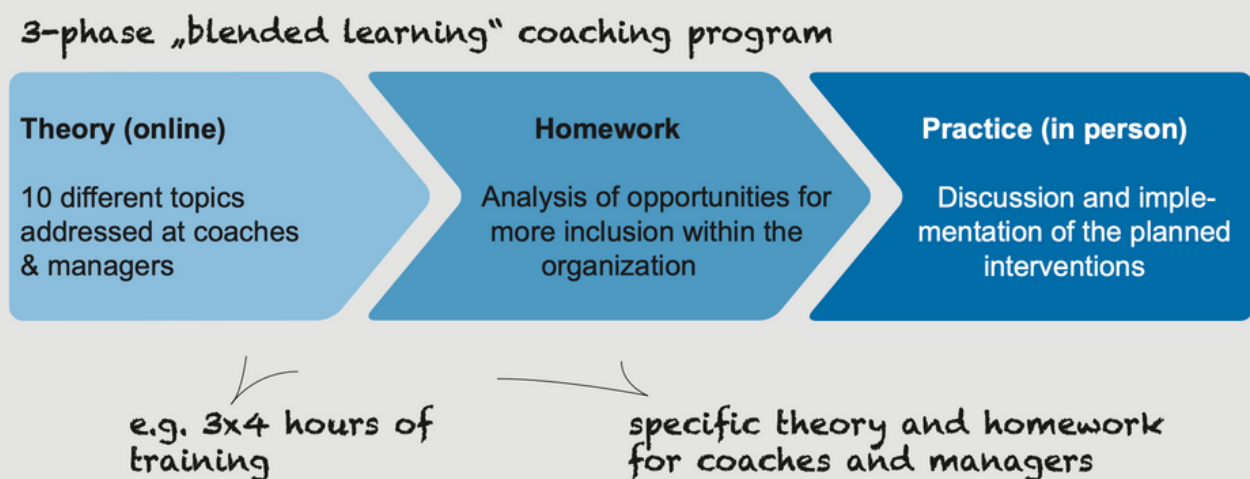


Figure 5: Timeline of an exemplary blended learning education program for coaches and sports organization managers including three stages: 1. Theoretical input via online training, 2. Distinguished homework for coaches and managers, respectively, and 3. A practice session to implement and discuss the homework.

## Modular Structure

In Figure 6 we present the modular structure of the education program. The topics presented in Figure 1 (as in D2.3) have been combined in five separate modules, which are to be seen as a set of topics. Recipients are either coaches, managers or both, as indicated by the arrows in Figure 6. The conceptualization of an inclusive framework for the respective sports organization (e.g., sports club) will include contents primarily catered for those working in club or organizational management.



This first module can then be followed up by the subsequent module on „practical strategies and guidelines“ introducing concrete instructions for action (e.g., pricing models for club admission and membership). Furthermore, the module includes content to help establish and manifest change towards a more inclusive structure (i.e., writing an inclusion commitment statement and process planning).

The communication module is equally targeting managers and coaches, in order to emphasize the importance of the communication and to establish the role of each party within the inclusive organization. Awareness of the barriers that low-SES children and their families face is an important starting point. Content may cover everything from the initiation of contact to the coach-athlete relationship and its importance regarding the well-being of young athletes. Building on that, coaches will learn more about the association between socio-economic status and group dynamics in children and adolescents. Specific instructions for action as well as best practice examples concerning group cohesion.

Finally, critical pedagogy and social justice in sports will serve as integral topics within the education program. Best practice examples will complement the theoretical input and put an emphasis on the practical work of the coaches.

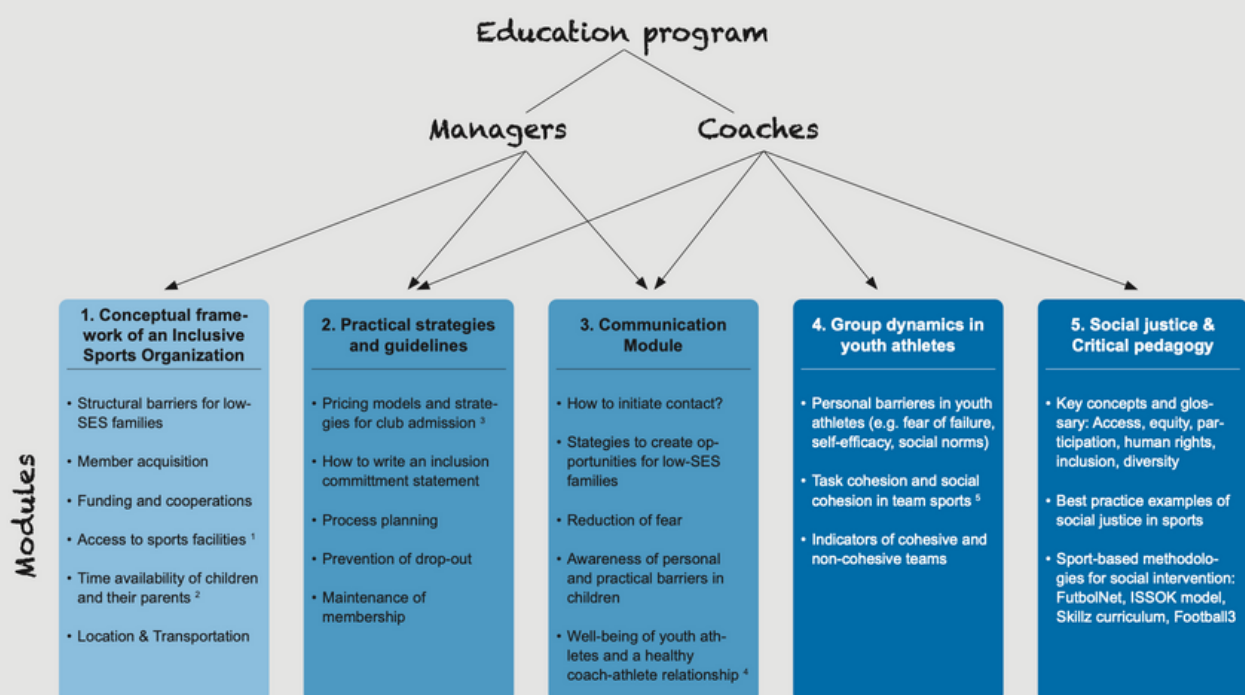


Figure 6: Modular structure of the education program. Five clusters of topics have been identified, either for both or only one of the target groups (Managers and coaches). SES = socio-economic status.

## 2.4. References

- Alexander, K., Stafford, A. & Lewis, R. (2011). *The Experiences of Children Participating in Organized Sport in the UK*. London: NSPCC.
- Balibrea, K., & Santos, A. (2011). *Deporte en los barrios: ¿integración o control social?* València: Editorial Universitat Politècnica de València.
- Bergeron, M. F., Mountjoy, M., Armstrong, N., Chia, M., Côté, J., Emery, C. A., Faigenbaum, A., Hall, G., Kriemler, S., Léglise, M., Malina, R. M., Pensgaard, A. M., Sanchez, A., Soligard, T., Sundgot-Borgen, J., van Mechelen, W., Weissensteiner, J. R., & Engebretsen, L. (2015). International Olympic Committee consensus statement on youth athletic development. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 49(13), 843-851. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2015-094962>
- Brunet, J., Sabiston, C. M., Chaiton, M., Barnett, T. A., O'Loughlin, E., Low, N. C. P., & O'Loughlin, J. L. (2013). The association between past and current physical activity and depressive symptoms in young adults: a 10-year prospective study. *Annals of Epidemiology*, 23(1), 25-30. doi:10.1016/j.annepidem.2012.10.006
- Balibrea, K., & Santos, A. (2011). *Deporte en los barrios: ¿integración o control social?* València: Editorial Universitat Politècnica de València.
- Brunet, J., Sabiston, C. M., Chaiton, M., Barnett, T. A., O'Loughlin, E., Low, N. C. P., & O'Loughlin, J. L. (2013). The association between past and current physical activity and depressive symptoms in young adults: a 10-year prospective study. *Annals of Epidemiology*, 23(1), 25-30. doi:10.1016/j.annepidem.2012.10.006
- Buonomo, E., Moramarco, S., Tappa, A., Palmieri, S., Di Michele, S., Biondi, G., Palombi, L. (2019). Access to health care, nutrition and dietary habits among school-age children living in socio-economic inequality contexts: results from the "ForGood: Sport is Well-Being" programme. *International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition*, 71(3), 352-361. doi:10.1080/09637486.2019.1655714
- Carter, B., López-Pastor, V.-M., & Fuentes, F. G. (2017). La integración de los estudiantes inmigrantes en un programa de deporte escolar con fines de transformación social. *Qualitative research in education*, 6(1), 22-55.
- CNAPEF. (2021). *Formação – Desporto como Elemento de Inclusão Social: Projetos de Sucesso*. Retrieved 20/08/2021 from <https://cnapecf.wordpress.com/2021/04/17/formacao-desporto-como-elemento-de-inclusao-social-projetos-de-sucesso/>
- Cseplö, E., Wagnsson, S., Luguetti, C., & Spaaij, R. (2021). 'The teacher makes us feel like we are a family': students from refugee backgrounds' perceptions of physical education in Swedish schools. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 1-14. doi:10.1080/17408989.2021.1911980
- Devis-Devis, J. (2006). Socially critical research perspectives in physical education. In D. Kirk, D. MacDonald, & M. O'Sullivan (Eds.), *The Handbook of Physical Education* (Vol. 9, pp. 37-58). London: Sage.

- DJB. (2021). Deutscher Judo-Bund - Trainerfortbildung „Inklusion“ in München. Retrieved 09.09.2021 from <https://www.judobund.de/aktuelles/detail/trainer- fortbildung-inklusion-in-muenchen-4451/>
- Duran, J. (2018). Entrenando un Proyecto social: María del Mar Martínez Alcaide. Boletín INFORMATIVO Asociación Española de Investigación Social Aplicada al deporte (AEISAD), 64(11), 212-216.
- Eime, R. M., Charity, M. J., Harvey, J. T., & Payne, W. R. (2015). Participation in sport and physical activity: associations with socio-economic status and geographical remoteness. *BMC Public Health*, 15(1). doi:10.1186/s12889- 015-1796-0
- Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogy of the oppressed - 30th anniversary edition*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Future+. (2019). *Future+ Handbook. A tool for promoting social inclusion through sport*. Retrieved from Barcelona: Future+ Project:
- Hallal, P. C., Victora, C. G., Azevedo, M. R., & Wells, J. C. K. (2006). Adolescent Physical Activity and Health. *Sports Medicine*, 36(12), 1019-1030. doi:10.2165/00007256-200636120-00003
- Henchoz, Y., O'Donoghue, G., Kennedy, A., Puggina, A., Aleksovska, K., Buck, C., Boccia, S. (2018). Socio-economic determinants of physical activity across the life course: A „DEterminants of Dlet and Physical ACTivity“ (DEDIPAC) umbrella literature review. *Plos One*, 13(1), e0190737. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0190737
- Higgerson, J., Halliday, E., Ortiz-Nunez, A., & Barr, B. (2019). The impact of free access to swimming pools on children's participation in swimming. A comparative regression discontinuity study. *Journal of Public Health*, 41(2), 214-221. doi:10.1093/pubmed/fdy079
- Howie, E. K., McVeigh, J. A., Smith, A. J., & Straker, L. M. (2016). Organized Sport Trajectories from Childhood to Adolescence and Health Associations. *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, 48(7), 1331-1339. doi:10.1249/ mss.0000000000000894
- Kelly, L. (2011). 'Social inclusion' through sports-based interventions? *Critical Social Policy*, 31(1), 126-150. doi:10.1177/0261018310385442
- Knijnik, J., & Luguetti, C. (2020). Social justice narratives in academia: challenges, struggles and pleasures PETE educators face in understanding and enacting critical pedagogy in Brazil. *Sport, Education and Society*, 26(5), 541-553. doi:10.1080/13573322.2020.1732905
- Lecumberri, C., Puig, N., & Maza, G. (2009). *Guía de intervención educativa a través del deporte*. Barcelona: INDE.
- Li, M.-H., Sum, R. K. W., Wallhead, T., Ha, A. S. C., Sit, C. H. P., & Li, R. (2019). Influence of Perceived Physical Literacy on Coaching Efficacy and Leadership Behavior: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Journal of Sports Science & Medicine*, 18(1), 82-90.

- Lubans, D., Richards, J., Hillman, C., Faulkner, G., Beauchamp, M., Nilsson, M., Biddle, S. (2016). Physical Activity for Cognitive and Mental Health in Youth: A Systematic Review of Mechanisms. *Pediatrics*, 138(3), e20161642-e20161642. doi:10.1542/peds.2016-1642
- Marques, M., Sousa, C., & Cruz, J. (2013). Estrategias para la enseñanza de competencias de vida a través del deporte en jóvenes en riesgo de exclusión social. 112, 63-71.
- Maza, G. (2009). Deporte, actividad física e inclusión social. Una guía para la intervención social a través de las actividades deportivas. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Deportes.
- Moeijes, J., van Busschbach, J. T., Wieringa, T. H., Kone, J., Bosscher, R. J., & Twisk, J. W. R. (2019). Sports participation and health-related quality of life in children: results of a cross-sectional study. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 17(1). doi:10.1186/s12955-019-1124-y
- Ovens, A., Flory, S. B., Sutherland, S., Philpot, R., Walton-Fisette, J. L., Hill, J., . . . Flemons, M. (2018). How PETE comes to matter in the performance of social justice education. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 23(5), 484-496. doi:10.1080/17408989.2018.1470614
- Palomäki, S., Hirvensalo, M., Smith, K., Raitakari, O., Männistö, S., Hutri-Kähönen, N., & Tammelin, T. (2018). Does organized sport participation during youth predict healthy habits in adulthood? A 28-year longitudinal study. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports*, 28(8), 1908-1915. doi:10.1111/sms.13205
- Pate, R. R., Pratt, M., Blair, S. N., Haskell, W. L., Macera, C. A., Bouchard, C., Buchner, D., Ettinger, W., Heath, G. W., King, A. C., & et al. (1995). Physical activity and public health. A recommendation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Sports Medicine. *JAMA*, 273(5), 402-407. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.273.5.402>
- Peng, J., Zhang, J., Zhao, L., Fang, P., & Shao, Y. (2020). Coach–Athlete Attachment and the Subjective Well-Being of Athletes: A Multiple-Mediation Model Analysis. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(13), 4675. doi:10.3390/ijerph17134675
- Philpot, R. (2016). Physical education initial teacher educators' expressions of critical pedagogy(ies). *European Physical Education Review*, 22(2), 260-275.
- Rodriguez-Ayllon, M., Cadenas-Sánchez, C., Estévez-López, F., Muñoz, N. E., Mora-Gonzalez, J., Migueles, J. H., . . . Esteban-Cornejo, I. (2019). Role of Physical Activity and Sedentary Behavior in the Mental Health of Pre-schoolers, Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Sports Medicine*, 49(9), 1383-1410. doi:10.1007/s40279-019-01099-5
- Sabariego, M. (2002). La formación del profesorado en educación intercultural. Bilbao: Desclée.
- Schenker, K., Linnér, S., Smith, W., Gerdin, G., Mordal Moen, K., Philpot, R., Westlie, K. (2019). Conceptualising social justice – what constitutes pedagogies for social justice in HPE across different contexts? *Curriculum Studies in Health and Physical Education*, 10(2), 126-140. doi:10.1080/25742981.2019.1609369

- Serra, P., Soler, S., Prat, M., Vizcarra, M. T., Garay, B., & Flintoff, A. (2016). The (in) visibility of gender knowledge in the Physical Activity and Sport Science degree in Spain. *Sport, Education and Society*, 23(4), 324-338. doi:10.1080/13573322.2016.1199016
- Smith, B. J., Thomas, M., & Batras, D. (2016). Overcoming disparities in organized physical activity: findings from Australian community strategies: Table1. *Health Promotion International*, 31(3), 572-581. doi:10.1093/heapro/dav042
- Soler Prat, S., Flores Aguilar, G., & Prat Grau, M. (2012). La Educación Física Y El Deporte Como Herramientas De Inclusión De La Población Inmigrante En Cataluña: El Papel De La Escuela Y La Administración Local. *Pensar a Práctica*, 15(1). doi:10.5216/rpp.v15i1.16653
- Soler, S. (2004). Formación de profesionales de educación física y deporte. El tratamiento de la diversidad cultural. In T. Lleixà & S. Soler (Eds.), *Actividad física y deporte en las sociedades multiculturales. ¿Inclusión o segregación?* (pp. 111-134). Barcelona: Editorial Horsori.
- Soler, S., Lecumberri, C., Daza, G., Hinojosa-Alcalde, I., Tarragó, R., & Serra, P. (2020). Centros penitenciarios y aprendizaje-servicio en el INEFC de Barcelona. *Tándem. Didáctica de la educación física*(69), 69-72.
- Somerset, S., & Hoare, D. J. (2018). Barriers to voluntary participation in sport for children: a systematic review. *BMC Pediatrics*, 18(1). doi:10.1186/s12887-018-1014-1 Van der Veken, K., Lauwerier, E., & Willems, S. (2020). "To mean something to someone": sport-for-development as a lever for social inclusion. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 19(1). doi:10.1186/s12939-019-1119-7
- Veselska, Z., Madarasova Geckova, A., Reijneveld, S. A., & van Dijk, J. P. (2011). Socio-economic status and physical activity among adolescents: The mediating role of self-esteem. *Public Health*, 125(11), 763-768. doi:10.1016/j.puhe.2011.09.007
- Walton-Fisette, J. L., & Sutherland, S. (2018). Moving forward with social justice education in physical education teacher education. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 23(5), 461-468. doi:10.1080/17408989.2018.1476476
- Woods, M. (2021). Inclusive Sport Design. Retrieved 07.09.2021 from [www.inclusivesportdesign.com](http://www.inclusivesportdesign.com)

3

A EUROPEAN-BASED  
COACH PROGRAMME

## 3.1. Module 1. Conceptual framework of an Inclusive Sports Organization

The high percentage of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion in Europe (21.7% in 2021) (Eurostat, 2022) highlights the importance of using sport as a tool for social inclusion and improving quality of life, especially among young people with low socio-economic status. According to *StreetGames* (1), about 3.5 million children in Britain come from families with a low socioeconomic level, an aspect directly associated with non-compliance with national guidelines for recommended daily physical activity. That is why this group is three times more likely to suffer from mental illness, living an average of 3.6 to 5 years less than their more affluent companions.

Against this background, all sports organizations and sport club's sensitive to the social inclusion of the most vulnerable population face a triple challenge:

- **Challenge 1:** to facilitate access to sports for all interested persons, especially young people, regardless of their social, economic, cultural status, etc., by adopting specific measures for this purpose.
- **Challenge 2:** to enhance the positive side of sport, which promotes the improvement of physical, mental, and social health; the acquisition of values, such as tolerance, solidarity, respect, effort, etc.; and the increase of social capital (improvement of relations and communication between equals) (Bourdieu, 1991).
- **Challenge 3:** to limit the negative side, which is linked to attitudes of violence, sexism, racism, dirty play, among others, especially because of the over-dimension of competitiveness.

Knowing that sport is not intrinsically educational or inclusive, the interventions that are carried out in sports entities and sports clubs by all the people involved such as managers, technicians, coordinators, etc without exception, they must be accompanied by a true socio-educational and inclusive will.

To this end, this module presents some of the main guidelines that would allow any sports organization/club to become an Inclusive Sports Organization (ISO).

---

1. <https://www.streetgames.org/about-us/>

## Main objectives of Module 1:

To reflect on the basic characteristics of an ISO:

- To analyse the key priorities of an ISO.
- To know the main structural barriers (practical and personal) that affect the sports participation of young people at risk of social exclusion.
- To identify global measures to reduce the effects of structural barriers.

## BLOCK 1. Key priorities

According to the association *Play by the Rules (2)*, sports-clubs that position themselves as defenders of inclusion can generate a set of social and private benefits of great magnitude.

### • **Social benefits:**

- Provide a more diverse and inclusive sports community.
- Breaking barriers and promoting social inclusion.
- Increase access and opportunities for participation.
- Comply with regulatory obligations in sports.

### • **Specific benefits:**

- Improve your brand and reputation.
- Increase the number of members.
- Increase opportunities for sponsorship.
- Increase public support and the volunteer base.
- Ensure greater publicity and a positive public image.
- Provide consistency in "leading by example" to meet their strategic objectives.

Given this reality, what are the fundamental priorities facing any sports club or entity that wants to become an ISO? (Figure 7) (SPORTOP, 2022):

- **Participation:** is concerned about increasing the participation of young people, facilitating access to them. It also refers to the active participation of all the agents involved (management team, technical team, athletes, and families) in the decision-making of the entity and in the final evaluation of the proposals.



- **Equal opportunities:** to ensure participation in sport, equal opportunities among all users must be promoted in an equitable manner, for example, by reducing the gender gap, reducing economic constraints, etc.
- **Educational approach to sport:** it involves adopting a true educational and pedagogical approach to sport that reduces its countervalues (extreme competitiveness, violence, exclusion for reasons of motor skills, etc.) and to promote free participation in a positive climate for all.

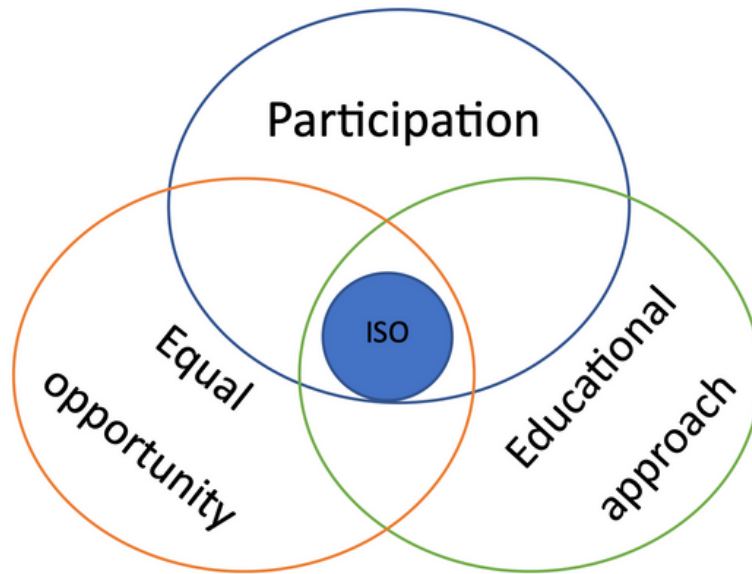


Figure 7. Key priorities of an ISO entity. Own elaboration

**ACTIVITY:**

Reflect on your sports-club entity and answer in the table, being 1 nothing and 3 much.

How does my sports club...?	1	2	3
Is concerned to increase participation and recruitment of young people			
Facilitates the active participation of families, the technical team, etc., in different decisions			
Reduces the gender gap (facilitates the existence of mixed teams...)			
It allows the incorporation of athletes regardless of their sports levels, etc.			
Proposes alternative measures or creates facilities for the payment of quotas			
Promotes education in values			
Diversifies the sports practices of the entity			
Prioritises maximum participation of athletes			
Put sports results in the background			

## BLOCK 2. Structural barriers and global measures

Families with low socioeconomic level and young people at risk of social exclusion may encounter a set of structural barriers (practical and personal) that negatively affect when participating in physical-sports activities in the community, both short and long term (Somerset & Hoere, 2018) (Figure 2). ISOs should be able to know, identify and, if possible, prevent and/or eliminate them.

### . Practical barriers

The main practical barriers are grouped into three: time, location, and cost. Families (LOW-SES) tend to have little temporary availability, especially for work reasons, which can make it difficult to move their children/ as (Transport- Location) to clubs or sports entities (sometimes away from homes and with practice hours difficult to reconcile). In addition, economic difficulties can prevent the payment of fees (sometimes high), the purchase of sports accessories (sometimes essential, e.g. hockey skates), and even the payment of transportation.

### . Personal barriers

Personal barriers are divided into internal and external. Internally, young people with a low level of motor skills or competence are often afraid to be publicly judged for it, which favors their own awareness and conformity (assume that they are not suitable for such sports). These ideas grow in contexts of maximum competitiveness. On the other hand, bad previous sports experiences, such as in Physical Education classes, along with rejection or negative assessment by peers or coaches/s, add to cultural, physical and gender stereotypes, among others, as external barriers to consider. Obviously, both internal and external barriers can be present in training, so the role of the technical team (coaches and coaches) takes an essential role.

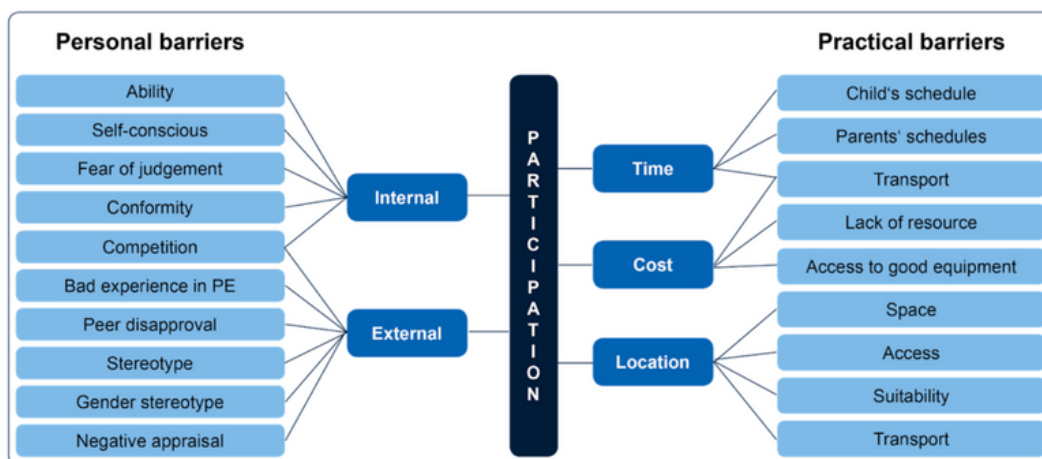


Figure 8. Structural barriers to family sports participation. Source: Somerset & Hoere (2018)

In order to overcome these limitations, ISOs can adopt a comprehensive set of measures which make it possible to limit the negative effects of the above barriers and thus facilitate young people's access to sports (Figure 9). Together with these, Module 2 will provide a set of more specific practical strategies and guidance for their implementation.

- **Athlete recruitment (not to be confused with talent acquisition):** Does the club perform any type of sports recruitment? If so, how does it work? What are the criteria? If not, why not? On the other hand, is it possible to increase the participation of young people in the community?
- **Funding and partnerships:** what are the sources of funding available to the entity? cooperation with other external actors? Could resources be increased?
- **Access to sports facilities:** how is access to sports facilities? Can it negatively affect the participation of young people in the community?
- **Hourly availability of children/children and their families:** what hourly availability does the sports organization offer and how could it fit the needs of children and their families? Is there any flexibility depending on the groups involved?
- **Location and transport:** to what extent can the location of sports facilities limit the participation of athletes? are there adequate means of transport for access or other viable alternatives?
- **Pedagogical training** (team of coaches and technical team): beyond technical-sports training, what is the level of pedagogical training of sports agents? as there a particular concern for the pedagogical training of staff?



Figure 9. Overall measures taken by an ISO entity. Source: Own production

### BLOCK 3. Case studies

The following two cases describe the realities of two young people. Read them, reflect on them, and identify the barriers (practical and personal) they encounter and choose what global measures could be adopted from an ISO.

#### CASE 1:

*Paola is a thirteen-year-old Cuban girl who loves basketball. However, she has not been able to practice it since she arrived in the country two years ago. At the beginning of this course, the main basketball club of the city organized an exhibition and a sports day in her school. The technical team was so fascinated with her level that they invited her to join the training of the club in the outskirts of the city (an hour away from the family home by public transport). However, Paola has not yet been able to attend because she must take care of her six-year-old sister until her father and mother close the restaurant and get home.*

What kind of practical barriers does Paola encounter?	Yes	Not
Time availability (for families)		
Transporting		
Lack of resources		
Access to good equipment		
Space - Access facilities		
Facility location		

What overall measures does or could the club take?	Yes	Not
Recruitment of athletes		
Financing and cooperation		
Access to facilities		
Time availability (for families)		
Location and transport		
Pedagogical training		

## CASE 2:

*Kevin's family (nine) wants his son to play sports outside of school, but he doesn't want to. After trying several collective sports in different clubs in the city, Kevin does not want to try anymore because he thinks that he is not good at sports in general, something that his classmates and even his Physical Education teacher often reproach him. Besides, Kevin hates the pressure he sometimes gets under during games. He is afraid of failing or losing control of the ball. If it were up to him, he'd go swimming every afternoon, at his own pace, no pressure. However, there are no water facilities in the city.*

What kind of personal barriers does Kevin encounter?	Yes	Not
Skill		
Fear of being judged		
Conformism		
Self-consciousness		
Bad experiences in EF		

Disapproval of the comrades		
Negative assessment		
Stereotypes		
Gender stereotypes		
Competition		

What overall measures does or could the club take?	Yes	Not
Recruitment of athletes		
Financing and cooperation		
Access to facilities		
Time availability (for families)		
Location and transport		
Pedagogical training		

## TO LEARN MORE

- Sport! OP! (Opportunities for the inclusion of vulnerable young people through sport) is a project of the European Union's Erasmus + programme. This project aims to improve the well-being of vulnerable young people by building resilience and developing social and life skills.

- <http://sportopproject.eu>

## 3.2. Module 2. Practical Strategies and Guidelines

### INTRODUCTION

The online training program is designed to provide practical guidance and support to youth coaches, sports organizations, and clubs who are committed to becoming more inclusive for families and children of low-socio-economic status. This module aims to help you identify and implement effective and practical strategies and guidelines to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all participants.

The module will cover a range of topics, i.e., the implementation of a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) mission statement, practical guidelines to overcome barriers and become more inclusive, as well as a best practice example to provide inspiration and real-world learnings. You will learn about the importance of considering the needs of families and children from low-SES backgrounds, and the strategies that can be implemented to ensure equal access and opportunities for all participants. The module will also provide guidance on how to build relationships with local organizations and businesses to create mutually beneficial partnerships that can help support your efforts to become more inclusive.

By completing Module 2, you will have a better understanding of the practical steps that can be taken to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for families and children of low-socio-economic status. The strategies and guidelines covered in this module will help you to ensure that your organization is accessible and supportive for all participants, regardless of their background or financial circumstances. Whether you are a youth coach, sports organization, or club, this module is designed to help you achieve your goal of becoming more inclusive and welcoming for all.

#### **Main objectives of Module 2:**

- To write your own DEI Statement
- To learn about practical strategies to become more inclusive

## **BLOCK 1: DEI Commitment Statement**

### **1. What is a DEI commitment statement?**

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commitment Statement (DEI) is a practical way to declare and manifest one's own intentions with regards to becoming more inclusive. It shows that you as a coach or a sports organization aim to foster diversity and belonging in your community. A DEI further highlights your values and goals related to diversity, equity and inclusion. It can be especially helpful in establishing trust between you and your community, athletes, coaches, parents and other stakeholders. A DEI commitment statement is not required by law nor policy, yet it is a positive signal for a diverse and inclusive place to work, train and coach.

### **2. How to write a DEI commitment statement?**

Your DEI commitment statement is simple and short, yet elaborative. Therefore, we suggest the following guidelines for you to create your very own and individual DEI commitment statement. Your DEI statement should consider the following:

- What does DEI mean to you or your organization?
- How does DEI relate to your or your organization's mission and values?
- Why is DEI important to you or your organization, now and in the future?
- How do you or does your organization approach DEI, now and in the future?
- What are some specific DEI initiatives or actions, either ongoing or planned for the future?

When writing your DEI commitment statement you should consider that anyone should be able to read the statement - therefore, write in an inclusive manner.

- Create a headline (other than "DEI commitment statement")
- Keep the statement short (20 - 75 words)
- 8th grade readability level
- Keep sentences short (~8 words average)
- Use positive words
- You may also use graphical elements
- You can draw inspiration from well-written examples (see 2.3)
- Give your DEI commitment statement a home (see 2.4)



### 3. Example DEI commitment statements

1. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is the American governing body for all collegiate sports ([www.ncaa.org/sports/2016/3/2/ncaa-inclusion-statement](http://www.ncaa.org/sports/2016/3/2/ncaa-inclusion-statement))
2. The Canadian Endurance Sport Alliance (CESA) briefly describes its DEI related goals on their website ([www.endurancesportsalliance.ca/dei-statement](http://www.endurancesportsalliance.ca/dei-statement))
3. The Barça Foundation also does a great job in describing and visually portraying their DEI goals (<https://foundation.fcbarcelona.com/for-diversity>)

### 4. Homework: Give your DEI commitment statement a home

A good intention is worth even more, when others know about it. So show your community what your DEI-related goals and intentions are. Tell them about your values, so that they feel invited and develop a sense of belonging. You can share your DEI statement on your organization's website, you can print and frame your DEI commitment statement, in order to hang it in a place, where everyone can see and read it. No matter how or where, be creative and tell the world about your DEI commitment statement.

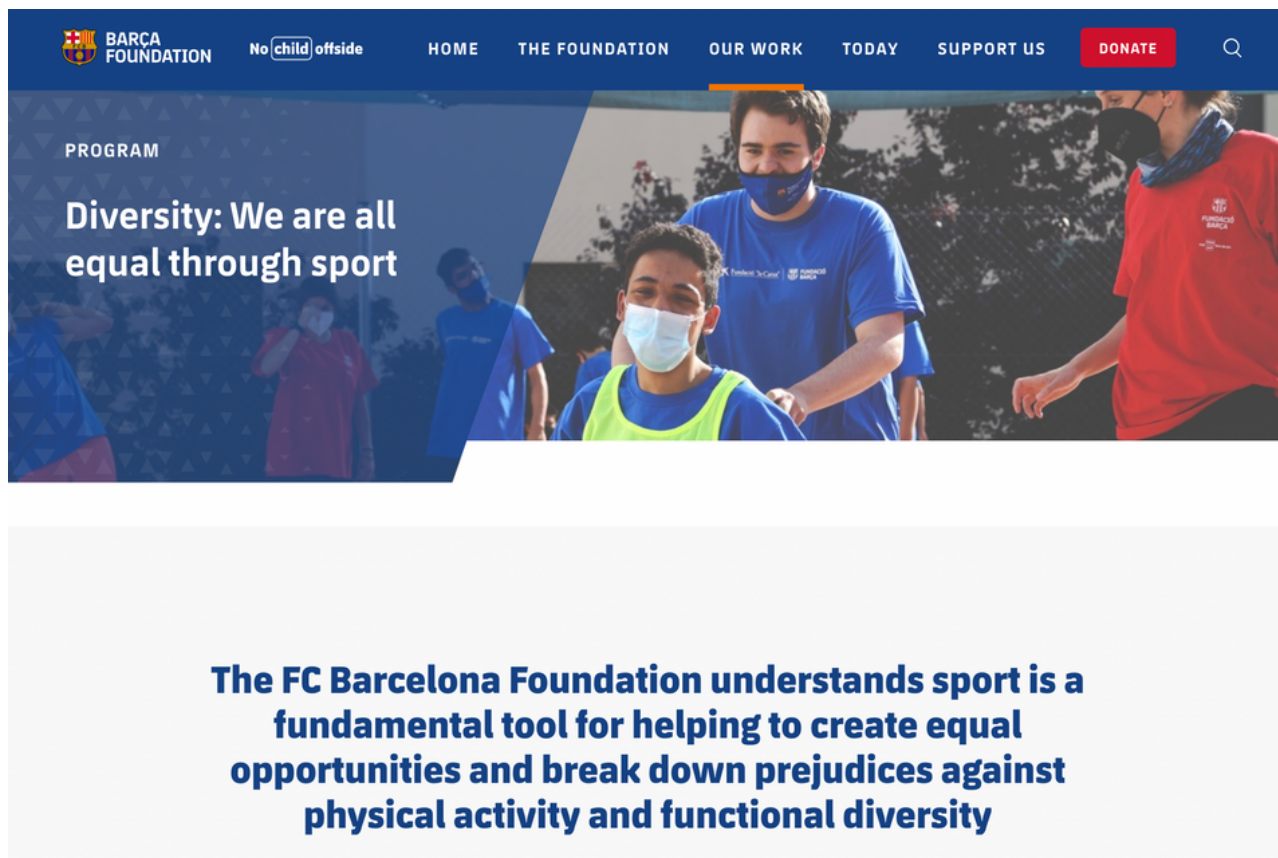


Figure 10. Screen-shot of Barça Foundation DEI statement (28.12.2022)

## **BLOCK 2. Inclusiveness Survey**

### **1. Introduction: Barriers**

As indicated in Module 1, practical and personal barriers (reference to figure in Module 1) prevent long-term participation of children in organized sports. They can be identified, in order to remove them or help families and children overcome those barriers. In the following block, it is your goal to identify potential barriers within your club, organization or coaching framework. Where can you integrate a greater degree of inclusion? Where do you see potential to cooperate with your community to improve inclusiveness? How can you bring your members and athletes together in order to create a more inclusive environment?

Personal barriers are either internal or external, ranging from the own athletic ability of the athlete (internal) to negative appraisal (external). It is quite obvious that these internal barriers are mostly influenced by the peer group and training environment. On the other hand, practical barriers including time, cost and location constraints, are mostly influenced by the families, community and sports organization. So whether you are a coach or an employee in a sports organization, both sides are very relevant. However, you may be able to have more or less influence on removing barriers, depending on your position within the framework.

Read through the “practical Strategies” in section 3.2 and then answer the questions in 3.3 for yourself to find out more about the barriers that your individual case may pose to young children who want to participate in organized sports. Use this knowledge to then increase inclusiveness.

### **2. Practical strategies**

Inclusive sport organizations aim to create an environment that promotes equal access and opportunities for all participants, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. This can be achieved through a combination of strategies and guidelines that address accessibility, communication, diversity, and support. Some of these strategies may include providing accessible facilities, using inclusive language, encouraging diversity in leadership positions, and offering training and resources to support inclusivity. By adopting an inclusive approach, sport organizations can create a welcoming and empowering environment that benefits everyone.

Collaborating with schools can provide a strong platform for reaching potential new members, especially for organizations catering to younger age groups. Recruitment at schools can also be a direct and effective way to attract new members. Building relationships with social services, such as disability organizations, can help reach individuals with specific needs. Promoting the organization within the local community can raise awareness and encourage community members to get involved. Utilizing volunteers can also be a valuable asset in acquiring new members as they can help spread the word, assist with events and provide a welcoming presence. By utilizing a combination of these strategies, sports organizations can effectively reach and attract a diverse range of new members, promoting inclusivity and growth within the organization.



An example within the European community on how to use volunteering as a measure to increase member acquisition can be found following this link: <http://www.prevenicija.ba/en/volontiranje-n-za-n-studente-ice/stariji-brat-starija-sestra>

There are several sources of funding available to sports clubs, including government grants, corporate sponsorships, and community fundraising. Applying for government grants, such as those offered by local councils or state sport organizations, can provide funding for new equipment, facility upgrades, or programs. Corporate sponsorships can also provide financial support, as well as offer opportunities for brand exposure and community engagement. Community fundraising initiatives, such as bake sales or charity events, can help generate additional funds and raise awareness for the organization. To reduce the financial burden for low-SES families, sports organizations can offer financial assistance or scholarships, flexible payment options, and subsidies for equipment and transportation. Partnering with local businesses to offer discounts on gear and equipment can also help reduce costs for families. By taking a proactive approach to reducing financial barriers, sports organizations can increase accessibility and promote inclusivity for all participants.



Provide kids with access to sports facilities and equipment and they will lead a more active life. This is the motivation for fritids banken in Sweden, an amazing initiative providing kids with the opportunity to borrow all sorts of sports equipment - for free! See here: <https://www.fritidsbanken.se/en/about-us/>

Providing accessible means of transportation to practices and games/meets is an important factor in attracting and retaining members, especially for those from low-SES families who may not have access to reliable transportation. Sports organizations can explore partnerships with local transportation companies, provide subsidies or reimbursement for transportation costs, or organize carpooling options for families.

### 3. Survey: Identification of own potential

1. Does the sports club provide all athletes/children with access to adequate equipment?

- a. YES à Great! This is an exceptional way of increasing participation of children and youth athletes.
- b. NO à Does the sports organization aid families with access and costs of sports equipment?
  - i. 1.2.1.YES à A very good way of reducing the families' financial burden. Great job!
  - ii. 1.2.2.NO à Providing children with equipment or opportunity to e.g., rent, borrow, or buy second-hand sports equipment, may drastically reduce the financial burden on the families and hence increase participation rates.

2. Are sports facilities open to public use?

- a. YES à Great! This way children get to be physically active, spend time on your facility's property and may even become active members of your community at some point in the future.
- b. NO à Can sporting facilities be used outside of regular training times?
  - i. 2.2.1.YES à Great effort! Yet, you might want to think about opening up your facilities even to non-members, e.g., during summer vacation time, so children who are out of school can be physically active.
  - ii. 2.2.2.NO à It has been shown that opening up sports facilities (e.g., soccer pitches, basketball courts, swimming pools) for children and adolescents – free of charge – increases overall physical activity.

3. Is the sports club connected to public transportation?

- a. YES à Perfect! This is a safe way for all children to get to your facility
- b. NO à Think about increasing accessibility for those who might not be able to drive themselves or have their parents fetch them. Community buses may be one way to increase participation.

4. Can young athletes ride their bicycles to the venue safely?

- a. YES à Great location!
- b. NO à Organization of group rides to practice for more safety

5. Is there a way in place in order to alleviate high costs for participation?

a. NO → For families of low socio-economic status, the financial burden of sport participation can be insurmountable. So for the sake of the children's participation in organized sports, it may be worth thinking about how to alleviate some of these costs for those who cannot afford it. E.g., think about scholarship or sponsorship programs, support from the municipality and so on.

6. Do coaches go through an education program (coaching license)?

a. YES → This is great! Youth coaches play an essential role and are the contact point between the sports organization and the youth athletes. Especially in youth sports, coaches need to combine sports specific knowledge and pedagogical know-how. Make sure to give them all the education they require.

b. Are coaches supported financially when pursuing further education?

i. 2.2.1. NO → Coaches very often invest a large part of their free time into their coaching work without being financially reimbursed. Improving the coaching staff's level of education may also enhance your organization's attractiveness for potential new members.

7. Can athletes talk to someone regarding bad experiences within the organization?

a. YES → Your organization is a safe space that has the children's health and development as their first priority!

b. NO → Make sure that children feel safe and make your organization a place where they can thrive and develop their potential to the fullest!

### **BLOCK 3. Best Practice Example - "Sport vernetzt"**

#### **1. Sport vernetzt by Alba Berlin**

A German term to describe a network through sport as well as connecting people through sport: Sport vernetzt is a large scale Germany-wide project initiated by Alba Berlin with the goal to "getting children excited about exercise, linking daycare, school and club sports, and developing socially disadvantaged neighborhoods" (watch this [video](#) in German language).

Alba BERLIN Basketballteam e.V. was founded in 1991 and has since grown to the club with the highest number of members and one of the most successful basketball teams in Germany. Initiated in the summer of 2021, Sport vernetzt is an educational initiative by Alba Berlin to create education and exercise opportunities for children - especially in less privileged parts of Germany's metropolitan areas. What started in Gropiusstadt (Berlin), has now grown to a country wide network of daycare facilities, schools, universities, social sponsors, neighborhood managements and sports clubs (Sport vernetzt partners). On a daily basis, more than 10,000 children exercise with Alba Berlin in 55 daycare facilities, 160 schools and with more than 120 active coaches all across Germany.

Public funds, foundations, companies, health insurance companies and housing associations finance the project, while Sport vernetzt partners are the driving forces implementing the project locally at the locations of action (daycares, schools and sports clubs).

## 3.3. Module 3. Communication

### INTRODUCTION

Sport is a context that allows the full development of the human personality and civic awareness to be achieved. According to the Olympic Charter, it must be characterized for effort and fair play, self-discipline and teamwork, respect for competition rules and camaraderie, rejection of violence and racism, and the defence of sporting universality, tolerance, and peace. At present, diversity in sport and in society is increasing due to migration, which contributes a social and human wealth that we must know how to respect and twin, following the fundamental principles of Olympism. Effort and sporting ability are nothing without camaraderie, solidarity, tolerance, intercultural integration, appreciation for our rival, our teammate, the coach, the one who referees us, those who encourage and accompany us, without respect for their dignity as persons.

However, numerous conflicts arise from a lack of respect of equal values. In the sports context, managers and coaches have an important role to play as they can solve conflictive situations that might occur in the everyday. For this reason, it is essential that managers and coaches have strong interpersonal skills to be able to communicate with everyone in a way that is respectful.

In society, it is impossible not to communicate. Communication is the exchange of information between people, involving one or more senders, and one or more receivers, who establish a relationship through a message. Communication is a two-way interaction in which messages (information) are exchanged and can be symmetrical (when the communicational exchange is based on equality) or complementary (when it is based on difference). However, due to different causes (related to the sender, the channel, the message, or the receiver), there may be differences between what is meant and what reaches the other person; that is, we never know what we have said until we hear the response to what we have said.

Mastering communication skills is of great importance, since they are the basis for interacting with other people. Through these skills we can express our feelings, ideas, participate in a debate, or resolve a conflict. Therefore, developing strong communication skills helps to improve other skills and abilities such as empathy, assertiveness or problem solving. Following this line, the main objective of this module is to bring the concept of communication closer to managers and coaches so that they learn how to use communication to foster an inclusive climate for athletes.



## Main objectives of this module:

- 1.To deepen on communication: its main characteristics, the different types of communication, the elements that can facilitate it and the barriers that can occur in the communication process.
- 2.To learn practical strategies for managers and coaches on how to improve communication, and how to facilitate the inclusion of all athletes.
- 3.To acquire self-assessment tools and strategies so that managers and coaches can test the knowledge acquired.

## BLOCK 1. Fundamentals of communication

The communication process is necessary for the development of effective, efficient, and effective training and competition, since it allows the transmission of knowledge, competence, skills, and human values to athletes (Figure 11). However, within communication, errors or problems can occur. Explanations for this can be that the sender does not communicate the message well, the receiver does not receive it well, or because an adequate exchange of messages is not achieved. These problems can be derived from the message itself (e.g. double meanings, verbal games, incomplete or distorted messages); psychosocial (e.g. simultaneous or conflicting demands, misinformation, censorship); or human, personal, or interaction-related (e.g., polarizing thoughts, overgeneralization, catastrophic vision, personalization,

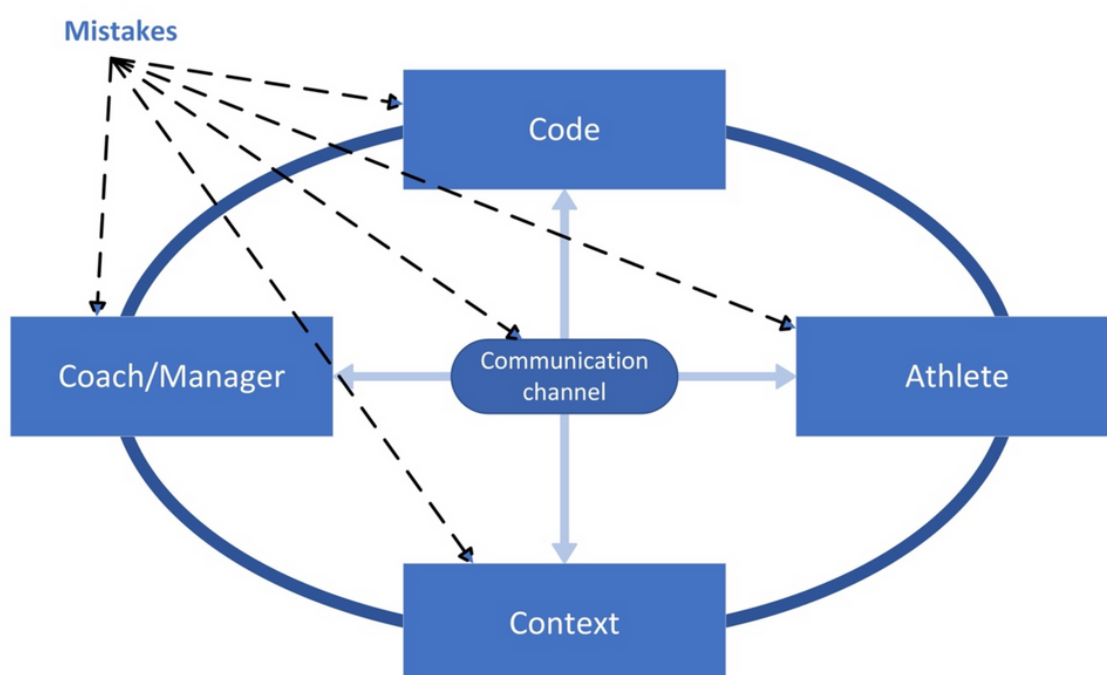


Figure 11. Summary of the communication process. Source: Bohórquez (2022)

## **Types of communication**

In interpersonal relationships, attention must be paid both to what the sender says and the way it expresses the information. Therefore, communication can be of two types: verbal and non-verbal. On the one hand, verbal communication is the vehicle for communicating the explicit content of the message, that is, opinions, ideas, thoughts, etc. Through verbal behaviours, questions, requests, arguments, and disagreements are made; as well as orders and instructions are given. It has both linguistic (vocabulary and syntax) and paralinguistic (prosody, tone, and volume of voice) components, and the keys to proper verbal communication are not interrupting, active listening (e.g., paraphrasing).

On the other hand, nonverbal communication, also called body language, is made up of a set of behaviours that accompanies verbal communication. It includes affection, attitudes, and emotions; It serves as a complement and support to the verbal message and can even be used in isolation to express information. It includes a gestural/corporal component, either symbolic or contextual.

The information provided from both verbal and non-verbal communication is complementary. It is appropriate that the message sent from both types of communication is consistent. However, if they are different, we pay more attention to non-verbal communication.

## **Facilitating elements and obstacles in communication**

There are aspects or actions that improve communication, including:

- Turn-taking in a conversation.
- Choose the right time and place for the conversation.
- Feel at ease and comfortable.
- Explicitly value communication.
- Repeat part of what was heard.
- Make a summary of the last arguments issued.
- Check that the message was understood.

However, there are also obstacles that prevent the message from flowing properly, that is, circumstances that can paralyze, stop, or prevent the communication process and the personal relationship that are established, including

- Poor choice of time and/or place.
- Emotional states.
- Not actively listening.
- Not empathizing.
- Not asking open-ended or specific questions.
- Trying to impose things.
- Not clearly expressing your wishes or opinions.
- Sending mixed messages.
- Not accepting criticism.
- Using a vocabulary that is not easy to understand (e.g., technical terms)
- Making accusations, threats.
- Using labels or generalizations

## **BLOCK 2. Practical strategies**

Establishing a good relationship and communication with athletes and families is essential for managers and coaches, facilitating a good work environment and improving motivation and cohesion of everyone involved in the sporting community. Some of the practical strategies that can be applied by managers and coaches to improve and enhance interpersonal relationships and facilitate the inclusion of everyone are shown below:

### **1.Strategies for managers and coaches**

These strategies can be used by both managers and coaches and are related to generating an adequate group climate with athletes, interaction and communication with families, and interpersonal relationships with athletes.

### **1.1. Strategies related to group climate.**

To maintain proper communication and interpersonal interaction, group leaders (whether managers or coaches) should:

- Foster a safe environment, physically and psychologically.
- Satisfy the basic psychological needs of athletes.
- Provide them with adequate supervision.
- Take an interest in the problems that athletes may have through informal talks (e.g., difficulties at school, problems with family or friends, relationships with peers, integration to the group...).
- Establishment of norms, expectations and responsibilities to make athletes responsible for their actions, discussing and determining the consequences of inappropriate behaviour's.

### **1.2. Strategies related to family interaction and communication.**

To maintain adequate interaction with the families of athletes, managers and coaches can carry out various actions, including:

- Greet each other and say goodbye to everyone in training / competitions.
- Take an interest in them and their children/family members.
- Give them information that may interest them (e.g. schedules, talks, meetings...).
- Comment on the progress of the athlete, alluding to the positive aspects and, if applicable, possible negative behaviour's, trying to provide guidelines so that they can work on them at home.
- Give individual meeting options to discuss any aspect in more detail.
- Establish roles of responsibility among all family members of the group (e.g., group delegate, manager of extra-sports activities, photographic manager...).
- Encourage participation in sports and extra-sports activities that create group cohesion and encourage interaction between them (e.g., father/mother-son match, going to see a high-level match, meals...).

### **1.3.Strategies related to the relationship with athletes.**

To strengthen and improve the relationship with athletes, managers and coaches can do the following:

- Model behaviour (be patient with others) athletes, have realistic expectations, show respect to all agents involved in the sporting context, communicate clearly and concisely, and see mistakes as a learning opportunity.
- Foster positive interpersonal relationships among athletes with other social agents (e.g., parents, peers).
- Make a conscious effort to connect with others athletes on key issues inside and outside of sport; being close, honest, and caring about them, accepting their perspectives and values, showing empathy, and making your expectations clear.
- Motivate the athletes so that they try to apply what they have learned in training inside and outside the sports context, giving them positive reinforcement when they do so successfully.

### **2.Specific strategies for managers**

These strategies are designed specifically for managers and are mainly focused on communication and interaction with the athletes' families, and with other social agents in the community to which they belong.

- Arrange an initial meeting with the family to share general information (e.g., sports equipment needed by athletes, schedules, calendars, etc), the sports philosophy of the club / team, as well as the importance of their role, and the motivation of the manager and coaches to carry out their position. It is also important to request their participation in different tasks or roles of responsibility, open a question time and thank them for their participation.
- Follow some lines of action regarding meetings with families: send them informative notes with the importance and details of the meeting (place, time, agenda and contact); hold meetings at times that allow the greatest possible attendance of families and in comfortable and relaxed rooms; be punctual; use some audio-visual support as a guide for the meetings; and propose a spatial distribution of the attendees that allows visual contact between them and with the manager.
- Forge ties with families and other social agents who are members of the community to which the athletes belong (e.g. teachers).

### 3. Specific Strategies for Coaches

The objective of the coach should not only be to improve sporting skills, but also to spread enthusiasm and stimulate sports practice; maintain a positive and proactive attitude; foster good relations with and between players; teach to respect everyone (the rival, the referee, and the public); develop a protocol when acts of violence, racism, homophobia, or discrimination arise. In summary, the promotion of personal development above results. There are many strategies that coaches can follow to promote all the above mentioned, for example, communication and interaction with athletes:

- Maintain everyday rituals such as greeting everyone involved in the sporting context (e.g., athletes, families, etc).
- Use respectful language, avoid an aggressive tone, insults, belittling or disqualifications. Athletes should not be allowed to use inappropriate language.
- Have a healthy relationship with all members of the group while acknowledging the authority of the coach. The coach should worry about those who do not attend or those who are injured, promoting the participation of all.
- Promote dialogue with the group, asking about their interests and problems, answering their questions, reinforcing their contributions, and actively listening to them.
- Promote relationships between the athletes themselves to develop a feeling of belonging to the group, and to increase motivation and commitment.
- Create a mastery-oriented climate (i.e., seek a specific goal in the lessons and orient instructions and constructive feedback towards it, favouring the process over the result), giving athletes a logical reasoning for decisions and letting them choose between different types of tasks, considering their points of view.
- Provide athletes with a structured definition of the target skills so they can understand it and take time during practice to talk about them and their importance.
- Establish a 5-minute reflection routine for the athletes to express themselves, reflect on what they have done during the session, what has gone well or could be improved, and how they have felt.
- Use conflict resolution strategies, involving the athletes themselves in this process. The following section explores these strategies in more depth.

## Conflict Resolution Strategies

Conflict is “a mismatch between the needs, tendencies, or values of people when interacting in a specific context” (Ruiz Omeñaca, 2004, p. 103). Fostered by the interdependence between people and the incompatibility between their objectives. Conflict is an essential element in the coexistence of human beings, and depending on the purpose for which it arises and the way of dealing with it, it can become a motor of personal development and a catalyst for human relations.

Conflict resolution. It could be defined as the cognitive-affective-behavioural process through which the individual, or a group, identifies or discovers the effective means of dealing with the problems encountered in everyday life. It is essential that managers, coaches, and the athletes themselves know how to independently resolve conflicts that may arise in sports practice. To do this, the person in charge of the group must act as a mentor or mediator, promoting a democratic climate based on rules of coexistence previously agreed with the group, using dialogue as the main tool to resolve the conflict.

In a conflict you can act in different ways, collected in Table 1. The objective when resolving a conflict should be to act using collaboration or negotiation strategies, avoiding imposing, avoiding, and giving in, since they generate situations of imbalance and do not take care of the relationships of coexistence in the team.

**Table 2. Ways of acting during a conflict**

Performance	balance in relationships	social perspective	Balance in the result
Impose	Superiority / Inferiority	Null attention to relationships of coexistence.	I benefit / you are harmed
Avoid	Inferiority / Superiority	Little or no attention to relationships of coexistence.	I am harmed / you benefit
Give	Inferiority / Superiority	Coexistence is attended to the point of giving up other objectives.	I am harmed / you benefit Sometimes I accept what I think is fair
Seek outside help	Uncertain	It varies depending on the circumstances.	Uncertain.
Negotiate	Equality	Attention is paid to relationships of coexistence.	You and I get a benefit, although we give in part.
To collaborate	Equality	Attention is paid to coexistence seeking the common benefit.	You and I benefit.

Next, actions that managers or coaches can carry out to solve disruptive actions of an athlete or to resolve conflicts between several players are proposed (Table 2).

**Table 3. Strategies for managers and coaches**

Strategy	Description
time for reflection	<p>Faced with a disruptive action, they are given time to think.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The player leaves the activity and has some time to reflect on the meaning of his behaviour.</li> <li>• Return to activity when you are fit to resume participate, respecting the rules of coexistence and with the approval of the coach.</li> <li>• You can talk to the player before joining, so that he can tell us what he has thought about what happened and what he is going to do about it, as well as for the coach to support or redirect him.</li> </ul>
modification plan	<p>Between the coach and the player, a plan is established to modify the unwanted behaviour's.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside of the session, the coach holds a meeting with the player in which the steps of conflict resolution are followed to seek compromise with the agreed solution.</li> <li>• It is recommended to sign a contract and put a review date.</li> <li>• It is necessary to evaluate the compliance and effectiveness of the plan, and, if it does not work, find another.</li> </ul>
talkative bank	<p>The players involved in the problem leave the activity and focus on resolving the conflict autonomously. If they are not capable, the coach or another player intervenes as a mediator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply the steps for resolving a conflict.</li> </ul>
sports board	<p>A board of players is established to act as mediators to facilitate the resolution of the conflict.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It can be used when there is a problem that two players are unable to solve on their own, or it affects a large part of the class.</li> <li>• A jury is established with 3 players who intervene as mediators.</li> <li>• You can join the rest of the group, holding a great debate with lawyers or popular jury.</li> </ul>
Emergency plan	<p>It consists of taking a decision, a drastic decision, to reach an agreement and that the discussions do not drag on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It can be used if the problem is not resolved through cooperation/negotiation.</li> <li>• Generally, lots are cast or a Solomonic decision is made.</li> <li>• The players agree to comply with the coexistence guidelines established by the coach.</li> <li>• It is the strategy that contributes the least to the development of student autonomy, so it should be used as little as possible, but sometimes it is necessary to maintain a positive atmosphere in the group.</li> </ul>



In conjunction with the above strategies, managers and coaches can also follow (and teach athletes) the different steps for conflict resolution, shown in Figure 12 and Table 3.

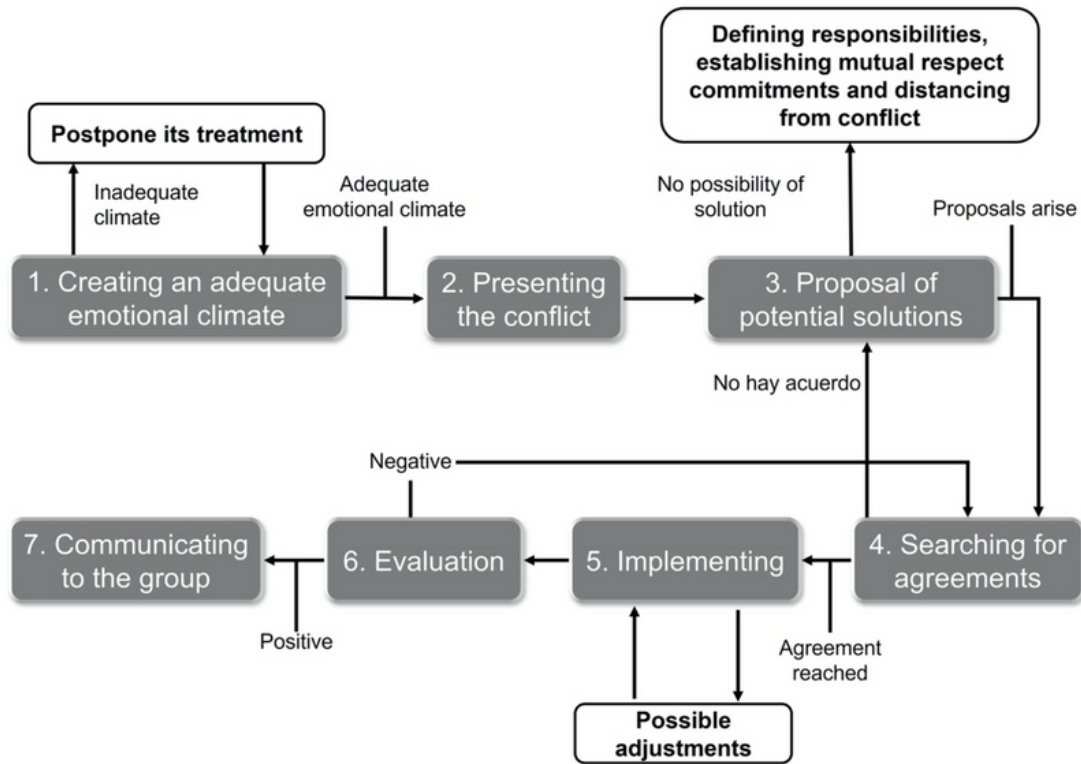


Figure 12. Steps for conflict resolution. Source: Adapted from Caballero-Blanco (2012), Caballero-Blanco & Delgado-Noguera (2014), Ruiz Omeñaca (2004) and Vizcarra (2004)

**Table 4. Development of the steps for conflict resolution**

Passed	Goals	involved	Mediator
Creation of an adequate emotional climate	Reduce the emotional climate of the situation. Create the conditions so that the parties involved can express their feelings in a positive way.	They express their emotions and feelings in an effective and non-violent way.	It curbs violent responses. Orients emotionality towards channels of rational expression.
Exposure of the conflict	Share perceptions about what happened.	They explain what has happened.	Regulates the alternation in speaking time. Paraphrase the interlocutors. Synthesize positions.
Approach of possible solutions	Propose alternatives that can provide a solution to the conflict.	They propose constructive alternatives that provide a solution to the conflict raised.	Summarize and clarify proposals. Repair common needs.
Agreement search	Choose among the people involved the solution that provides benefits to all or, the one that provides an acceptable balance between what is given up and what is obtained.	They select the most beneficial alternative while also being sensitive to the needs of the other party.	It urges the parties to opt for the proposal that meets the needs of all. Summarizes the commitments assumed by the parties.
Implementation of the agreement	Implement the agreement with the commitment of the parties to comply with the agreement.	They implement the solution. They fulfil their part of the commitment.	You can verify whether during the implementation of the agreement the parties comply with their commitment.
Assessment	Analyse the degree to which the agreement has been put into practice. Evaluate the agreement to overcome the conflict.	They express their degree of satisfaction with the agreement and with the way in which it has been put into practice.	You can propose to the people involved that they assess the agreement and its implementation.
Communication to the group	Share with group members which has been the origin of the conflict, how it has been addressed, what solutions have been adopted and how they have satisfied the interests of all parties. Offer the group keys for resolving the conflict.	They explain to their classmates the notable aspects in relation to the way in which they have dealt with the conflict.	It can encourage you to explain to others what happened. Try to speed up the process. It synthesizes focusing on the most outstanding elements from an educational perspective.

## **BLOCK 3. Practical cases**

Two case studies will be presented. If you are a manager, you will complete the first case study, if you are a coach you can go to the next page and complete the second case study.

### **Case study for managers**

You have been the manager of a volleyball sports club, in which there are usually 14 teams of different categories and genders. This year the council has given you a new facility, and it was decided to create a new children's team (12-14 years). One month before the start of the season, registration for this new team is closed, made up of 15 first- and second-year players who had never been part of the club. Within this group, there are 4 girls at risk of social exclusion and three foreigners (two Moroccans and one Latin American). As manager:

- . What would be the steps you would take once the composition of the teams was known?
- . What specific actions would you take in relation to girls at risk of exclusion? And with respect to the three foreigners?
- . What actions would you take on a day-to-day basis for that team to maintain adequate communication with athletes and families?
- . What other social agents could you try to involve?

### **Case study for coaches**

You are the coach of the new team of the club mentioned in the previous case study, and it is your first experience managing this category. As a coach:

- . How would you initiate contact with the team (athletes and parents/guardians)?
- . What specific actions would you take in relation to girls at risk of exclusion? And with respect to the three foreigners?
- . What actions would you take on a day-to-day basis for that team to maintain adequate communication with athletes and families?
- . One day, a conflict arises between one of the girls at risk of exclusion and another classmate of medium-high socioeconomic level, in which the second calls the first "poor shit". What specific steps or actions would you take to resolve this conflict?

## Indicative answers

**Managers:** In the first question, reference should be made to the different strategies exposed in block 2, and more specifically to those related to managers. In this way, an initial meeting with the families could be included as an answer, following the lines of action outlined in block 2. In the second question, one could talk about arranging individual meetings with these families separately, as well as with the players themselves to take an interest in them and their situation. In the third question, you could include any of the strategies (ideally, all) raised in the strategies for managers and coaches, arguing how they would be carried out. Finally, in the fourth question it could be argued which other social agents could be involved.

**Trainers:** In the first question, one could also talk about holding an initial meeting with the families, in which the manager could also be present, and another one only with the athletes, following the previously described guidelines. In the second, individual meetings could be held with these families separately, as well as with the players themselves to take an interest in them and their situation; Rules could also be used in the training sessions themselves that serve as an inclusion of these girls in the tasks or include some norm of coexistence in relation to this topic. In the third question, you could include any of the strategies (ideally, all) raised in the strategies for managers and coaches and in the specific strategies for coaches, explaining how each of them would be developed. In the fourth question, you should explain step-by-step how you would act to resolve the conflict, applying the steps in Figure 2 and Table 3 and specifying whether you would use any specific strategy.

### TO KNOW MORE

#### **Sport Information Resource Centre (Canadá)**

Actions speak louder than words: Non-verbal communication in sport. Available in: <https://sirc.ca/blog/non-verbal-communication-in-sport/>

#### **What communication means for a coach**

Part of the book "Sport Psychology for coaches", from Damon Burton & Thomas Raedeke (2008). Available in <http://www.humankinetics.com/excerpts/excerpts/what-communication-means-for-a-coach>

## 3.4. Module 4. Group dynamics in young athletes

### INTRODUCTION

From birth, every human being is by nature a social being who experiences a diversity of interpersonal relationships, with the psychological and emotional benefits that this entails. During the seven phases of human development (prenatal phase, infancy, childhood, adolescence, youth, adulthood, and old age), people exchange relationships, meanings, and emotions because of a process of relational and emotional literacy (Roffey, 2008).

In this line, the social dimension that is linked to the sports practice of young people acquires a special interest for sports entities/clubs sensitive to inclusion of the most vulnerable population. In the first place, and as discussed earlier, a set of essential social advantages for this group can be obtained from practicing sports, such as improving social skills-relationships and interpersonal communication (social capital) (Burdieu, 1991). Secondly, because some social factors, such as having fun, friendship (being with a group of friends) and affiliation (the need to be part of a group and/or a team), among other reasons, tend to justify the levels of adherence that young people present towards sports practice. Finally, social connection is essential when it comes to maintaining intrinsic motivation towards sport, according to the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (1985).. This way, the social dimension in sport appears as an inseparable pairing to which special attention must be paid (Figure 13).

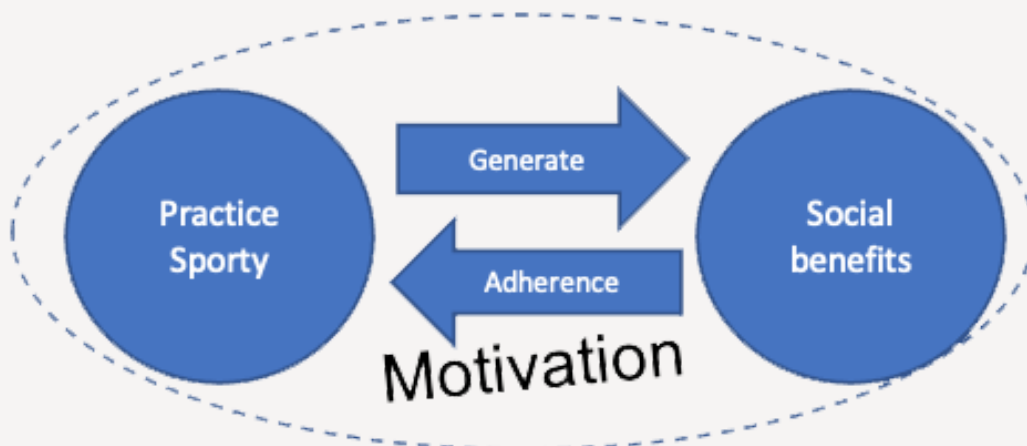


Figure 13. The binomial of the social dimension in sport. own elaboration

Faced with this reality, coaches and trainers must be able to analyse the characteristics and dynamics of their group-teams, as well as promoting the existence of adequate levels of cohesion; especially for the great benefits that are associated with it.

#### **Main objectives of module 4:**

- To reflect on the group dynamics in the teams where young athletes participate:
  - To analyse the basic characteristics of an effective group-team.
  - To deepen the group dynamics and the concept of group cohesion.
  - To know the levels of group cohesion through a sociogram or the analysis of the perceptions of the players involved.

### **BLOCK 1. The group - team**

Belonging to a group where you can be with friends, in a playful and fun environment, is essential for young people to achieve adequate personal and psychological well-being. At the same time, these reasons are considered decisive when initiating affiliation or maintaining adherence to a club-sports team (Smith, 2007), whether individual (swimming, athletics, etc.) or collective (soccer, basketball, etc.).

But what is meant by group-team? It is an association of two or more people who interact with each other, sometimes in a dependent way, in search of the achievement of the same objective, such as victory in a sport competition. The group-teams are usually integrated into a social structure that includes rules and roles (sometimes of their own creation), and even some identifying features that differentiate it from the others (names, shields, colours, etc.). Sometimes, group-teams are so important in social dynamics that barriers are even created to form part of them (quotas, entrance tests, etc.) (Kim et al., 2021). In turn, the group-teams usually incorporate subgroups, especially for reasons of affinity, or simply for technical-sporting reasons.

In this line, and due to the global complexity of the group-teams, the coaches and trainers are faced with the challenge of improving the sports experiences of the athletes, maximizing the productivity of the group and being able to guide it effectively towards success (sports, social, etc.) (Kim et al. 2021). To do this, there are a set of key considerations related to the development of effective groups:

- **Member attributes:** teams are made up of people with diverse individual characteristics: age, sex, ethnic origin, personality (the most studied attribute), etc. Managing to effectively integrate these attributes is essential for success, especially within a framework of equity and equal opportunities. Existing research so far is ambivalent regarding age, sex, and ethnicity. With regards to personality, the most effective groups are those that contain a balance between agreeable-extroverted and disagreeable-introverted individuals.
  - As reflected in several true stories captured in the cinema, such as INVICTUS or TITANS MADE HISTORY, managing multicultural teams is not always an easy task.
  
- **Group structure:** To take advantage of the potential of each person, it is recommended that players assume different informal roles of a positive nature (beyond sports), such as auxiliary, social facilitator, comedian, motivator, mentor, co-operator /to. Negative roles (distraction, cheater, slacker, etc.) should be identified and eliminated (Cope et al., 2011).
  - The Sports Education model proposed by Daryl Siedentop (see Module 5) can serve as an example as far as the creation of roles is concerned.
  
- **Group processes:** since multiple individual relationships take place in the teams, generating preparation processes (what should we do, what are our roles and objectives, etc.), execution, evaluation (review and analysis of the actions) and adjustment (incorporation of changes and improvements), could maximize the chances of overall success and the positive experiences of each member (especially in competitive sports).
  
- **Emerging states of the group:** correspond to the affective and cognitive perceptions about the group and the classmates. The optimization of these states affects the dynamics of the groups and their cohesion (see Block 2).

Along with the above, coaches who wish to form optimal groups should, whenever possible:

- Choose the individuals of each team deliberately and not randomly, considering the different attributes of the members and the informal roles they manifest.
  
- Establish clear, consensual, and even rotating roles (such as the captaincy), in addition to the existence of mentors that facilitate the incorporation of new members.

- Link other members of the club (administrative staff, people in charge of catering, etc.) and other organizations in the community-environment.
- Apply strategies and group dynamics throughout the life of the group, not just at the time of its creation (see Block 2)

## ACTIVITY

- View this short film by Tyler Waye entitled "The Power of Team" and reflect: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PAnd4fVpxs>

## BLOCK 2. Group dynamics and group cohesion

The dynamics that take place between the different teams are closely related to the management of the clubs, the technical teams, the athletes and their families or tutors. As a good practice, these agents must be coordinated and aligned to experience a healthy synergy. The lack of communication or the existence of conflicting interests (competitiveness vs. participation, for example) give rise to conflicting expectations. For this reason, the identification of desired principles or values, and the alignment of these with the demonstrated practical actions, could guarantee a stable group culture. For example, if a sports entity has the slogan "The victory of values".



Figure 14. "The victory of values". Official motto of a football club. Source: fcsantquirze.com



In turn, and within teams, group relationships should be characterized by mutual support, regardless of performance levels. Compared with teams segregated by level that live in a competitive environment, inclusive groups present better group dynamics and high levels of cohesion. In this case, the role creation appears again as a prominent element.

Regarding the role of the coaches and trainers, to favor the existence of adequate group dynamics, it is recommended:

- The creation of norms and values that promote unity and group awareness, regardless of belonging to a subgroup.
- Understanding the personality traits and values of all team members.
- The facilitation of communication processes between coaches and athletes, when it comes to resolving doubts (clarity of roles, compliance with the rules), or the reporting of some harmful situations, either publicly or privately (anonymous mailboxes) (see Module 3).
- The organization of authentic and inclusive team meetings of a festive nature (excursions, celebration of anniversaries, etc.).
- The systematic application of group dynamics of a playful nature, far from the sports technique of the sport modality in question, with the intention of promoting group interaction in a fun environment.
- The eradication of possible rookies.

At this point, it should be noted that teams that maintain adequate group dynamics usually have a positive level of cohesion. But what is meant by cohesion?

Cohesion is the most studied and complex emerging state of sports group dynamics, and the one which "reflects the tendency of a group to remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or to satisfy the affective needs of its members" (Carron, Bradwley and Widmeyer, 1998:213). Among its benefits are the following (Spink, 2020): a) increased motivation, adherence and personal satisfaction; b) improving social skills; c) decrease in stress and laziness; and d) the increase in team performance (especially in women's teams).

Finally, cohesion is conceived as a multidimensional construct, made up of individual and group aspects (less valid in young boys and girls), and by social and task aspects. As the latter is the most valid option in minors, Table 1 presents the definitions of "social cohesion" and "cohesion towards the task".

Social cohesion	Task cohesion
Reflects the orientation of team members toward developing and maintaining social relationships within the team	It refers to the willingness of the group to work together to achieve team goals.

Table 5. Definitions of the social and task dimension of the cohesion concept

## ACTIVITY

- Watch the video and learn how to make a sociogram in your team. Follow the instructions and dare to know what the group relationships between your players are like
  - Link video
  - Link Materials (ANNEX X)

## BLOCK 3. Indicators of cohesive and non-cohesive teams

There are multiple investigations focused on analysing the degrees of cohesion presented by the different teams, especially in children's ages. However, the research by Martin et al. (2011). It is one of the most important, since it reveals the perceptions of the athletes themselves about which indicators are associated with a cohesive team compared to one that is not (Table 4).

Cohesive team indicators			
Cohesion towards the task		Social cohesion	
Work together	Talk things over (communication)	Eliminate conflicts	Connect outside of sport
Eliminate conflicts	Show mutual support	Having fun in and with the group	Avoid exclusions
Share the blame	Don't be selfish	Be good friends	Get along and respect each other
Non-cohesive team indicators			
Cohesion towards the task		Social cohesion	
Not work together	Presence of conflicts	Presence of conflict	Exclude people
Don't share the blame	Existence of selfishness	Not getting along	

Table 6. Indicators of cohesion and non-cohesion of a sports team according to Martin et al. (2011).

## ACTIVITY

After reviewing these indicators, the following task is proposed: Do you know what your athletes think about the levels of cohesion in their teams?

The following task intends to explore the perceptions of the participants about the degree of group cohesion of the team and the indicators of the cohesive and non-cohesive teams, as well as the methods to develop cohesion in the teams. Gather your players (recommended for boys and girls over 10 years of age) in a large and quiet space. Give each of them a pen and a sheet of paper with the following questions (anonymous task):

Thinking of your team

1. How would you assess the level of cohesion of your team?
2. What do you think happens in a cohesive team?
3. What do you think happens in a loose team?
4. How do you think the level of cohesion of a team could be increased?

Subsequently, collect the answers to each question and analyse their meanings. Group the sentences according to their relationship with the levels of "cohesion towards the task" or "social cohesion". Subsequently, group the phrases by their similarity in terms of themes. For example, five sentences speak of "presence of conflicts", twelve speak of "fun", etc. Finally, review all the results and compare with the previous table. How is the level of cohesion of your team and what are the indicators detected by the players? Reflect on it.

## TO KNOW MORE

For the analysis of group cohesion levels there are also different validated questionnaires. If you are interested in the subject and want to delve into something more, here are the links to the most used questionnaires.

- Group Environment Questionnaire [GEQ] (Carron, Widmeyer, & Brawley, 1985). Available here: [http://sportpsych.mcgill.ca/pdf/coaching/Group\\_Environment\\_Questionnaire%20GEQ%202.pdf](http://sportpsych.mcgill.ca/pdf/coaching/Group_Environment_Questionnaire%20GEQ%202.pdf)
- Youth Sport Environment Questionnaire [YSEQ] (Eys, Loughhead, Bray, & Carron, 2009). Available here: [https://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=kppe\\_faculty](https://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=kppe_faculty)

## 3.5. Module 5. Social Justice and Critical Pedagogy

### INTRODUCTION

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations acknowledges sport as an important enabler of sustainable development, recognizing the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions that it makes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Of specific interest to the SGD is the contribution of sports in promoting health and wellbeing (Goal 3), gender equality (Goal 5), and the reduction of inequalities (Goal 10). Nevertheless, sport by itself neither promotes social justice nor defends human rights. Sport can perpetuate racism and homophobia, among other forms of marginalization and exclusion.

Given this reality, the role of the different agents in sport and education is fundamental. They are responsible for teaching the various sport techniques, as well as they have the challenge to educate and transmit important values such as solidarity, respect, tolerance, harmony, and peaceful coexistence. Thus, it is essential to incorporate the principles of social justice and critical pedagogy in the day the day-to-day of sport organizations and professionals who: a) reflect on their own beliefs, assumptions, and potential stereotypes; b) questioning, rethinking, and redesigning interventions towards more inclusive and socially fairer practices; and c) transforming sport to achieve more educational values.

With professionals committed to social justice and social transformation, sport can be an agent for social inclusion to help overcome the situations of inequality and discrimination in our societies. Against this backdrop, do you want to become a real agent of change? Are you ready to reflect on your own beliefs? Do you want to promote social justice through your sport or your organisation?

Main objectives of module 5:

- Reflect on the role of sport and the role of sport agents in the defense of human rights and social justice.
  - To know the main key concepts related to the topic.
  - To analyze some of the existing good practices as well as some specific methodologies for the promotion of social inclusion through sport.

## BLOCK 1. Conceptual approach

In this chapter we introduce some of the key concepts that will be the guiding principles that are most important to us about the way that we work within our sports clubs, including a) social justice; b) sustainable development goals and human rights; c) discrimination; d) diversity; e) equity, and f) inclusion.

### a) Social Justice

Did you know that the United Nations declared 20 February as the World Day of Social Justice? As UNICEF indicates, "social justice is based on equal opportunity and human rights. It is based on equity and is essential for each person to develop their full potential and for a peaceful society". Similarly, "the decision to promote or deny social justice is in the hands of the people, whether at the individual, local, national or global level". This is why today's society needs people who are committed to fight against discrimination, which is one of the most common injustices that reduces the possibilities for the development of people's potential.

Social agents within the field of sport, such as entities, clubs, federations, and coaches, can promote social justice by developing anti bullying policies and protocols, and by facilitating access to people who do not have the means to pay the fees of sport activities.

### b) Sustainable Development Goals and Human Rights

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 17 Goals were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which set out a 15-year plan to achieve the Goals. The four goals we will focus on throughout this module are health and well-being (SDG 3), gender equality (SDG 5), reducing inequalities (SDG 10) and promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 16).

Human Rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death. Human rights are norms that recognise and protect the dignity of all human beings. These rights govern the way individuals live in society and relate to each other, as well as their relations with the state and the state's obligations towards them. Among the 30 main existing Human Rights are non-discrimination, the right to education, the right to health.

Within this global framework, the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport developed by UNESCO in 1979, provides sport an important role in promoting human values such as respect, solidarity, and tolerance, and in combating all forms of discrimination and social exclusion. The aforementioned document points out, "one of the essential conditions for the effective exercise of human rights depends on the possibility given to each and every one to freely develop and preserve their physical, intellectual and moral faculties and that consequently the possibility of access to Physical Education and sport should be given and guaranteed to all" (pp. 32).

At this point, to what extent do the current sport entities favour the acquisition of the SDGs through sport?

### c) Discrimination

Discrimination happens when a person, or group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal characteristics. This is known as "direct discrimination". It is also discrimination when an unreasonable rule or policy applies to everyone but has the effect of disadvantaging some people because of a personal characteristic they share. This is known as "indirect discrimination". Discrimination can be against the law if it is based on a person's: age, disability, or race, including colour, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status; sex, pregnancy, marital or relationship status, family responsibilities or breastfeeding; and sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status. Undoubtedly, discrimination is a form of symbolic and cultural violence that favours the segregation or expulsion of certain groups of people.

More than discrimination: watch the following video about what is discrimination  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=da6UCBskqNk>

### d) Diversity

While there is not a single definition of diversity because of the various meanings that exist, diversity is understood as variety or difference. The term diversity refers to the different characteristics of people who make up our community. This includes gender (including male, female, and unspecified), age, race (including nationality, ethnicity, and colour), culture, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. Within families, friendship groups and local communities we may find diversity amongst people. In fact, the way each individual relates to these characteristics may differ. An individual is not defined by just one of these characteristics. Diversity is a strength of our community. It is also the reason sport organisations should be inclusive in order to engage a wide range of people to participate in sport.

Understanding that everyone is different is a normal part of human beings, society, and cultures, and we should all get used to living in harmony with this reality. This is one way to avoid thinking that what is different is something negative, which often leads to situations of exclusion and rejection. Similarly, diversity is not the opposite of equality: the opposite of diversity is similarity, and the opposite of equality is inequality. Therefore, there is no contradiction in defending the equality of human beings and defending diversity.

#### e) Equity

The term equity refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality: whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and adjust imbalances. The process is ongoing, requiring us to identify and overcome intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures. As shown in Figure 1, equity is only achieved if the person who needs it the most can count on enough help, in this case structural and temporary, to be equal with the rest.

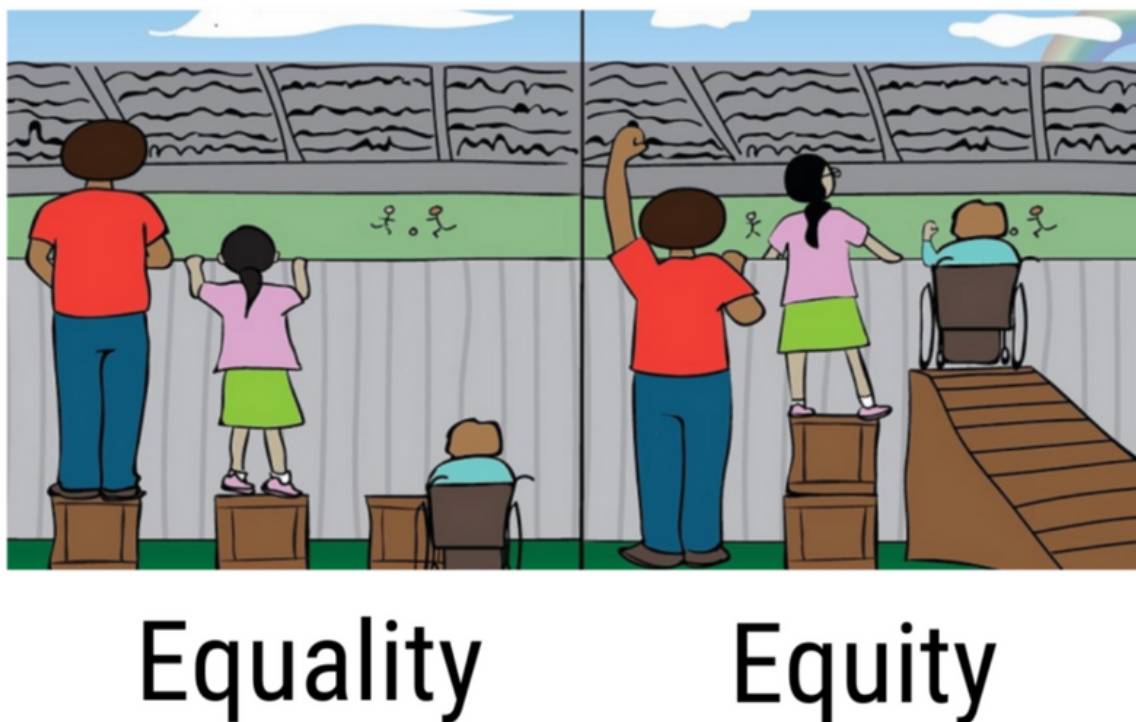


Figure 15. Differences between equality and equity (create a new image). Source: Play by the game.

## f) Inclusion

The term inclusion refers to what we do to ensure our diverse community is reflected in sport participants. Being inclusive means being proactive in the way we plan, lead, and control the delivery of sport and recreation opportunities for everyone. Inclusion in sport means everyone in our diverse community, regardless of their gender, age, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, or ability, is afforded a range of opportunities to participate.

A person is not defined by a single characteristic such as their age, religious affiliation, or sexual orientation. Yet some communities are under-represented in sport participation. To achieve a more inclusive participation for all, sport organisations should provide choice and opportunities to support greater participation by people with disabilities, LGBTI communities, aboriginal communities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women and girls, older adults, and people who are experiencing social or economic disadvantages.

In understanding the need for inclusion in sport it is important to remember that individuals may identify with some, or all, of these characteristics. These characteristics may mean that sometimes people face certain barriers to participation, such as language, accessibility, attitudes or even discrimination. If someone experiences multiple barriers it may be harder for them to participate in sport. Inclusion is about taking proactive steps to remove these barriers; and barriers are the result of the way sport products and services are often designed and delivered – not the characteristics of the individual. Every person has the ability – and the right – to participate in sport.

A successful approach to inclusion will give the community a voice and empower them to contribute to solutions, program design or other important decisions affecting them. Doing this helps to create welcoming and inclusive environments and can lead to greater involvement by diverse communities as participants, volunteers, administrators, and officials.

Along these lines, figure 16 visualises how this concept differs from other related concepts.



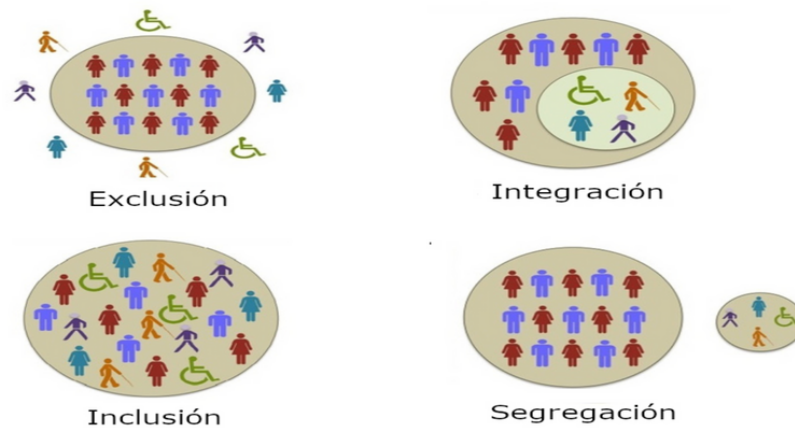


Figure 16. Differences between related concepts.

Watch the following video about inclusive coaching:

- Inclusive coaching: why? (Play by The Rules). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LDaRIK7g8G4&t=42s>

## BLOCK 2. Good practices

Good practices are a set of guidelines, ethnics, or ideas that represent the most efficient of prudent course of action in a given situation. A good practice is a real-world example (case study) of a method or technique that has been applied that has consistently shown a positive impact among their participants. Below we present some of the good practices identified at European level about social inclusion through sport, which can serve as a source of inspiration for social agents in sport.

### a)Olympic Wrestling Club La Mina

La Mina is one of the most disadvantages districts of the metropolitan area of Barcelona. More than 15.000 people live below the poverty line and have low educational levels. The Olympic Wrestling Club La Mina develops sport programs for people aged 5 to 15 years old (Figure 3), and with the following objectives: a) to provide sporting opportunities for the youth; b) to reduce anti-social behaviour in the district; c) to improve coexistence and civility; d) to promote social inclusion; e) to reduce truancy and school dropouts, as well as to improve academic results. In summary, the Sports Club also strives to change the negative image of the neighbourhood from an internal and external point of view.



Figure 17. Olympic Wrestling Club La Mina. Source: Albert Bravo

To know more:

- Official website: <https://www.zenytsports.com/fclliddaa/indexdosesp.php?club=LM>
- Documentary “Els guerrers de la Mina”: <https://www.ccma.cat/tv3/alacarta/30-minuts/els-guerrers-de-la-mina/video/3937170/#.XHVP3Y2IQqc.email>
- Documentary “La mina de campeones”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=av26llmJDSg>

## b) Kick it Out

Driven forward by their love of sport, kick it Out is a UK-based association that works to make football a game for everyone by putting equality and inclusion up front (Figure 4). Kick it Out was set up to fight racism in football in 1993. Then in 1997 the association expanded to tackle all forms of discrimination. Since the beginning, they have made huge progress on and off the pitch, leading the charge for positive change. According to its principles, "we are here to make sure that everyone, everywhere, can come on a Saturday or Sunday knowing that they will be welcomed and respected regardless of their background, ethnicity, sexuality, gender and age". Kick it Out currently works with football authorities, professional clubs, players, fans, and local communities to tackle all forms of discrimination.



Figure 18. Kick it out campaign. Source: official website

Kick It Out currently runs educational programmes for academy players, parents, and fans. They campaign to make sure football is always welcoming to everyone. They support people from under-represented and minority communities to make a career in football and thrive. And they call out discrimination wherever it happens from the Premier League to the community.

Clubs and/or leagues interested in being a member have to fill in a contact form and then sign an "Equality Charter". A member of the team then contacts the club to offer ideas and advice on how to become a -free club, such as the mandatory appointment of an equality officer and training on equality, inclusion, and diversity issues for all staff.

To know more:

- Official website: <https://www.kickitout.org>
- Complaints Box: <https://www.kickitout.org/report>
- Download Resources: <https://www.kickitout.org/take-action/resources>

### **BLOCK 3. Methodologies for Social Inclusion**

Some of the most successful methodologies for promoting social inclusion are described below. It should be noted that both can be transferred and adapted to many existing sport modalities.

## a) FutbolNet

The organisation:

Fundació Barça created "FutbolNet" methodology (figure 5) as a tool to favour the social inclusion of children and young people in vulnerable communities and contexts. More specifically, it "seeks to promote effort, respect, teamwork, humility and ambition, understood from the culture of cooperation, because they are positive at an individual and collective level".

The methodology:

In each session, a value is worked on through a football match in which the participants have to put it into practice. In order to facilitate reflection and dialogue, the matches are divided into three parts: 1st half: The players dialogue independently and agree on the rules of the game; 2nd half: A football match of about 15 minutes is played. Here the young people develop their interpersonal skills, and the educators help them to be responsible in their actions; 3rd time: The participants have a critical discussion afterwards, where the game is evaluated and the winners are decided on the basis of their behaviour and the application of the values in question.

Links:

- Official website: <https://fundacion.fcbarcelona.es/futbolnet>
- Videos: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A\\_M23glCD1w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_M23glCD1w)
- Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tI127kwdweg>



Figure 19. FutbolNet's experience in Jordan. Source: Official Website.

## **b) Pedagogical Model of Sport Education**

The organization:

With a long history in the educational context, the "Sport Education" model was created and implemented by Siedentop in the late 1980s. His first work, entitled "Sport Education: quality PE through positive sport experiences", was one of the most important manuals for social inclusion in PE. According to Siedentop, this model was developed out of his "dissatisfaction with seeing sport taught in a totally incomplete and inadequate way in many physical education classes" (1994, p. 7). For Siedentop, sport was taught out of context, as the social meaning of sport, consisting of rituals and values, was often overlooked.

The methodology:

This model seeks to increase the social cohesion of the participants, fair play, motivation, and participation. In addition, the model seeks to improve the technical and tactical skills through the creation of key elements such as the season, the pre-season, and the final festival, as well as affiliation and roles, among others. Unlike other more analytical methodologies, in this model the students participate in mixed and heterogeneous groups with the intention of assuming a set of rotating roles, among which are those of referee, coach, animator, journalist, etc.

Links:

- Siedentop, D. (1994). Sport education: quality PE through positive sport experiences. Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics Publishers.
- Video "Edufis": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQnDoCwG3MA>
- Recommendations for implementing the model: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4Ve0hal2p8>

## TO KNOW MORE

In this chapter we present several good practices at European level aimed at promoting social inclusion through sport.

- Training platform, developed by Sport Integrity Australia and "Play by the Rules", where you can find a large number of free courses about the topic:
  - [https://elearning.sportintegrity.gov.au/blocks/androgogic\\_catalogue/index.php?c1=Courses](https://elearning.sportintegrity.gov.au/blocks/androgogic_catalogue/index.php?c1=Courses)
- Sid Foot is an Erasmus+ programme funded by the European Union, whose partners are: Real Betis Balompié Foundation, the European Football for Development Network, Balearic Islands' University, Liverpool City Council", and Aalborg BK, among others. The main objective of the project is the promotion of physical activity and social inclusion in disadvantaged neighbourhoods through sport. To this end, the project has identified a set of successful initiatives, which are grouped and disseminated through a website with the intention to raise awareness, inspire, share knowledge, and promote partnerships.
  - Official website: Some of the most successful methodologies for promoting social inclusion are described below. It should be noted that both can be transferred and adapted to many existing sport modalities.
  - Good practices handbook: Some of the most successful methodologies for promoting social inclusion are described below. It should be noted that both can be transferred and adapted to many existing sport modalities.

# 4

# DEVELOPED TOOLS

## 4.1. The e-Learning Platform

### A gamified experience

Through this project it has been designed the online training tool "Future ++ Challenge: a journey towards inclusive sport" based on the gamified experience .

Werbach and Hunter (2012) define gamification as the "use of game design elements and techniques in non-game contexts" (p.28). More specifically, gamification seeks to use the potential of games (based on the contributions of the video game industry) and the fun associated with it, to motivate and provoke behavioral change in people (players).

Since gamification was proposed in 2014 as an ideal methodology for higher education, its irruption in the educational-training field has grown at a dizzying pace. So much so, that an appropriate design can favor among students some of the following positive effects (Blázquez and Flores, 2021):

- Increased joy, fun and personal satisfaction.
- Decreased fear of making mistakes, failure and anxiety.
- Increased intrinsic motivation towards the subject or task.
- Increased degree of commitment and involvement-participation of the students towards the subject or tasks
- Improved group relations and cohesion levels.
- Increased learning

The "Future ++ Challenge: a journey towards inclusive sport" gamification consists of the following key elements:

#### **NARRATIVE:**

Through one of its sophisticated satellites, the European Space Agency has discovered a Galaxy where sport is truly inclusive. Want to learn how to achieve it?

Embark on this interstellar adventure and crew your own spaceship! Pass the different missions and complete your passport - will you be able to traverse the Galaxy and successfully return to planet Earth?

#### **AVATAR:**

Users can choose the spaceship they like the most to start the adventure. During the experience there are also different aliens residing on each of the existing planets in the galaxy.



### **MISSIONS - STAGES:**

Users can start the adventure with the mission of their choice. In total there are 5 missions, each of them linked to a different planet. After overcoming the five missions, they must complete the final mission, which consists of returning to planet Earth.

Mission Stage	Didactic Contents
Mission Green Planet	Conceptual Framework
Red Planet Mission	Practical Strategies
Blue Planet	Mission Communication
Yellow Planet Mission	Group Dynamics
Purple Planet Mission	Social Justice and Critical pedagogy
Mission Back to Earth	Final Evaluation

### **BADGES:**

All participants will have a digital passport to travel around the galaxy. After completing each of the missions, the players will obtain the stamp corresponding to the planet visited. When the passport has the stamps of all the planets, the players will be able to complete the final mission back to Earth.

### **REWARDS:**

Upon successful completion of all modules, participants will receive a diploma or certificate of participation and course completion.

## The e-Learning Platform structure

Each of the theoretical and practical learning modules designed specifically for this project are inserted in this tool.

After an introductory video explaining the narrative of the gamified experience, the user can choose between 8 available languages (English, Italian, Greek, Spanish, Catalan, German, Portuguese and Dutch).

Once the language and the avatar (game person) have been chosen, the user is presented with six modules of theoretical and practical content.

Each module is structured in a similar way. First of all, all modules have an introductory section which briefly explains what they consist of. Subsequently, there is a theoretical section (block 1) where the essential theoretical information for the analysis and learning of each of the topics is provided. Subsequently, the modules contain a block 2, where good practices are described or small tasks are requested. Afterwards, the modules contain block 3 with activities that are more applicable in real contact, in the form of Homework. Finally, all the modules end with the presence of a questionnaire in block 4 and a specific section called "to know more", where additional information is provided to the user.



Figure 20. e-Learning Platform Pilot Test in Portugal

## 4.2. European Network for Coaches

The European Network of Coaches for social inclusion is one of the main Future ++ outputs. It aims at becoming a forum for new methodologies and tools to explore, experiment and test innovative approaches to addressing social challenges.

The European Network of Coaches will be a useful tool in order to allow:

- Partner organisation to collect, analyse and discuss comparable knowledge across European countries
- The promotion of best practices in all participating Member States in order for EU citizen to benefit from the state-of-the-art best practices
- Focus on cross-border threats in order to reduce risks and mitigate their consequences

The Network is designed to advance development and to deliver scalable and transferable solutions for promoting a more empowering climate and making youth sport a real tool of social inclusion. In this way, the network become a concrete tool able to promote social inclusion and volunteering in European sports clubs. It was developed in English in order to provide a forum that would allow coaches from all over Europe an easily interactive channel to promote the exchange of methodologies, good practices and tools to explore and test innovative approaches to address social challenges.

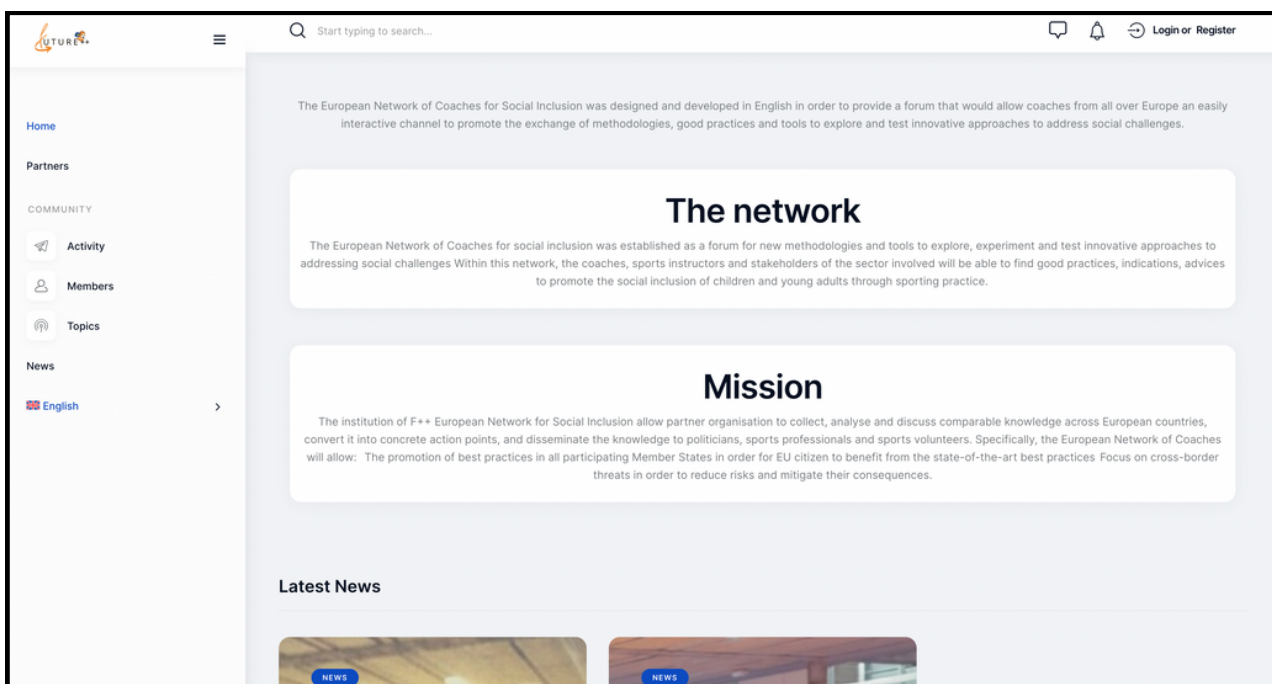


Figure 21. Screenshot of the European Network for Coaches

5

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the research and based on the results of the project, we have confirmed that the training of sports technical personnel is one of the key issues to promote social inclusion in and through sport. It is important to emphasize how, after analyzing existing training programs in different European countries, we have observed a plausible reality: there are still few specific training programs on sport as a tool for the inclusion of young people of low socioeconomic level. For this reason, working to promote and consolidate training in the sports field as a tool for social transformation must be a priority issue.

The previous study and analysis of existing training programs and the review of the state of the art has made it possible to define the key topics to be addressed in these training programs. These include aspects such as: knowledge to recognize situations of inequality and discrimination; strategies to give access to sport to young people of low socioeconomic level and to overcome the practical barriers they encounter (time, costs, transportation, etc.); resources to unite the group and reinforce the self-esteem of young people through sports practice; tools to facilitate communication and create the appropriate learning context; and knowledge of the key aspects to promote social justice through sport as well as examples of good practices and teaching methodologies that facilitate inclusion and cooperation.

Sport is another tool to promote the socialization and inclusion of people with a high risk of social exclusion. We believe that conducting training in this area is truly enriching and transformative for society as a whole. Making sport an accessible practice, free of barriers and harm is everyone's responsibility.

