



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



## Introduction

The Sport!Op! Project (Opportunities for inclusion of vulnerable youth through sport), within the framework of the Erasmus + Sport program, was born in 2020 and its main goal is the inclusion of vulnerable young people through sport. It also has the challenge of being developed during the global crisis generated by Covid-19.

In this first newsletter, the partners involved in Sport!Op! explain their participation in the project, the first steps they have taken, successful experiences and also reflections on the inclusion of young people and children through sport.

## What have we done so far?



UNIVERSITAT DE  
BARCELONA

The purpose of the Sport!OP! (Opportunities for inclusion of vulnerable youth through sport) project is to develop local community-based strategies using sports as a vehicle of social inclusion of the most vulnerable and at risk children and adolescents.

The project will focus on municipalities of small and medium size and takes a multistakeholder approach, in which public, private and voluntary organizations of each region have an interest and a role to play.

Our findings to date highlight the needs and the expectations of the different stakeholders (municipalities, sport organizations, children, adolescent and youngsters) involved in the project and we will be highlighting some of these in this newsletter.

First, we agreed on a conceptual framework to be used as a starting point for the

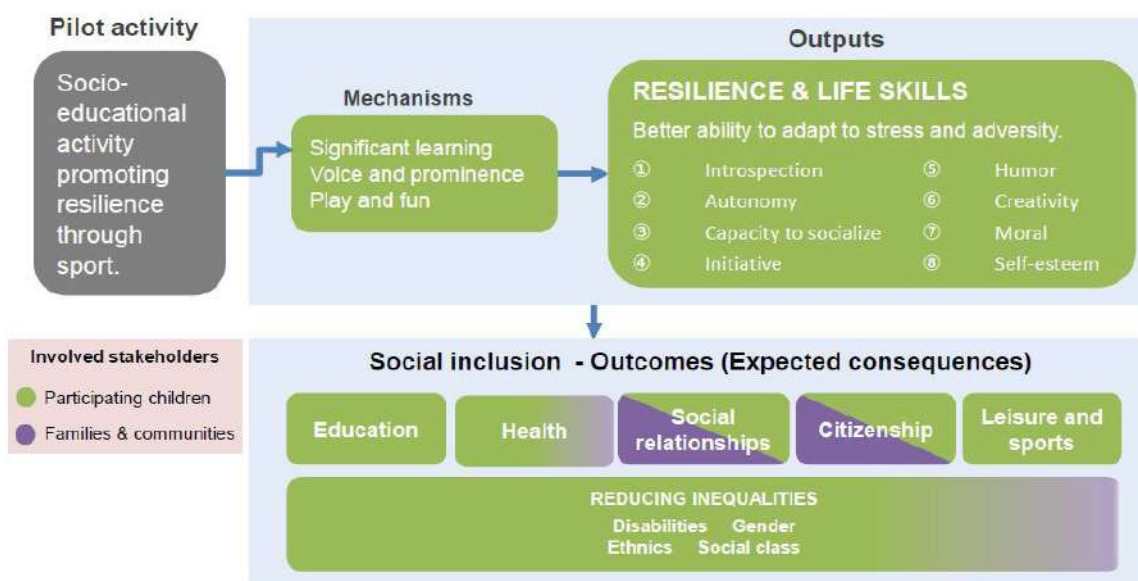


project. You can consider it our hypothesis of work.

We are deeply convinced that sport activities are capable of delivering positive educational & life-skills related outputs when nurtured through a deliberately designed and purposeful educational strategy.

At the same time, we truly believe that those educational outputs have a potential long-term impact on the social inclusion of children and youngster at risk. Just in the way it is showed in the graphic below:

### SportOp! Project Theory of Change



Second, in order to start putting this ideas together, we have already identified some needs and potentialities in order to facilitate (at later stages in the project) to design, develop and carry out a pilot project based on sound methodological guidelines for sport organizations working with vulnerable children and youth.

The University of Barcelona (UB) have been leading this “Analysis of needs and opportunities” activities supported by a team of 5 researchers with significant experience in children development and building of resilience through sport.



## The goal of Go! Atheneum in the project



GO! Atheneum Ieper has jumped into the SportOP! project because of the possibilities the project presented. The city of Ieper has many sports clubs and facilities but also a large number of sedentary citizens.

In order to achieve the aims that have been set, the city has joined forces with 'Fedasil'. Fedasil is a refugee centre near Ieper. Many refugees would like to do sports, but have no facilities or lack the abilities to become a member of a sports club. Hence, the main goal is to inform refugees of which sports they can take part in and how to get in touch with clubs to find the right facilities. Most importantly, it will allow participants to play the sport of their choice.

To reach the targets, The city has called on the help of students in their final year studying physical education. They will help achieve our aims by organizing sporting events in cooperation with nearby clubs. Our students will provide a large variety of sports, each with his/her own specialties and talents.

The activities started with the kick off day, with a refugee from Fedasil who is responsible for the sports activities. He talked about the needs of the refugees and the sports they would like to do. He also taught our students about the sport of cricket. In return, our students would like to coach the refugees and act as a connection between sports clubs and Fedasil in the coming year.

Each month a new sport suitable for the refugees will be introduced. By doing so, we will hopefully expand their personal networks. In this way, as the project progresses, the group should grow in size.



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## Could “Hand the Ball” and the magical green “goalcha ball” be the key to social inclusion?



In this first newsletter we would like to give you an update about the development of our project. We want to start by sharing some interesting results worth highlighting from the analysis of the local needs assessment questionnaires. The results showed that among our target group, the majority of children in the 9-12 years old age group from Vikingaskolan (Vikingaschool), agreed that having fun is the most important factor when it comes to doing sports. Most of the children also agreed that winning is what matters the least. The target group represented is a mix of children: some of whom have never done sports, others who have taken part in sports before and some who are presently involved in sports.

With this in mind, we are convinced that the concept of the ‘Hand the Ball’ game is suitable to be implemented as our pilot project. The fundamental pillars are that it can be played by anyone and everywhere, as long as they have the magical component: the specially developed green ‘goalcha ball’. The aim of ‘Hand the Ball’ is to shift focus from competition and results to the social and interactive element of the game. Therefore, it becomes an inclusive and fun activity not limited by participants, age, gender, experience and skill levels.

The unique ‘goalcha ball’ serves several functions within the concept of ‘Hand the Ball’, both literal and symbolically. With no other equipment required other than the ball and the ability to adapt activities to the space available, ‘Hand the ball’ can create instant results anywhere. ‘Hand the Ball’ has the ability to create meaningfulness, self-confidence and social skills through play. Furthermore, it delivers physical and social results along with enjoyment where they are most needed.

Having the result of the local needs assessment in mind we believe that the concept of ‘Hand the Ball’ with the magical green ‘goalcha ball’ will be an important tool in creating social inclusion through sport.



Here are some pictures of some of the ‘Hand the Ball’ activities with the green ‘goalcha ball’ that we have done within our sports club.



**Next events:**

- Pilot implementation- At the beginning of 2021, we will start the implementation of the pilot project at Vikingaskolan in Lund.
- Multiplier Sport Event- At the beginning of 2021 we will invite you to join a meeting with our local partners to discuss more about the project and to share and exchange experiences. Keep an eye open for the invitation. We would love to see you there!



## The Local Needs Assessment in Granollers



Ajuntament de Granollers

Social inclusion through sport is a really important issue all over the world. One aspect of the Sport!Op! Project is to improve the well-being of vulnerable youngsters by building resilience and developing social and life skills. To achieve these goals, a needs analysis has been carried out which uses a qualitative (work session) and a quantitative (surveys) method of data analysis.

Firstly, questionnaires were sent to the state and semi-private schools in Granollers in order to know whether the children schooled in the city did any physical activity. Specifically, to discover the reasons why they do or don't play sports. According to the results (515 responses) 53,3% of the children play a sport and a 46,7% don't. Of those who don't play any sport, it was especially due to socio-economic reasons (21%), lack of time (15,13%), the fact that they didn't enjoy doing sport (15,7%) or that they couldn't do the sport they liked (14,47%). In addition, the health situation caused by COVID-19 has also had a significant impact on children's responses.

Following this, on Monday October 26th, an online work session was held. The workshop was aimed at physical education teachers, coordinators, monitors or representatives of different sports entities in Granollers along with town council technicians. There was a high level of participation, with 25 professionals joining the meeting. The goals set were: (1) to analyse how our knowledge could be improved of the circumstances which compromise children's relationships with physical activity, (2) to identify which aspects can reinforce the expertise of sports professionals in promoting resilience and life skills through sporting activity.

With all the information gathered in the session it was agreed that Granollers has a wide range of sports and also adequate facilities to foster participation. However, despite having the sports scholarship program offered by the Granollers council, there is a lack of economic resources for all citizens to take part in physical activity. Sport should also be encouraged from a gender perspective, there should be more visible sports and places to play them. Additionally, the benefits that these activities may give should be promoted. It was also agreed



that it's very important to stress that sports professionals must continue to promote values and a zero-tolerance policy towards violence.

In summary, through the conclusions drawn from the surveys and the work session. It was agreed that there are children who don't do sporting activities in the city of Granollers for the different reasons mentioned earlier. Therefore, work must be done to make sport more accessible for everybody who wants to take part.

**P7.- If you did an extracurricular sports activity (in a club or in the same school), which would be more important? Maximum three**

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- Improve as an athlete
- Win competitions
- Improve as a person
- Have a good time
- Make friends
- It makes me feel healthier

## BLOC C

**P8.- Indicate the reasons why you think you are NOT participating in any extra-curricular sports activities (at a club or school) Maximum three**

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- I don't like / I don't want to
- I would like to but I can't do the sport I would like
- I do not have time (I do other things that I also like)
- I would like it but my family was not supportive towards me doing sports
- I would like to, but the place where you train is far from home
- I wish to but neither my family nor I can afford it
- I wish but none of my friends do
- I wish but no one can accompany me on the way to the sport activity



## Sport!Op! in Zagreb



HAŠK Mladost has presented and promoted the Erasmus+ Sport project Sport!OP! -Opportunities for Inclusion of Vulnerable Youth Through Sport on three occasions during Autumn 2020 in Zagreb.

Traditionally HAŠK Mladost participates in the 'European Week of Sport' activities and 'BeActive' campaigns. On 23rd September came a new opportunity to promote the value of sport for our communities and neighbourhoods. Several hundred people visited the HAŠK Mladost area and the Sport!OP! project was presented and briefly explained to small groups. The Prime Minister of Croatia Andrej Plenković visited our promotional area.

The second occasion was to the management committee of the Multisport Club, consisting of 35 club representatives from 30 different sport clubs. A presentation was given by Bojan Mijatović, the coordinator of the project. He spoke about the activities which will take place in Prečko, a part of Zagreb which does not have a substantial offering for young athletes. The meeting was held on 16th September in the Volleyball Centre Mladost, Jarunska bb, Trešnjevka (South Zagreb).

The final presentation took place on 5th October in the City Plaza Center, Slavonska avenija 6 in Trnje, Zagreb during the annual Assembly of HAŠK Mladost, during which 95 members of four sport clubs attended and were informed about the Sport!OP! project. The grass hockey, water polo and fencing clubs have shown most interest in participating. The project was presented by Dunja Bračun, deputy project coordinator.







## Being a child in Bosnia and Herzegovina



Being a child is remarkable. During childhood you are carefree and joyful. Everyone hugs and kisses you, grandparents, parents, aunts... But we children are more than joy, we are like tender chrysanthemums that will wither if they are damaged. We children have feelings too, but adults mostly forget that children are not just machines for joy, carefreeness, and kindness. We are also different:

some of us want to grow up as fast as possible and some want to stay a child for as long as possible. Many ask, “What are children for?” Children are not used to being sent to mines to work, to war or being slaves. Children serve to enjoy childhood first, and then later to be big, smart, and learned. It is best to always remain a child in heart and soul. That way everything will be easy, and nothing will be impossible.

While in recent years there has been progress regarding several areas of child rights, significant disparities persist, particularly for children from the Romany community, children with disabilities, children on the move and other vulnerable youngsters. Overall, there is a lack of systemic monitoring of indicators on children’s rights in BiH.

BiH has made steady progress towards achieving universal access to primary education (98 percent) and secondary education (85 per cent). Nevertheless, equal access to truly inclusive quality education for all children remains a challenge, due to geographical disparities in the provision of educational services. Early childhood education is not available to all children, especially those from vulnerable families. The preschool enrolment rate in BiH for children aged 3 to 6 years is the lowest in Europe (25 percent) with clear gaps between urban and rural areas and employed and unemployed parents. However, 78 percent of 5-year-old children attended obligatory preschool programmes in 2018/19, up from 31 per cent in 2011/12. Furthermore, the highly complex administrative structure and decision-making processes have proven to be challenging for the harmonization of legislation on education and the provision of services across the country<sup>1</sup>. This briefly represents what it is like to be a child in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



As with all human beings, children are highly adaptive to different environments and living conditions. Despite its challenges, being a child in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be fun too; and there are organizations and individuals willing to make it work. One way is through sport, another through education, through systematic improvement and so on. Each is helpful and effective. In particular, we find sports the most interesting way of improving children's lives due to its numerous physical, mental, and spiritual benefits. Sport is a 'congenital' activity for humans. It is of strong interest and has a strong attraction. It has great educational potential and power. Sport is an extraordinary educational tool. It allows children to develop their human qualities and promote authentic human values. Education for love, life and togetherness keeps us from selfish introversion and builds a strong barrier against the spread of drugs, alcohol and crime that are so widespread today.

So, let's go out and play. #stayhealthychild

Source: <https://www.jabuka.tv/u-bih-355-djece-ostavljeno-u-domove-najvise-u-sarajevu-a-najmanje-u-mostaru/>





## Grigny - Holidays Leisure Activities: A summer seen from here



Last summer Grigny offered 'Holidays Leisure Activities', a program which aimed to be more ambitious in terms of its offering. The scheme promoted activities which were integrative and broader in scope, focussing on the themes which are key to the Sport!Op! project: sports, education, leisure, culture, integration and citizenship.

The main points or goals of the project were:

- A desire to go beyond the context of the current health crisis by focusing on deconfinement as a vector for recovery and renewal.
- A need to better adapt to the realities of the territories, through initiatives during afternoons, evenings and weekends.
- To take into account the impossibility of leaving Grigny during the summer for the majority of families. Adapt our responses for outings outside the city and mini breaks.
- An offer that limits the disruptive effects on the educational level of the youngsters with: learning holidays / the week of the conservatory / scientific weeks



for learning while having fun / the holiday villages combining leisure and education.

- To readjust financial resources taking into account the period of confinement which saw expenses reduced due to the slowdown in services.



During July and August, 525 activities had been organized in 25 public facilities, involving 21 partners. Thanks to the city's educational facilities, structures and the mobilization of our stakeholders, all the summer activities organized in Grigny made it possible for the city to be a great place for sport. There was a participation level in sport activities of no less than 38%. For example, one of the activities was the 'Agglo Fun Tour'. It consisted of 2 weeks of outdoor activities and games making use of GPS with more than 2.300 participants.

Municipality of Granollers (ES) is acting as lead partner of the project, and the University of Barcelona (ES), the Municipality of Grigny (FR), the Atheneum Ieper (BE), the LUGI Handbollsörening (SE), the HASK Mladost (HR) and the Marathon Sarajevo Club (BA) are brought together to create and consolidate a local community-based strategy embracing sporting activity as a primary vehicle for social inclusion.

Should you have any questions, comments or suggestions on SportOp! Project, feel free to contact us at: **Anna Entraigas** (aentraigas@granollers.cat) or **Meritxell Castellsagué** (mcmillan@granollers.cat)

**Thank you for your time and we hope you enjoy reading our newsletter!**