



**NEETs
NEED
SPORT**

COMPARATIVE STUDY

**On working methods of youth workers
in their relation with marginalized young people**

RJ4All Publications

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**Unió de Federacions
Esportives de Catalunya**



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INTRODUCTION



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The present study has been produced within the NNS Erasmus+ projects which comprises a consortium made up of four organizations from four different countries in Europe.

The projects - NNS

The NEETs NEED SPORT (NNS) project is developed by 4 organizations from Romania, Hungary, Spain and UK, with the support of associated partners from each country – Ministry of Youth and Sport in Romania, the John Wesley Theological College in Hungary, 25 social organizations and the administration DGAIA (Child Care Department) and DGJJ (Justice Department) in the region of Barcelona; local Council Southwark, Bucks New University and University of East London., the national, youth-led FRED Campaign UK Youth, and British Council Internationalism Alliance.

The general objective of the project is to develop a set of training tools for youth workers/sport coaches in order to increase the employment of marginalized young people (NEETs) using the power of sport as a learning tool - through interactive, fun and attractive activities, thus allowing educational and development activities delivered efficiently to young people. The project will increase young people's soft skills, provide momentum for the employment environment and increase the employment rate.

Our project aims to:

1. showcase of good practices related to the working methods of youth workers in their relation with marginalized young people, in the participant countries;
2. invest in a sustainable transnational network of youth workers that have expertise in the coordination of employment programs based on sports, for marginalized young people in general, and NEETs, in particular.



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3. develop the skills of about 100 youth workers from the participant countries in employability programs based on sports, for young people with fewer opportunities (including NEETs)

4. foster the inclusion and employability of young people with fewer opportunities (including NEETs) in the partner countries by allowing cross-sectoral cooperation (regional sports and youth directions – local youth centers – sport centers – Vocational Training Companies - employers).

Our pilot employability programmes based on sport in the partner countries will impact a lot of stakeholders in the domain of training, sport, youth, employment: sports/youth organizations; employment organizations that want to start sporting activities as a tool for employee involvement; national governments that can raise awareness of the potential of sport and employability programmes to various policy domains – employment, youth, education; public employment services; national sport organizations, national governing bodies for sport; European Youth organizations.

The NNS project will involve about 100 youth workers in Learning, Teaching or Training activities, about 100 young NEETs in employability programs based on team sports, about 100 representatives of youth and sport organizations, employment organizations; national governments; public employment services; national sport organizations, national governing bodies for sport, that will be present at our multiplier events in Hungary, Spain, Romania and UK.

The partners



Student Culture and Sport Centre TEI - CCSS Tei

CCSS TEI was founded as a structure of the Ministry of Education in 1952, being designed as a summer camp type of place for university students and professors. Since 1984, the cultural and leisure activities of the institution (stand-up, folklore, theater, musical, dance, sports and sports journalism, radio broadcasting, film galleries, disco) have become a brand. In light of the changes produced after 1989, participation of students in the cultural activities presented above diminished considerably. Under these conditions, the vision of the management of TEI Centre was redirected towards creating a secure space for students and youth to develop here sports and non-formal education activities. The passing of TEI Centre under the jurisdiction of the National Authority for Youth was carried out under provisions of Government Resolution no. 801/2004.

Currently, CCSS TEI is a public body subordinated to the Ministry of Youth and Sport, its main activities being addressed to young people and students. The facility is situated close to Bucharest city center and is connected to the main education institutions by numerous public transportation routes.

On the 12 hectares the Centre is built on, there are a youth hostel with 60 beds, 2 restaurants, 7 conference and training units, 18 tennis courts, one natural rugby court and one football green court, 2 synthetic football courts, 3 beach volleyball courts, 2 basketball and 8 streetball courts, green spaces and alleys and a wonderful view to lake Tei. Out of the 18 tennis courts, 12 can be covered during winter, the rest remain open air. All are used all year long indifferent of the weather conditions by different youth Clubs and sport associations located in our complex.

The mission of CCSS Tei is to create an adapted and inclusive framework to support the personal and professional development of young people in Bucharest, as well as supporting their participation in public life and the development of the local community. The activity of the Centre



to carry out its mission is set around four pillars: Culture and Non-formal Education/Health, Sport and Recreation/Participation and Volunteering/Work and Entrepreneurship

CCSS Tei develops cultural, artistic, educational, sports, leisure and cultural projects for the students in Bucharest University Center and for the entire community of young people from Bucharest. The Center works to continuously initiate and develop partnerships with student and youth associations and federations, as well as with central and local public authorities, in order to diversify the offer of student and youth activities and projects. TEI Student Culture and Sports Centre annually implements cultural, sport and educational activities dedicated to young people in Bucharest, most of which are the fruitful collaboration with local and national youth and student NGOs.

Unio De Federacions Esportives De Catalunya - UFEC

UFEC, founded in 1933, is made up of 69 sports federations throughout Catalunya with around 12,500 clubs covering a wide variety of sports such as football, cycling, tennis, volleyball, athletics, sailing and fencing. The number of federation members currently stands at around 70,000 with representatives from various abilities, social and ethnic backgrounds and ages. Its purposes are to unify and represent Catalan sports federations and organised sports in Catalonia, collaborating closely with Government (Generalitat) it is an advisory body for the Generalitat de Catalunya that aims to discuss and resolve issues that affect sports in Catalonia as a whole and it's also a training organisation for sports education.

INSERsport (i.e., insertio laboral) is a programme by the Catalan Union of Sport Federations (UFEC). INSERsport started as a pilot project in sailing in 2015. The project supports vulnerable young people to qualify as a basic level coach (assistant instructor) or referee in a specific sport, with the support of the regional sport federations. The level of engagement in the programme differs between federations.



With the cooperation of 25 social organisations and the administration DGAIA (Child Care Department) and DGJJ (Justice Department) in the region of Barcelona, young people between 16 and 25 years old are registered in the first level qualification training programme of seven regional sport federations. Both the programme for basic level coach and the programme for referees provide training programmes which include theoretical workshops and practical sport sessions on sports coaching. Some sports only provide a basic level coach qualification (m) or a referee (r) qualification (basketball (r), volleyball (r), tennis (m), mental disability sport (m) and sailing (m)), other sport federations combine both courses (table tennis and wrestling). In most sports, this encompasses 50 hours of theory and around 100 hours of practice.

In an INSERsport four-month training programme beginning in March, the participants take part in theoretical and practical sessions in a specific sport, guided by a sport coach from the federation or a sport club. These sessions are organised two or three times a week. The programme will end in June so graduates can find work as a basic level coach in summer sport camps or in September as a referee when the sport competitions start. Additionally, there is one part-time social worker who provides a social workshop once a week to all participants. As an adolescent, the social worker participated herself in a community sport sailing programme (in the sailing club included in the INSERsport programme). The workshops include 10 different sessions based on four specific themes: Personal development. Self-esteem and self-concept, motivation of the participants, confidence and gender equality; Social and communication skills. Empathy, active listening and assertiveness; Emotional management and competence development; Conflict resolution.

In the sailing club, 10 participants of the pilot projects in 2015 and 2016 are the sport coaches in the INSERsport programme. They have a contract in the sailing club to work on a part time or a full-time basis with disabled people and regular customers from schools and groups during the weekend or the holidays



Oltalom Sport Egyesület - OSA

OSA was founded in Hungary as a cooperation of individuals and non- governmental organizations in 2005. Its goal is to use sport as an innovative tool of education to increase self-esteem and promote healthy lifestyle to people with disadvantaged background. In its national and international events and tournaments, the organization plays football alongside teams with different socio-economic status in order to enhance social integration of at-risk groups. The Association's first team was set up from the residents of Oltalom Homeless Shelter and Refugee Shelter. Since 2009, the organization has been a member of streetfootballworld network.

The mission of OSA is to prevent fall out from society and to enhance social integration by using sport as an innovative tool for every person with different socio-economic status. We thrive to reach out to those who are in need and offer stability and regularity to those who come to our training and by involving them in our social services offer them assistance to improve their life. OSA provides regular football training sessions and equipment for homeless people, refugees, youth at risk and disadvantaged children and adults free of charge.

Besides the football sessions, OSA offers culturally sensitive social work and further services to its players, such as employability services, language trainings, individual and group activities. In the framework of our social services, we delivered a group activity called female participants where sexual education related and various sensitive topics were covered in a safe environment. We use the football pitch as an informal venue for a first interview with players where we try to engage them in our further activities.

OSA promotes respect, tolerance, fair play and social cooperation in each of its activities. Since 2012, OSA has been organizing its own initiative called Fair Play Football Roadshow. With the initiative we intend to reach. In 2019, the Roadshow visited 13 venues in Hungary and one in Romania. In 2019 altogether 96 teams participated in the Fair Play Football Roadshows. Every year the Roadshow series is closed with a final Fair Play Gala with the participation of the fair



play prize winners of each Roadshows. Matches are played with the use of a special method named Football3 used especially for social groups in conflict. Every year we train our volunteers and young leaders to be football3 mediators and be able to lead the discussions involved in the football3 matches. Furthermore, our staff members are also trained mediators. We have been focusing on developing not only social skills but also on the development of soft and hard skills that are essential for finding and a suitable job and to stick in the job market.

OSA delivers employability trainings to its participants where they focus not only on CV and Cover letter writing and sufficient usage of the job seeking portals, but also through interview techniques and mock interviews and carrier advices we try to assist them to find not only a job but a job that they are interested in and meet their needs and interests.

Besides the employability training we offer individual job counseling where players receive employability assistance in a one-on-one meeting. OSA is a partner with the Hungarian Football Federation in its Grassroots sport program. Through the years we obtained a great number of international relations with grassroots football organizations and have been invited to several international tournaments (e.g. Wroclav Cup, European Streetsoccer Cup, Streetfootballworld Festival, etc.). Every year we delegate teams to the Homeless World Cup, where in the year 2018, we finished at the 3rd place.

OSA is based in the 8th district of Budapest. The area is well known from its dwellers with low socio-economic status. The office of the Association is located at a Homeless shelter, which enable us to recruit participants from the residents of the shelter as well. The aim of the organization is to enhance social integration of marginalized people through sport and sport related activities. In addition, we foster them to be active citizens and be able to vindicate their rights. Since 2012 OSA has been organizing Fair Play Football Roadshows, where with the use of football we try to break down stereotypes and boundaries that exist between different social groups and by this try to widen the circle of the participants of the civic space. At our football trainings people participate regardless of age and gender, thus we work on an inclusive and open



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society. All the trainings are held with the participation of socially sensitive coaches and social workers who have expertise on working alongside people with less opportunities.

OSA's primary youth target group are NEETs. As many of these youngsters have dropped out of school, OSA tries to help them to get back into education to finish their secondary (or even primary) education or even move towards higher education. To achieve this, social workers, who are always present at the sport sessions, provide individualized support and counselling to participants.

Those who are interested to get employability support, can also discuss this with the sport coaches and social workers after the sport sessions. They are then brought in contact with the job coach. One of the main purposes of OSA is to reach youngsters through sport (mostly football). Therefore, they organise different sport sessions for different target groups (starting from age 6 up to the age of 30): After school football sessions for children in a local primary school from a disadvantaged area; Open football sessions on Wednesday afternoon and Saturday in deprived areas.

The open football sessions provide opportunities for young people to engage in sport and to receive additional support by the social workers on social and employability skill development. In addition, because OSA regularly participates in football tournaments (also international and abroad), many youngsters are eager to join the teams and travel to these tournaments. OSA uses this interest among the youth to allow participation only under certain conditions.

Restorative Justice For All International Institute - RJ4All

Restorative Justice for All International Institute is an international institute with a mission to advance community cohesion and human rights locally, nationally, and internationally. We



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redistribute power in a more equal way by delivering social justice projects, educational programmes and high-quality volunteering opportunities to the most marginalized groups of society. We do this by using the power of education, sports and arts as well as the practices (mediation, conferencing, circles, dialogue, workshops) and values of restorative justice including power sharing, fairness, equality, dignity and respect. RJ4All is the leading Europe-wide restorative justice network with members from over 40 countries. We achieve our charitable aims by:

- Carrying out educational projects and information campaigns in the interest of children and young people, communities, victims and marginalised groups at the local, national and international levels.
- Providing internships to young people, those at risk of being affected by crime and marginalised groups as well as high quality volunteering opportunities involving social action
- Bringing harmed parties together (directly or indirectly) through restorative justice to negotiate solutions and restore the harm that they experienced
- Increasing public awareness of restorative justice, human rights and inter-cultural dialogue.
- Carrying out evaluations and research on restorative justice, criminal justice, human rights and equality programmes
- Building bridges between grass communities and the powerful, as well as acting as learning network between practitioners, researchers, policy makers and users of the justice system
- Increasing knowledge and pushing the boundaries of restorative justice especially in contested areas of practice (e.g. domestic violence, sexual abuse and hate crimes).
- Making restorative justice more accessible to young people, junior researchers, students, practitioners, policy makers, the public and the media.
- Influence international, regional and local policy, legislation and practice.
- Providing expert, tailored and independent advice on restorative justice, human rights, equality and criminal justice.

RJ4All has received the Quality Label (receiving and sending) for the European Solidarity Corps and works in close collaboration with EURODESK UK. We are also supported by an independent Academic and Editorial Board and an International Advisory Board. Their membership includes some of the most prominent academics, researchers and practitioners in



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the areas that we cover. Within this Board, there is an Ethics Committee that reviews Ethics Applications when vulnerable individuals are involved in our work. Working for more than 10 years in the area of equality, community cohesion, youth and justice, we have developed numerous strong partnerships with civil society, statutory and non-statutory organizations, locally, nationally and internationally. Acting as a national and European network, we share expertise and best practice among our users, partners and networks. As a membership organization, RJ4All has over 3000 registered individuals and organizations from across the UK, Europe and overseas. We communicate with our members on a bimonthly basis via newsletters and blogs that are written by them and the RJ4All team.

RJ4All also hosts the youth-led FRED campaign which is a pan-European initiative aiming to promote the values of Freedom Respect Equality and Dignity (see <http://www.fredcampaign.org>) Evidence-driven practice and social policy are important to RJ4All and thus it has in place efficient and elaborate internal as well as external quality control systems. Putting emphasis on the quality of our services, we are dedicated to measuring our impact on our users and the wider society. Exploiting the Theory of Change and using user-led evaluation methods, we produce high quality evidence-based outcomes that allow us to review our work and improve our approaches.

RJ4All also runs an independent, publishing arm. RJ4All Publications is an impactful publisher specialising in social sciences and the publication of cutting-edge research. As a user-led international institute, RJ4All aims to empower communities via education, and help disseminate power through the implementation of restorative justice values and practices including inter-cultural dialogue, internships, training, volunteering, workshops, and the holding of mediation, family group conferencing and circles. RJ4All has long expertise in designing and delivering projects with international impact as well as providing high quality volunteering placements from across Europe. One of our key aims is to increase cultural awareness especially amongst children and young people, breaking in this way the barriers that lead to division and



community tensions. To this end, we hold community-led projects focusing on integration and community cohesion. Founded upon the FREDA values of Fairness, Respect, Equality, Dignity and Autonomy, RJ4All creates partnerships with local, national and international frontline, like minded organisations to instil and implement FREDA, while also leading on the evaluation and wider dissemination of project results.

On a monthly basis, we offer more than 30 volunteering opportunities and over 5 part-time internships to young people. These are structured placements that aim increase their skills and confidence levels while mitigating the risks that are facing being of being unemployed and further marginalised.

CONTEXT



What is marginalization?

Marginalization, also referred to as social exclusion, occurs when certain groups of people get denied access to areas of society. Many factors can lead to this denial of access to institutions and opportunities, including historical bias and lack of funding.

Marginalized people don't necessarily belong to one particular demographic: Marginalization occurs due to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, socioeconomic level, and age. Marginalized groups are often at a disadvantage when it comes to obtaining health care, decent education, and employment that would improve their well-being.

Marginalization puts people in powerless positions based on one or several dimensions of exclusion:

1. *Economic marginalization*: Economic marginalization refers to disparities in amassing wealth or getting a job. For example, many forms of employment marginalize racial minorities due to harmful stereotypes about what types of people make good managers or workers.

2. *Political marginalization*: Politically marginalized communities struggle to participate in parts of the civic process, like voting or gaining access to their political representatives. Jim Crow-era laws that prevented Black Americans from voting were examples of political marginalization.

3. *Social marginalization*: When someone can't participate in everyday leisure activities, it's known as social marginalization. Denial of access to clubs and organizations is an example of social marginalization.

Marginalization can result from intentional campaigns that exclude certain people (like ethnic groups) from society. It can also occur unintentionally due to structures that benefit some members of society while making life challenging for others.

Main causes of marginalization happening can be considered:

1. *Discrimination and bias*: Social forces, like racism, sexism, and religious hatred, can lead policymakers or community members to create structures that keep certain groups from



participating fully in society. Apartheid is an example of this, as are institutional boundaries like the prohibition of marriage between people of the same sex.

2. Poverty: Poverty is a major contributor to marginalization. Impoverished people often don't have the time or resources to advocate for their interests, either because they live in marginalized communities and lack access to necessary resources or spend excessive time and energy trying to provide for themselves and their families. The outsized effect money has in the political system exacerbates this situation. For example, many people burdened by homelessness cannot access mental health services or other social benefits that could improve their lives.

3. Structural disadvantages: Sometimes, society marginalizes people by denying them the space or accommodations they need to advocate for their needs and make their voices heard. For example, the lack of accessible housing for people with disabilities has increased poverty levels for this group.

Marginalized youth

Modern society has a lot of issues which require immediate interference from the side of state policy and government. Special place among these problems takes the process of marginalization of young people which is caused by deformation of state and public institutions, destruction of social, cultural, ideological and political bases of life, loss of value orientations. Stereotypical presumptions about people, coupled with prejudiced views concerning specific religions and their followers, are dangerous with respect to the influence that these stereotypes can have on progress towards social integration and community cohesion. Social exclusion produces negative consequences and long-term damage to the living conditions, social and economic participation, health status and emotional life of young people. It also leads to the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Social status and social feeling of population, including the young people are constitutive features of changes which appear in the society and define the



level of society condition, which depend on possibility of youth realization and meeting their needs.

Research conducted on youth show that experiences of poverty, homelessness, racism, unemployment, abuse, addiction, gender preference and so on generally determine marginalization but not necessarily. Almost one out of three young people between the ages of 18 and 24 is at risk of social exclusion and poverty in the European Union.

NEETs: a more and more recurrent case of marginalized youth

What do we really mean when we talk about NEETs? When we think about NEETs category our imagination just stops to a boy or a girl that does not want to study or work, someone that is doing nothing in his life, and usually we blame him of being a cost for the society, in economic and social terms.

Over the past decade, the number of young people neither in employment, education, or training (NEET) has reached a seriously high level in many European countries.

The phenomenon of youth unemployment is seen as one of the most severe problems in Europe. Not only because it costs a lot for the society, but also because it affects the future of the society. If an increasing part of the new generations begins its adult life with the feeling of being unnecessary and having no chance to integrate into the mainstream society, the future will be burdened with more and more inexperienced and disappointed people with all its consequences to the actual status quo.

Young people are more easily dismissed and their chance to find a job is very low – less than 30% of the unemployed aged 15-24 found a job in 2021, according to the data of the European Commission. Those who find a job, have to be satisfied with a less stable employment than adults as temporary and part-time contracts are offered to them much more frequently.

But it is not the unemployment itself that makes the problem of youth so severe. Unemployment conventionally means only those people who are not in education want to work



and actively seek a job but cannot find one. Those are the so-called active unemployed (ILO definition). There is however a large group within the young generation that does not belong to the active unemployed. They are 1) the unavailables (e.g. young carers or disabled people), 2) the disengaged people (e.g. those who are not forced to seek a job), 3) the opportunity-seekers (those who are actively seeking employment or education but waiting for the opportunities that they see as best fitting for their expectations or those who are pursuing anti-social lifestyles) and 4) those, who are voluntarily not in employment or education as they engaged in other activities such as travelling, art, self-directed learning and so on.

These four subgroups together with the active unemployed form the group of young people who are “not in employment, education or training” or NEET. The identification of this group originates from the United Kingdom in the 1980s and the expression of NEET was formally introduced first in 1999.

In the EU, the concept of NEET gained importance as a consequence of the crisis that resulted in higher unemployment rates in general. The rate of NEETs stood at 13% of 15-24 years old and 20% of 25-29 years old people in the EU in 2011 that are by 2 and 3 percentage points higher respectively than there were in 2008.

The Europe 2020 flagship initiative Youth on the Move mentioned the problem as a group of “young people at risk” beyond the active unemployed. Active unemployed people are part of NEETs. In 2011, in the Union there were around 14 million young people of 15-29 years of age out of both education and work, from which 8.7 million are active unemployed. For the 15-24 years cohort the data are 7.5 million and 5.3 million respectively. That means that besides those who are in the labor force statistics, either as employed or as active unemployed, there are 2.2 million young people less than 25 years of age and 3 million 25-29 years old (all together 5.2 million) who are inactive and not in any kind of education. This group, together with those who seek a job actively are at risk of being excluded from the labor market and become dependent on benefits in the long run.



NEETs in Hungary

In Hungary, the NEET population has been a growing concern in recent years. According to data from Eurostat, the NEET rate in Hungary was 12.6% in 2020, which is higher than the EU average of 10.6%.

Demographic data suggests that young people are particularly vulnerable to becoming NEET in Hungary. In 2020, the NEET rate for people aged 15-24 in Hungary was 17.2%, which is again higher than the EU average of 13.8%. The NEET rate for young women in Hungary is particularly concerning, as it was 20.4% in 2020, compared to 14.4% for young men. This data means that in youth work, and in particular in youth work through sport, there is a need to give special emphasis to the development of girls' employable skills.

There are also regional differences in the NEET rate in Hungary. The highest NEET rates are found in the traditionally less developed Northern and Eastern regions of the country. The NEET rate in the Észak-Alföld region was 17.9% in 2020, while in the Northern Hungary region it was 16.5%.

There are a number of factors that contribute to the high NEET rate in Hungary. One of the main factors is a mismatch between the skills that young people have and the skills that are in demand in the labor market. Many young people in Hungary do not have the skills and qualifications that employers are looking for, which makes it difficult for them to find employment.

Other factors that contribute to the NEET issue in Hungary include poverty, social exclusion, and a lack of support for young people who are transitioning from education to employment. The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a significant impact on the NEET population in Hungary, as many young people have lost their jobs or have had their education disrupted.

Overall, unemployment in Hungary affects the NEET age group - aged 15-29 - more than the average, with a worryingly high proportion of girls and women. Regional differences in the



NEET rate also highlight the need to address economic disparities across the country. The NEET issue in Hungary is complex, and requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses the skills mismatch, poverty, social exclusion, and lack of support for young people.

A major obstacle to identifying the real number, situation and opportunities for NEETs in Hungary is the public work program (közmunka-program) introduced by the Hungarian government in 2011, which offers employment without providing sufficient living wage for participants and their families, or training that would give participants sufficient knowledge and skills for a realistic chance of applying for jobs in the labor market.

A further complicating element is the fact that the government's 2011 amendment to the law set the compulsory school age at 16 instead of 18 years of age. According to the article published 5 years after the 2011 law change, experts estimated that more than 40,000 young people of compulsory school age had dropped out of the public education system. In the 6 years since then, this number has obviously further grown. Young people, teenagers, leaving school without any earlier vocational training have little chance of finding employment.

NEETs in Spain

Doing an overview of youth unemployment data in Spain, we observe that currently, the tax of youngsters unemployed from 16 to 24 is 38.38%. Even if the tax has been reduced from the final 2020, the number is still high and hasn't recovered from the pre-pandemic level, which was still high because of the economic crisis that hit Europe some years ago. The youngsters are the most affected social group by unemployment and the ones that had suffered the most during the pandemic in 2020.

Structural vulnerabilities, which arise from factors such as gender, ethnicity and intergroup inequality, interact with the dynamics of the life cycle to place certain groups of people at higher risk, among which are also young people.



As we have seen, the most affected social group is the youngsters from 16 to 24, but there are plenty of different groups compressed between these ages.

In Spain, one of the most vulnerable groups of youngsters under 18 are “menas” (unaccompanied foreign minors). We are talking about boys and girls who are separated from their parents and who are not under the care of any other adults. Currently, and after the generalization of the use of this term (‘MENA’) in the public sphere has led to dehumanization and criminalization in a group of extreme vulnerability. We must speak of them as they are: boys, girls, adolescents who are alone and exposed to a serious risk of exclusion and helplessness.

In Spain, the reality of migrant children who are unaccompanied by adults is mostly associated with the Maghreb countries and with Morocco and Algeria. However, unaccompanied minors who have arrived from Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe and the Middle East are also present in our country.

The reasons that lead these children to leave their countries of origin are poverty and a lack of future: family breakdown and institutional lack of protection; natural disasters; war; persecution; violence and situations of general violation of human rights.

NEETs in United Kingdom

Youths struggle to enter the labour force after leaving education due to lack of work experience, social networks and the development of skills needed to obtain jobs. The 2007-2010 financial crisis, along with public sector cuts have particularly affected youth with limited qualifications and experience. With the youth unemployment rate being 12.2% in contrast to the total population rate of 4.5% in the UK, there is evidently a critical need to address youth as the



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most vulnerable age group suffering from unemployment (Powell et al., 2021). The high rate of those Not in Education,

Employment, or Training underlines the challenges faced by early-leavers and unemployed youth such as discouragement in consequence of being viewed as dispensable by the labour market or lacking qualifications. These barriers perpetuate a pernicious cycle whereby youth lack work experience and are subsequently unable to gain the necessary skills and networks to secure future employment.

The context of the Covid-19 pandemic has had exceptionally negative impacts on the ability of those under the age of 25 to secure new jobs or maintain current jobs (Rawlings, 2020). In the months following the start of the pandemic significant job loss for people aged 16-24 resulted in the number of young people in employment falling by 206,000 in the UK (Powell et al., 2021). In addition to economic implications of the pandemic, social effects are evident by the increased number of young people suffering with wellbeing in work.

The instability of employment opportunities in the economic climate has had detrimental implications on minority demographics of youth facing income inequality and discrimination due to factors such as gender, race, disability, and class (Disparities in education, work, and family in Britain, 2020). The severe impact of the pandemic on social mobility due to barriers to mental health, work experience and job loss has further entrenched generational employment gaps. Resultantly, lowincome minorities are far more likely to suffer from lack of economic and cultural capital as a barrier to securing employment. This is seen by unemployed youth in the UK being twice as likely to be an ethnic minority, with black youth facing the highest rates of unemployment (Powell et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the rates of youth unemployment in London are also particularly high compared to the national average. These regional inequalities which put youth in London at particular risk can be attributed to high rates of socioeconomic inequalities, disparities in



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education quality as well as relatively high rates of participation in non-compulsory education (Hughes and Crowley, 2014).

NEETs in Romania

The NEET indicator, the acronym for the phrase "Not in Education, Employment or Training", represents one of the most important indicators of the labor market throughout the European Union, one that member states are trying to reduce through various government policies. This indicator shows the average share of young people in the European Union who are not enrolled in any form of education and are not engaged in the workforce. Practically, this indicator shows how many of the young people between the ages of 15 and 29 do not work or study.

"The NEET indicator proved to be a very good indicator for a better understanding of the extent of young people's vulnerabilities. It is probably the best indicator to capture the extent of the multiple disadvantages of young people in terms of their participation in the labor market. However, despite the ease with which the NEET rate can be calculated, some aspects of the use of the term have been criticized. This term refers to a very heterogeneous population and is sometimes misused to specifically identify disadvantaged and problematic groups, such as the so-called <<hard to reach>> groups", writes Eurofound - the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living Conditions. Work and Life.

At the local level, this indicator is worrying. In Romania, 19.4% of young people between the ages of 15 and 29 were not in any form of education or in the workforce in the first quarter of 2022, the second highest rate among the member countries of the European Union, after Italy.

The socio-economic integration of the young population is one of the major concerns of the European Union. The social inclusion of young people refers not only to providing opportunities and resources to the disadvantaged in order to participate in economic, social, cultural life and increase their quality of life, but has a broader meaning aimed at the process of



realizing a person's potential and recognizing its contribution to social development that can be manifested through work, education, volunteering, social participation, etc. (Eurofound, 2015).

The development of young people mainly involves the accumulation of human and social capital that will allow them to later gain economic capital by integrating into the labor market. Lack of integration of young people into the labor market has effects not only on their future employability, but also on self-esteem and self-confidence, and in the long run can lead to their social exclusion.

In Romania, the categories of young people most prone to the risk of social exclusion and poverty are young people aged between 18 and 24 who, according to World Bank data in 2012, had a poverty rate of 31.4% (World Bank, 2015). Moreover, according to the statistical data registered in the period 2020- 2021 we can observe:

- unemployment affected to a greater extent the graduates of lower and middle education, for whom the unemployment rate was 8.1% and 5.1%, respectively. The unemployment rate was only 2.2% in the case of people with higher education, as specified by INS.
- For young people (15-24 years), the rate of long-term unemployment (in unemployment of six months and over) was 8.2%, and the incidence of long-term unemployment among young people was 47.2%.

In 2020, Romania's active population was 8.973.000 people, of which 8.521.00 million were employed and 452,000 were unemployed. Specifically, the employment rate of the working age population (15-64 years) was 65.6%, decreasing compared to the previous year by 0.2 percentage points. As in previous years, the employment rate was higher for men (74.4%, compared to 56.5% for women). By areas of residence, the employment rate was higher in urban areas (67.1%, compared to 63.8% in rural areas) It is also significant that the employment rate of young people (15-24 years old) was 24.6%, and that of the elderly (55-64 years old) was 48.5%.



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More recent data shows that, in the third quarter of 2021, Romania's active population was 8.227.000 people, of which 7.791.000 million people were employed and 436.000 people were unemployed. In this quarter, the employment rate of the working age population (15-64 years) was of 62.3%, decreasing compared to the previous quarter by 0.1 percentage points. The employment rate was higher for men (71.2% compared to 53.1% for women) and for people in urban areas (67.2% compared to 56.3% in rural areas). The employment rate of young people (15-24 years) was 20.6% and the unemployment rate was 5.3%, increasing by 0.2 percentage points compared to the previous quarter.

Scope and methodology

The aim of the present study, in the framework of the preparation of the NEETs NEED SPORT programme, is to examine the work of youth workers working with NEETs in the project countries, the methods they use, the projects implemented in the past to improve the employability of the target group, their impacts and results.

This study examines the working methods that youth workers use when working with NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) target groups. The NEET phenomenon is a growing issue across Europe, and Hungary, Romania, Spain and UK are no exception. Youth workers have been tasked with the complex and challenging duty of addressing the needs of NEET youths.

The study provides an overview of the NEET issue in participant countries, including the demographic characteristics of NEETs and the factors contributing to their disengagement from education and employment. The essay also examines the policy framework that governs youth work in participant countries, and the role that youth workers play in supporting NEET clients.

The document then delves into the working methods youth workers use when working with NEET beneficiaries. This includes a discussion of the different approaches and tools that youth workers use to engage and support NEETs, such as outreach and advocacy, mentoring and



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coaching, and skills training and development. The essay also examines the challenges that youth workers face when working with NEET clients, including limited resources, complex needs, and the impact of COVID-19.

The second part of the study offers an analysis of the research done to identify the key components needed to effectively produce outcomes regarding the employability in sport-based interventions for young people, mainly young people at risk and NEETs. An online survey was addressed and promoted to stakeholders in the field of youth and sport

Additionally, the following questions were formulated: What good practice sare in use at present? What evidence is there to demonstrate that practices are effective? What recommendations can be addressed to different stakeholders?

An in-depth interview was held in each country to further showcase the good practices already in implementation. We observed NGOs that have proved the utility of sports in personal and professional growth of their participants', especially there where integrated programs are in place.

Based on the analysis of survey, the interviews with the selected organisations and findings reported in the literature, a generic set of conclusions for sport for employability programmes was then developed.

Based on the conclusions drawn, a set of guiding principles/ recommendations for organisations that want to deliver sport and employability programmes for NEETs is drafted to support future involvement from other stakeholders in the youth and sports field.

The timeframe of the study was May 2021 – November 2021 for the initial version delivered. The final document will be presented in multiplier events held in every country of the project, in spring 2023.

The study consisted of three different phases: literature revies, analysis via online survey and focus groups in each country, study cases in each country via in-depth interviews, formulation of conclusions and recommendations.



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THEORETICAL APPROACH

Introduction

Society at large shares a widespread trust in the 'good of sport'. This trust goes beyond sport's recreational benefits and its contribution to physical health enhancement. As one of today's most visible social phenomena, sport is - to an increasing extent - associated with a variety of personal and societal outcomes clearly exceeding the sport context. Among other things, active involvement in sport has been associated with improved 'life skills', moral reasoning and educational performance (e.g. Kay, 2009). For example, the European Commission refers to sport as: "... a growing social and economic phenomenon which makes an important contribution to the European Union's strategic objectives of solidarity and prosperity" (European Commission's White Paper on Sport, 2007).

Today, sport is used in a wide array of intervention programmes aimed at achieving developmental objectives. These sport-based intervention programmes, labelled as 'sport for development' or in short 'SFD', often target at-risk youth. SFD programmes can be found in most European countries and are supported by a transnational social agenda, as well as by national and local social inclusion policies. Rather than representing stand-alone sport or youth programmes, these initiatives often address more general cultural, social and educational challenges young people are facing, thereby to a growing extent also attempting to facilitate the transition from education and training to the labour market.

At the EU-level, the policy focus on the supply side of employability is articulated in the 'Europe 2020 Strategy' (2010) for "smart, inclusive and sustainable growth". One of Europe 2020's flagship activities, is its agenda for new skills and jobs designed to assist labour market



transitions. More recently, the 'Youth Guarantee' and the 'Youth Employment Initiative' (YEI) drew lessons on how to improve the EU and national efforts on deploying national Youth Guarantee schemes. In June 2016, the 'New Skills Agenda for Europe' launched specific action to equip people in the European Union with the appropriate skills to find a job. Besides the call to the EU Member States, social partners and other partners to work together to strengthen the skills of the people in Europe, the European Commission proposed different actions to strengthen human capital and employability.

Mapping most frequent youth workers methods in relation to marginalized youth

Youth workers employ a variety of working methods to engage and support young people in their personal and social development. Their actions and methods are influenced by their work environments and the needs and interests of their target groups.

Engaging high-risk, marginalized youth presents a significance challenge in our society, considering the prevalence of disconnect and distrust they often experience with their social environments/systems. Yet, meaningful youth engagement is a key concept not only for positive youth development, but also for systems change to more effectively support high-risk youth and families.

Most prevalent types of intervention from youth workers in relation to marginalized youth include one or several methods stated bellow.

Non-formal education: non-formal education is a key method used by Hungarian youth workers to engage young people in learning outside of the traditional classroom setting. Non-formal education includes activities such as workshops, games, outdoor activities, and discussions that are designed to be interactive, participatory, and fun.

These activities are usually tailored to the needs and interests of the young people involved. A couple of examples: organizing outdoor activities, such as camping or hiking, to



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encourage young people to develop new skills and interests outside of the classroom; facilitating workshops on topics such as leadership, conflict resolution, or communication skills to help young people build their personal and professional competencies; organizing community service projects, such as volunteering at a local shelter or organizing a fundraiser, to help young people develop a sense of social responsibility and engage with their community.

A good practice example on these types of activities are scouting societies for youth which in all countries are organized as youth organizations that promote non-formal education through scouting activities. They offer programs for children and young people aged 6-21, including outdoor activities, games, and workshops. Other organizations in the countries of the project offer non-formal education programs for children and young people to help them develop resilience and coping skills. Their programs include art therapy, drama workshops, and summer camps.

Mentoring: Mentoring is a common method used by Hungarian youth workers to support young people in their personal and professional development. Mentoring involves building a supportive relationship with a young person, providing guidance and advice, and helping them to set and achieve goals. A few examples: • developing a one-on-one relationship with a young person, providing guidance and advice, and helping them set and achieve their goals; • offering career guidance and job-seeking advice to help young people navigate the job market and build their professional networks; • providing emotional support and a safe space to discuss personal issues, such as mental health or family problems.

Examples for such programmes are the international volunteers programs, run by NGOs implementing Erasmus+ and European Solidarity projects which aims to help young people participate in international volunteering programmes. They believe that volunteering is part of a lifelong process of non-formal learning that contributes greatly to the achievement of lasting personal goals and the development of young people in their communities. Volunteering in solidarity projects also helps young people to become European citizens.



Similar goals are set by the Red Cross Youth Branches, which have been active since 1920's and offers programmes, camps, training and volunteering opportunities for young people. The aim of these organisations is to create a true community of values for young people, based on humanitarian values, which it builds up in an open spirit, supported by experiential pedagogical methods and based on mutual acceptance.

Youth-led initiatives: youth workers encourage and support young people to take the lead in developing and implementing their own projects and initiatives. This includes providing young people with the skills, resources, and support they need to plan and execute their ideas. Examples: • helping young people to identify a need or problem in their community, and brainstorming potential solutions; • providing guidance on project planning, budgeting, and fundraising; • offering mentorship and support throughout the project's implementation.

Working Groups of the European Youth Parliament in all countries of the project are one typical local actor in the pursuit of the above objectives. Their projects are youth-led initiatives that empowers young people to develop their public speaking, debating, and leadership skills. They organize youth forums and debates on topics such as climate change and social justice.

Peer-to-peer support: Peer-to-peer support is another important method used by youth workers. This involves creating opportunities for young people to support and learn from each other. This can include peer mentoring, peer education, and peer counseling. This includes, among others, the following activities: • organizing group activities, such as team-building exercises or peer counseling sessions, where young people can learn from and support each other; • providing training or workshops to help young people develop peer-support skills, such as active listening or providing constructive feedback; • promoting a culture of inclusivity and respect within the group, where young people feel comfortable sharing their experiences and supporting each other.

In line with the various examples of peer-to-peer methods set out above, the following programs are worthy of mention in recent years: Oltalom Sport Association has for many years



organised events with international partners to provide youth leader training for players who, because of their personality or family background, are able to provide effective support to their peers. In such programmes, the training is usually followed by a football tournament organised and run by the trained youth leaders. This gives them the opportunity to put into practice the skills acquired during the training.

Advocacy and policy work: conducting research on issues affecting young people, such as youth unemployment or mental health, and using the findings to advocate for change; organizing campaigns or events to raise awareness of youth issues and mobilize support for policy change.

A good practice example can be “The Here to Say” project of the Oltalom Sport Association, supported by Erasmus+. The two-year project aimed to bridge the problem of shrinking civic spaces. With the training material developed under the programme, and the training organized to test it, young people learned a range of techniques that can be put into practice to make their voices heard and effectively reach local decision-makers, empowering them to shape their situation and circumstances.

Conclusions and recommendations

The European Commission has expressed in various reports for years the importance not only of physics, but also of social practice in any sport. It distinguishes between educational, social, playful, cultural, and public health functions.

Sport constitutes an instrument to promote a more inclusive society to combat intolerance and racism, violence, the abuse of alcohol or other substances harmful to the body; sport can contribute to the integration of socially excluded persons (European Commission, 1998).



Sport has clear advantages for physical and mental health: ▪ It's a tool to avoid sedentary diseases; ▪ Promotes relaxation states and rewards at short and long term; ▪ Encourages the socialization and the creation of social networks, as well as new leisure spaces as a healthy alternative to do with families and friends; ▪ Creating and achieving the objectives learnt; ▪ Self-esteem boosting; ▪ Endorphins are released, this contributes to feeling better; ▪ Take the responsibility of their tasks, their own and from the others; ▪ The importance of discipline, constancy and effort is learnt; ▪ It acts as a prevention of toxic substances consumption; ▪ Their abilities and capacities are boosted.

Sport encourages the positive learning of the individual roles and the society rules. Apart from the cultural values, the attitudes and the individuals and collective behaviour learnt in the sport activity frame that find again in another life fields.

An online survey and 8 focus group with more than 100 participants from more than 85 organizations and public institutions and authorities was carried out throughout May - November 2021, to further assess the potential contribution for sports- related activities in supporting learning of soft skills and providing momentum for NEETs employment prospects. The strategic aim of the organisations studied was generally focused around promoting social and economic integration of marginalized youths into society, with main objectives of improving skills, experience and knowledge needed to access employment. In order to achieve this mission, the organisations in the study undertook initiatives through programs related to sports, provision of internships and work experience as well as, employability education. Many of the organisations combined elements of employment education, sport and work experience in their programs.

In addition to ensuring that each organisation consented to analysis of their responses, basic information was gathered to understand the type of organisation contributing to the survey. As 46% of organisations work with over 50 NEETs each year, the breadth of this study is comprehensive to accurately assess the outcomes and experiences of these programs. Furthermore, as 76% of organisations in the study also have monitoring systems for evaluating



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program effectiveness, the responses are not anecdotal and reflective of trends garnered. Although each organisation has varying program lengths, 42% of organisations have been running for over 10 years and the majority have been offering activities to NEETs in particular for over 6 years. This makes the responses to the analysis an accurate representation of long-term experiences and NEET-focused project outcomes. Accordingly, the information collected from the focus group is highly transferable and applicable to the NEETs Need Sport project.

With 83.3% of organisations aiming to develop participants' employability, the study's results reflect the importance of developing training tools for youth workers and sport coaches to increase employment of marginalised young people. Results also evidenced that 50% of organisations were youth worker institutions and public bodies, with most other types of organisations being NGOs or organisations that promoted education through coaching sports.

Thus, the effectiveness of sport as a tool for connecting, inspiring and teaching NEETs will be conveyed through the outcomes of organisations studied. The particular need to focus on youth is seen through the majority of participants of each organisation studied being between 16-25 years old, despite a variety of recruitment methods.

According to the survey, 19-21 years olds is a particularly vulnerable demographic, with males being more highly recruited by organisations. This survey highlights the centrality of reducing structural socioeconomic disparities by targeting NEETs, many of whom have been marginalised.

As the majority of NEETs that took part in the study have presented themselves through direct contact, there is evidently motivation from NEETs themselves in order to achieve a more financially stable and socially integrated role in society. The main problems causing young persons to become NEETs in organisations' areas were overwhelmingly reported to be 'poor education', 'lack of skills' and 'social & familial circumstances'.

Although these issues can be highly interrelated, this calls attention to the need to support NEETs socially by providing them with stable emotional networks of support, assistance



in soft skills development, as well as transferable skills and knowledge to employment that many early leavers will not have obtained. Personalised guidance is key to these organisations providing NEETs with the tools to overcome these inequalities as seen by over 65% offering one-to-one mentoring guidance and 89% of them offering career guidance while doing sport and sport related activities.

In terms of the methods undertaken to get NEETs 'back on track', the top responses included 'motivational and inspirational skills training' (83%), 'collaboration with stakeholders (authorities, schools, companies, parents)' (58%) and 'soft skills development' (50%). These results suggest that not only do NEETs benefit from developing social awareness and transferable employment skills, but they respond well to engagement with local support systems. As many NEETs lack the social networks required to emotionally guide and advise them, partnership with stakeholders beyond those leading the program are beneficial to their personal development and subsequent employment prospects.

The specific activities offered to NEETs mainly included personal development, sport activities and soft skills training. 83% maintained that their successful activities included sport, with team sports, most notably football, being the most suited activities for NEETs training. Evidently, team sports are key to engaging youth and supporting the development of employment skills such as communication, cooperation, problem-solving, decision-making and commitment.

The targeted discussions held during the focus groups in all countries of the study have underlined the social role of sport regarding fighting against unemployment of young people. Most of the delegates of the public bodies and NGOs involved have maintained that by developing social and communication skills, youth are more "assured, motivated and confident" and thus, able to improve their mental health. Mental empowerment is also key to facilitating long-term positive networks and mentors through volunteering to support youth in their employment endeavours by "preventing young people from joining the wrong crowd". In



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In addition to the social and mental benefits reaped, they assert that youth are also able to obtain transferable practical skills, including time management, managing responsibilities, goal-setting and relevant knowledge and qualifications.

Participants in the study argue that beyond skill development, sport should be directly utilised as an employability tool by promoting sport diplomas, getting young people involved in coaching, encouraging them to engage with the fields of personal training, community centres and sport and business. Youth can be supported on a practical level by connecting them with apprenticeship and internship roles with football clubs or sport clubs in general and helping them find jobs within sport clubs such as stadiums, retail and hospitality.

Alongside the sports sector and sports agencies including the FA, crucial partners to support employability are local MPs and councillors, sport government bodies, universities and public health agencies.

Furthermore, a central finding of this study was that in order for these jobs to be sustainable, informal learning standards must hold the youth accountable for engaging with content through assessment and utilising “incentives to volunteer in physical activities and promotion of awards to make activities more enjoyable”. Subsequently, the coaches should respond and adapt their program to address youth’s gaps in skills and knowledge and apparent response to the training.

Some of the youth workers and coaches involved in the study rightfully focussed more on the direct networking skills that engaging in sport can provide. They assert that, through sport, youths are able to gain transferable soft skills to help them find and sustain job opportunities such as teamwork, problem-solving, conflict resolution, resilience, confidence and accountability skills. Moreover, they are provided with technical employability skills by being able to engage in volunteering and experience in sport-related activities which “could open opportunities for a career path in the sports sector”.



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Working with partners outside of the sports sector including employers, NGOs, educational opportunities, government and local councils and professionals or leaders within the local community, youth will be directly provided with “opportunities for work experience, thereby increasing employability”. By developing highly transferable skills and experience they will also be able to access fields that underprivileged youth often face high barriers to entry to, such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), business and managerial roles.

Despite not directly engaging in non-sport sectors, the transferable nature of skills and experiences brought about by sport “may be seen favourably by employers as it could be a determinant of productivity, resulting in higher occupational status and higher salary”.

Furthermore, aside from working with partners to support employment, optimising this informal learning through sport requires training youth workers on how to best understand and engage with youth, working with NGOs to provide workshops and engaging with sport organisations or manufacturers to donate resources. This will create a positive learning environment to support youth in the social and technical elements of their employability skills and knowledge development.

In conclusion, this study suggests the potential success of the NEETs Need Sport project because there is evidently a need for supporting the development of marginalised youths’ soft skills to improve their employment prospects. In projects undertaken with similar missions, sports (particularly team sports) as a method to develop transferable employment skills shows widespread success. Sports training especially shows great success in impacting youths’ soft skills when employed in addition to employment skills mentoring and workshops. Therefore, the results from this highlight the importance of a combination of sports as a method for developing transferable employment skills, as well as further education of employment knowledge in order to improve societal integration of NEETs.



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All these experiences of training, employment and social collaboration have been accompanied by the emergence of various degrees and specialization courses for these fields. These new professional dynamics, which provide young people with concrete results for their insertion, offer very good expectations, but it should be noted that problems related to the continuation of these jobs and the consequent need to increase public support if they want to give continuity to these interventions of great social profitability (Balibrea, Santos & Lerma, 2004).

Encouraging responsibility in the practice of physical activity could be positive in the proposed training process for practitioners, since there is evidence of its relationship with pro-social behaviors, empathy and a greater perception of efficacy. The educational and sports centers must have the objective of transmitting moral and educational values from the sports context to the general context of the students (personal and social development), through intervention programs in responsibility (Fernández-Gavira et al., 2018).

It would be essential to incorporate sport in broader integration projects, with the participation of different institutions in labor, education, health, etc. It can be very useful to create communication spaces between professionals (educators and coaches or monitors) involved in a sport and social inclusion project (especially with young people).

Cari González, Social Educator of the Ajuntament de Barcelona, explains: «If we understand that the sport, the activity or the project itself becomes a meeting point, then it is feasible that other relationships can be produced between monitors, educators and those who participate. For example, the possibility that participants can make individual demands related to their future project, job search, training, health, etc. advice, etc.». It can also be very valuable to incorporate labor and professional guidance and training (perhaps of a sports nature) into projects that can guarantee a minimum economic independence in the medium or long term (Consejo Superior de Deportes, 2011).

As in other sports projects in Europe that enable social and labor reintegration, among



many other social tasks (Consejo Superior de Deportes, 2011); in Spain, these projects could be implemented and networked with other countries and institutions so that cooperation is the best tool for coordinating future sports projects that continue to help so many people find work and eradicate or, at least, minimize the social exclusion through sport.

CASE STUDIES

Good practice example: INSERsport - Spain

UFEC's Social Action Department, created the INSERsport program on 2017 and 5 years later, is still giving opportunities to youngsters. It is aimed at youth who are at risk of social exclusion and make use of third sector organizations that collaborate with UFEC. UFEC's relationships with these organizations come together to form a kind of network. This collaboration has expanded as more sports clubs and federations that are passionate about these issues have become involved.

On one hand, for these youngsters, having a job represents a very important tool to fight against poverty and social exclusion. On the other hand, sport helps youngsters to acquire values such as constant improvement, mastery of emotions, patience, sacrifice, instills perseverance, works acceptance of defeat to overcome, cooperation to achieve a common goal, respect and solidarity.

With this approach, this program gives youth the possibility of training through theoretical-practical courses for a short period of time (one or two days per week for two or three months and in morning or afternoon hours) so that they can obtain 1 federative certificate that will allow them to enter the labor market as monitors, referees, timekeepers, commissioners of route, assemblers of competitions, etc. of the sport that they choose. The ultimate goal is for this first occupation to serve as a bridge for them to continue expanding their studies. Also, that they



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believe in their possibilities, that they improve their social skills, and that they obtain work experience that helps them to make their way in the labor market.

To be able to carry out this course, we have had the collaboration of the following federations, throughout all the editions made since 2017: Involved Sport Federations: FC d'Activitats Subaquàtiques - FC d'Automobilisme - FC de Beisbol i Softbol - FC de Bàsquet - FC d'Escacs - FC d'Esgrima - FC de Futbol Sala - FC Hoquei - FC de Kick-Boxing i Muay-Thai - FC de Lluita - FC d'Esports de Persones amb Discapacitat Física - FC d'Esports per a Persones amb Discapacitat Intel·lectual · ACELL - FC de Rem - FC de Tennis - FC de Tennis Taula - FEC de Paralítics Cerebrals - FC de Volei - Federació d'Entitats Excursionistes de Catalunya.

As regards the individual scope:

Make new learnings. To achieve and consolidate new learning through both the theoretical practical training provided and the cross-curricular skills sessions; Obtain a federative certificate. Continuous attendance at training sessions, perseverance, performance, participation, pro-activity of youngsters and demonstration of the consolidation of the subjects taught through theoretical and practical knowledge tests, allow the majority of this youth, enrolled in INTERsport courses to obtain a federative certificate, that will open doors to the labour market and give them the opportunity to expand their curriculum vitae, both in the field of training and work experience.

Increase their self-control in impulsive behaviours. During the sessions of transversal skills, the identification and management of emotions, communication and social skills, assertiveness and relaxation techniques are worked. This transmission of knowledge allows the young participants to learn during the course, to identify emotions, to name them and to manage them correctly; avoiding loss of self-control and impulsive behaviors in situations that are new to them or that generate high levels of stress and anxiety and that, so far, they did not know how to deal with and manage them.

Focus attention on a new goal. Youth succeed in projecting into the future and in focusing



their attention and efforts on achieving the federative certificate that facilitates their access to the labour market, to economic autonomy and personal and social development.

Set goals and new challenges. During the courses the participants focus on several challenges progressively. The first challenge is to create the habit of attending to classes and focus efforts on not dropping out. Once they have incorporated class attendance into their routines, they focus on passing the knowledge test; once passed, they set new goals related to the world of work or other training complementary to the courses they have completed.

Continue studying. The fact of achieving the goals and challenges proposed in a short space of time reinforces the self-esteem of boys and girls and also their expectations; This situation allows many of them to decide to continue studying or resume studies that they had abandoned.

Create healthy habits. The training focuses on healthy habits such as increasing sports or physical activity, reducing the use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and other toxic substances. Youngsters are encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle by integrating exercise, balanced diet and adequate rest into their lives.

In reference to the socio-relational scope:

- Be more extroverted. Some of the youngsters participating in the project, have difficulty socializing and interacting with others. The environment surrounding the classroom and the dynamism of the theoretical classes and transversal competencies, helps them to gain self-confidence and participate. Similarly, the practice of sports on the slopes pushes them to interact with others, especially when it comes to team or collective sports.
- Improve relationships between peers and with family members and professionals. Youth are encouraged to relate to each other from respect and empathy; to create quality bonds and expand their networks and friendships. On the other hand, the individualized follow-up that is done with each youngster and the collaboration that



exists between the different professional profiles of their environment (social workers/workers, psychologists/mothers, parents, trainers/teachers, etc.), allows youngsters to express their concerns, to have a rapprochement and, therefore, to have a qualitative improvement in the interpersonal relations that they had so far with their immediate environment.

- Improve school, training, occupational and work performance. Through the courses, the majority of youngsters resume training or increase their performance. In addition, they are kept busy for several days a week and once they have finished the course, they get paid work from which they have studied. This contributes to the fact that weekends have an occupation and responsibility.
- Working as a team, fostering cooperation versus individualism. The INSERsport programme has focused on teamwork and cooperation through group exercises or practical training sessions.
- Understand the importance of following certain rules and regulations. INSERsport courses have emphasized from the outset the importance of following certain rules and regulations when living together in society. For this reason, not only have participants trained to obtain a federative certificate, but they have also been helped to integrate certain norms and standards into their lives: basic standards of education, correction of the communicative style, punctuality, responsibility, respect, tolerance, alternative adaptive responses to verbal, physical or psychological violence, etc.
- Find a fun space. In INSERsport courses, in addition to learning a sport and obtaining a federative certificate to be able to have access to a remunerated occupational, youngsters have found a space of leisure and fun in which to share moments of relaxation with their peers. This space has been recognized and praised by many of them, who have experienced it as an opportunity to break with their day-to-day problems and difficulties.



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TRAINING PROGRAMMES

All formative programs are 50 h to 150 h, with a first part of the practical learning of sports, so that youngsters do not associate the program to classrooms and decide to drop out (the vast majority of them come from experience of school failure, many do not have the ESO). In all formative programs in the most theoretical part, we use audiovisual material and meaningful learning.

Most federations propose training as auxiliary referees, referees, table assistants or timers, since looking at the labour market we see that there is a need for professionals from this field.

The above objectives are achieved through the following activities:

- Theoretical classes. Classes Taught by trainers from the federations of the different federated sports included in the program. During these classes, taught for 2-3 months (2 or 3 days per week) depending on the sport, the rules and other necessary technicalities of each sport are taught.
- Practical classes. Practical classes complement theoretical classes and are also taught by trainers from the federations. In these classes, the youngsters apply the theory in practical exercises (refereeing in track, writing minutes, etc.).
- Classes of transversal skills. These classes complement the theoretical and practical sports training; they are taught so that the participants develop or empower tools that will be useful, not only when they access a job, but in other spheres of their life. In the classes of transversal skills, taught by the UFEC's Social Action Area psychologists, aspects such as social and communication skills, assertiveness, management of emotions, negotiation and conflict resolution, impulse control and aggression, etc. are worked.



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- Excursions. There are weekend activities to find a space of leisure and fun in which the youngsters can share their formative experiences and expand their relational circles. In this way, they can participate in recreational activities and expand their knowledge of the world, the environment and their life experiences. Visits are made to the Barcelona Tennis Real Club to attend the Open Banc Sabadell - Conde de Godó Trophy - and the Barcelona racetrack-Catalunya of Montmeló, on the occasion of the Formula 1 GP of Spain. In addition, they are invited to make excursions in the mountain with an overnight stay or without some refuge.
- Volunteering. Volunteer activities are carried out with some of the youngsters: walks and/or solidarity races, sporting events, etc. Also, people outside the organization are encouraged to collaborate in an altruistic way with the project. Company workers often participate by volunteering.

BENEFICIARIES/ PARTICIPANTS

The INSERSport programme focuses on sports training, education in transversal values and skills, self-esteem, equality and the integration into the labour market of young people belonging to vulnerable groups and groups facing social exclusion. It also affects healthy habits, since at the age of 16 it is the age at which the use of toxins begins, especially alcohol, tobacco and cannabis.

The beneficiaries of the project and of the activities programmed within it are youth from 16 to 25, who are in a situation of vulnerability and/or social exclusion, derived from both NGOs and entities of the Third Social Sector and from the Administration (Social Services, General Directorate for Child and Adolescent Care (DGAIA), Open Environment of the Department of Juvenile Justice, Catalan Occupation Service (SOC)).

The profiles of these young people respond to different situations: early school leaving and lack of compulsory basic training; unemployment or job insecurity of youth and/or one or both parents; dysfunctional family situation; victims of violence; lack of economic resources



and/or lack of safe housing, with paying rent problems, with an eviction order and no basic supplies; youngsters on probation.

Some of the beneficiaries are unaccompanied migrant minors residing in sheltered centres. Among the project beneficiaries, there are also youngsters with physical and/or intellectual disabilities, various disorders (behavioral, addictive, personality, developmental...).

So far, more than 600 youngsters have benefited and the project has been funded by grants from public entities, foundations, and contributions from private companies.

Oltalom Sport Association (OSA) - Hungary

Helping NEETs with the means of sport

Sport - both recreational and competitive - has many of the qualities that make it an excellent way of teaching young people from disadvantaged backgrounds the skills they need to succeed in life in a playful and accessible way.

The mission of OSA is to prevent fall out from society and to enhance social integration by using sport as an innovative tool for every person with different socio-economic status. OSA strives to reach out to those in need, offers stability and regularity to those who come to their training sessions, and helps them improve their quality of life by involving them in their social services.

Sport is therefore a hook that can reach the widest possible range of young people. Until recently, the organisation has exclusively used football - one of the most popular forms of physical activity in the world - to engage young people.

It is not only football's extreme popularity that makes it so. In the OSA's approach, sport serves many purposes. The most important of these are:

- community building for young people living on the margins of society;



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- create regularity in young people's lives, which in the longer term will help them to feel safe and empowered;
- to equip target group members with transferable skills that will give them a better chance of succeeding at school, in the labour market or even in starting a family;
- to give them a sense of belonging to the community, that they are important, that without them the world would be a duller place, that they mean a lot to others;
- helping community members to access specific services through football that they would not otherwise have access to or consider important;
- to help community members to see the world and experience what a diverse and interesting place it is, by broadening their perspectives.

Community building

One of the most typical obstacles for disadvantaged young people attending the training sessions of the organisation is the lack of role models around them. Most of these young people come from a correctional institution or a foster home. Those who live in families are also, in almost all cases, from a background of housing poverty, and the lack of a positive pattern is also highly prevalent in their cases. Being part of a football team - and this is true of other team sports, too, of course - gives these young people the chance to experience what it is like to be counted on and to count on others. Optimally - and this is something that the players of the club are deprived of - this is how a family, a school class, and, ultimately, society at large works. Even in a football team, there are fixed, interdependent roles - positions - and mutual success can only be achieved if everyone does their part while being mindful of others.

Through sport, it is therefore easier for these young people to experience the power of community and to understand or sense the otherwise rather didactic context described above.

Regularity



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Experience shows that one of the main reasons why the young people at the heart of the programme drop out of school early, become pregnant early and fail to succeed in the labour market is a lack of regularity. The practice developed by OSA, the structure of the training sessions, the placement of each type of training within a given week, and even the occurrence of each period within a given year - preparation, national tournaments, international tournaments, summer camps, etc. - is planned, predictable, regular and reliable.

The positive aspects of belonging to a community - such as traveling to international tournaments or youth exchanges - are also mainly related to the extent to which a member of the community respects the requirements of regularity and can be counted on by the community. Only then can there be any question of how good a footballer someone is, or how well someone speaks English.

Transferable skills

The aim of the OSA's work is to equip its players with skills through sport, football, that will be useful to them in other areas of life. Predictability and punctuality in training are virtues that are also expected in the job market. The football pitch offers plenty of opportunities for players to learn to deal with disagreements, to exercise self-control, to learn to accept defeat and to deal with success.

In this sense, a football pitch, a match, is a miniature replica of life, where the skills needed to succeed - patience, predictability, discipline, communication skills, acceptance of otherness, putting individual interests before the interests of the community, etc. - can be learned.

Access to services

OSA players are mostly young people from the margins of society. They come from juvenile institutions, children's homes, housing poverty or from families with a migrant



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background. They typically receive low levels of education, live in dysfunctional family situations, and are not provided with positive role models by their peer community.

A special feature of the OSA is that the social sport coach is always accompanied by a social worker during training sessions, and the social workers also accompany the players to other events organised by the organisation, such as summer camps and international tournaments. This way of working provides an excellent opportunity for professionals working with young people to regularly monitor their clients' daily lives, to detect if any intervention is needed. The regular presence of social workers also allows them to gain an insight into the social environment and family life of the young people attending the training sessions. This often brings the association into closer contact with clients' families. This enables the association to provide concrete, material assistance to families in need. The assistance can take many forms, from food to cleaning supplies to finding employment.

A wide range of services are available: the OSA also offers English lessons to its players, and these can be compulsory before major international tournaments. Players can also take advantage of other extra-curricular classes at school. The association also organises other cultural activities in addition to training sessions and after-school classes.

The presence of social workers also makes it possible to organise events such as girls' clubs and boys' clubs, where, for example, the topic of sex education, which is very important for adolescents, can be raised.

To see the World

Motivating players to stay on the programme and attend training sessions regularly is not always an easy task. One of the most powerful motivational tools in this respect is the opportunity to participate in international tournaments. The majority of OSA players do not even get to go abroad, let alone to holiday destinations in Hungary. At the same time, the team participates in several tournaments abroad every year. Most of these are European football



tournaments, mostly in venues close to Hungary, but some events are organised in distant locations on other continents. When selecting the members of the travelling squad, as already mentioned, the primary criterion is not footballing ability, but the diligence of the players. These trips are also an opportunity for players to practise their foreign language skills.

Equally important in motivating players are the summer camps, which the club organises several times a summer. These are partly opportunities for young people to get out of their confined environment and partly chances to prepare for specific international tournaments.

Horn of Africa People's Aid Northern Ireland - UK

Established in 2011 by a group of dedicated volunteers, Horn of Africa People's Aid Northern Ireland was formed in response to a clear demand for support for refugees, asylum seekers, individuals and families from HoA and beyond who are living in NI. Based on Botanic Avenue, close to Belfast city centre, HAPANI works from an ethos of social inclusion – empowering those who are socially, financially or physically vulnerable in order to promote individual well-being and harmonious communities.

With a focus on gender, social, and religious equality while providing effective, practical support to those in need, we aim to develop independent initiatives, raise awareness, challenge intolerance and expand resources for those who need it most. HAPANI's approach is based on open and honest communication, collaborating with individuals and organisations for the benefit of service users and their communities.

Refugees and asylum seekers from the HoA region and beyond face a huge range of obstacles living in Northern Ireland – language barriers, poverty, accessing healthcare and education, connecting with services and securing employment after being granted refugee status, to name a few.

HAPANI's commitment is to connect, support and empower these individuals regardless of social background, gender, ethnicity or circumstance. They also offer direct support for



HAPANI youth who would otherwise be deprived of the right to education, training and personal development. With equality and inclusiveness at the core of our vision, HAPANI take an active, comprehensive approach to improving the lives of those from HoA and the communities in which they live.

HAPANI facilitates numerous awareness, educational, sports and support projects that aim to support and empower people from the Horn of Africa and beyond who are living in Northern Ireland and facing problems every day. They work to provide quality services based on integration and equality and we are dedicated to building an equal and integrative future for people from HoA and beyond in Northern Ireland. they believe that every refugee, asylum seeker and African person in Northern Ireland deserves a voice regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion or social background.

Their integrated approach to integrate and prepare for the the people to be professionally indepent is set on a multidomain basis, taking into consideration their beneficiaries' varietated needs.

Accredited English Classes. HAPANI provide their service users with free access to accredited English classes at institutions such as the Belfast Metropolitan College, as well as 6-12 weeks literacy and numeracy courses. This enables individuals to develop conversational and social skills that help them build their confidence and interact more easily within the community.

Access To Further Education and Training. By collaborating with non-governmental organisations such as Include Youth and Business in the Community, HAPANI offer pathways into further education, employment and/or training. They also advocate for the waiving of fees for refugees who might otherwise be unable to pursue further education due to financial hardship.

Access to Public Services. HAPANI uses its broad knowledge base along with its open communication style with public bodies to respond to the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and other HoA individuals. Accessing primary or secondary healthcare is not an option for destitute asylum seekers elsewhere in the UK, and they have helped individuals access these vital services.



By focusing on each person's individual circumstances, they advocate for appropriate housing, medical care and social services, and continually strive to nurture a culture of equality in Northern Ireland.

Advocacy. Advocating the social, economic and political rights of refugees in Northern Ireland is at the heart of HAPANI's ethos of equality. Their team deals with cases related to housing rights, educational access and hate crimes, as well as being represented at the Migrant Forum and Racial Equality Boards.

Sport for development. Physical activity is a great way for young people to improve fitness, form friendships and develop their social skills. HAPANI has partnered with Suffolk Swifts Football Club in Belfast to provide children aged 12-16 with the opportunity to train and play for the club on a regular basis. They have also organise basketball games between girls from the local area and those who have arrived in NI as refugees, ensuring that gender is no barrier to sporting opportunities in our continued efforts towards equality.

These integrated programmes are initially held for a period of six weeks in where language classes are concerned. The project involves the teaching of English to individuals of varying ages and abilities to enable those individuals to go about their daily lives living in Northern Ireland. The project was established initially to highlight the need to incorporate such initiatives into the community, to raise awareness of the practical assistance needed for individuals from the Horn of Africa region and to create a provision where these individuals can receive the necessary guidance and assistance.

The morning and noon learning sessions focused on providing for learning and developmental space, while the afternoons were made up of sports activities that complemented their learning. There was also a homework club in the evenings to give the children educational support and guidance. The idea of a school environment was very new to most of the Horn of Africa community, and for many it was their first time in a classroom.



In 2014, it was awarded a Comic Relief Community grant for a sports project for young people in Belfast, including those whose parents had come from Horn of Africa seeking asylum. Over 10 weeks, the young people had football and basketball coaching, played matches and learned tips on healthy living. The young people reported feeling more connected to each other, and enjoyed the opportunities for socialising, staying fit and learning a new sport. HAPANI have continued the project with small contributions from the young people who were keen to keep playing. The project has grown from that moment on to having both male and female teams on football and basketball.

From that starting point on, the NGO has multiplied and enlarged its programmes creating and integrated methodology to approach youth dealing with extreme marginalization.

An integrated approach towards the spectrum –

Dinamo Noua Generatie – Down Plus Bucharest Association – CCSS Tei

Within the CCSS Tei headquarters lies a fresh concept on integrated programs for youth at risk. Together, a special needs association, a public body and a football club provide a wide range of activities seeking to integrate socially and professionally a very special target group.

It is an initiative, not yet a long term good practice example, but it creates the ground for further development in the area and an example that could be applied to other special target groups.

The beginning of the initiative was in 2019 in March before the pandemic started during preparation for the celebration of World Down Syndrome Day. Then during all the event CCSS Tei hosted, a new collaboration was created.

Since then, regular activities have maintained. The partnership stands and provides a learning and educational course, a sports for development program together with all the facilities and ease of access to services a public body can open.



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“Football is not a sport of financial fulfillment as it is perceived lately. Football is the discipline that develops the body, mind, intuition, will, vision, insight, the power to make decisions from an early age. It is a team sport that develops communication that binds friends, integrates you into society and develops human character. A sport of ambition, seriousness, sports discipline on the sports field as well as outside it, building a victorious future! We are a society in constant motion, sometimes caught up in everyday life we forget to make time for small but significant things” says the chairman of the football club, mr Petre Zanfir, while overseeing the football session today.

Dinamo Noua Generatie football club works with children from Down Associations, but also with abandoned children from Children's Homes and considers that small things make the difference and one of the values of the DINAMO NOUA GENERATIE team is respect for the Future of our children. From the very beginning, for all these children DINAMO NOUA GENERATIE supports and makes sustained efforts to ensure a field with natural grass, synthetic and covered, heated field for training, training equipment, medical staff, tournaments and sports competitions organized in a special setting , supervision throughout the training or sports competitions, all of this together with licensed coaches.

At the moment, the DINAMO NOUA GENERATIE club supports a number of over 25 children from the DOWN Plus Bucharest Association, over 70 children from the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Bucharest sect2 and from the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection of Ilfov county, over 30 children from the Lindenfeld "Ajungem Mari" Association, from the "Children's Villages" SOS Association, from the Magurele Christian Social Ensemble, over 50 children from disadvantaged families.

For all these children, DINAMO NOUA GENERATION outside the field for training, provides coaches and mentors, medical staff and equipment (training equipment, game equipment, winter equipment, boots, protectors, gloves, etc.), also provides camps in the mountains and sea, tours in the country and abroad - transport, accommodation and meals, medical visits, etc.



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Down Plus Bucharest Association works with their beneficiaries to improve their condition. Because of their programmes, many have attended bachelor studies, have jobs and have become examples for their peers.

Part of the specialized sessions are held one-on-one in therapeutic centres and with professional experts, part of their handmade, crafts and leisure activities are held within CCSS tei grounds.

Most of the mainstream, high attendance events organized for these youth are also located within the CCSS Tei facilities. CCSS Tei also provides at regular intervals funds for the maintenance in practice of the long term activities.

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**NEETs
NEED
SPORT**

COMPARATIVE STUDY

On working methods of youth workers
in their relation with marginalized young people