



This project is funded by
the European Union



precious



Toolkit with the best practices to counter radicalisation through the medium of sports

Activity no: 4.2

Work Package no.4



Partners

KMOP – Greece | www.kmop.org

CID – North Macedonia | cid.mk

Author

KMOP, Greece



Contents

- 1. Introduction..... 3
- 2. Understanding radicalisation 4
 - 2.1. What is Radicalisation? 4
 - 2.2. Radicalisation vs. Extremism 4
 - 2.3. Root Causes of Radicalisation 5
 - 2.4. Radicalisation in the Context of North Macedonia and Beyond 6
- 3. Youth and the prevention of violent extremism..... 6
- 4. The Role of Sports in Preventing Radicalisation 8
- 5. Framework for Sports-Based Interventions 11
- 6. Sports-Based Initiatives 14
 - 6.1. Structured Team Sports 14
 - 6.2. Youth Mentoring 15
 - 6.3. Conflict Resolution Training 15
 - 6.4. Leadership Development 16
- 7. Tools and Resources 17
- 8. Challenges and Mitigation Strategies..... 23
- 9. Best Practices & Examples of Successful Sports-Based Initiatives 26
- 10. References..... 40



1. Introduction

The project “Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation in Youth through Sports” with the acronym PRECYOUS, started on 01/09/2022 and has a duration of 36 months.

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of municipalities and local CSOs in North Macedonia, and in particular youth and sports organisations, and to contribute to the prevention of violent extremism. It will do so by offering young people with reduced opportunities (esp. young women) better chances to become pro-active participants in society, while helping them build resilience and improve their personal development skills.

The project includes the following more specific objectives:

- to support Civil Society Organisations to implement innovative approaches towards empowering young people with reduced opportunities to contribute, through the medium of sports, to processes that encourage social cohesion and to lead social initiatives which prevent Violent Extremism and Radicalisation in specific municipalities/districts in North Macedonia
- to enhance collaboration with (and among) local authorities and build trust and dialogue with them
- to enable CSOs to have a more active role in policy-making and dialogue through capacity-building and advocacy at local, national and EU levels.

As part of this project and in response to the growing need to address violent extremism among youth, KMOP in collaboration with the Center for Intercultural Dialogue (CID), has designed this toolkit to serve as a comprehensive guide for organisations aiming to harness the power of sports in the fight against radicalisation and extremism. Designed for use by stakeholders such as NGOs, youth organisations, sports clubs, educators, policymakers, and community leaders, it offers practical methodologies for integrating sports-based initiatives into broader efforts to engage at-risk youth and build inclusive, resilient communities.

Radicalisation presents a significant challenge in many regions, particularly in environments where vulnerable groups may feel marginalized or disconnected from society. In such contexts, sports can play a crucial role in countering radicalisation by providing positive, alternative spaces for engagement. Sports foster teamwork, discipline, and mutual respect—values that promote social cohesion and counter the



precious

divisive ideologies that drive extremism. Through structured team activities and community-based sports programs, young people can develop a sense of belonging, resilience, and purpose, all of which are essential in the prevention of radicalisation.

This Toolkit emphasizes the importance of a collective approach, bringing together diverse stakeholders to create safe, inclusive spaces where young people can connect, learn, and grow. By offering evidence-based guidance and practical strategies, it aims to support organisations in North Macedonia and beyond in their efforts to use sports as a powerful tool for social change, helping to nurture a generation of individuals who are resilient to extremist ideologies.

2. Understanding radicalisation

Radicalisation is a complex and multifaceted process through which individuals or groups adopt extreme views or ideologies that may lead them to justify or engage in violent or criminal behaviour. It is essential for practitioners working in prevention and intervention to clearly understand the nature of radicalisation, its different stages, and the root causes that drive individuals toward extremist ideologies. This section provides an overview of radicalisation, distinguishing between key concepts, and exploring the underlying factors that can lead to the development of extreme views.

2.1. What is Radicalisation?

Radicalisation refers to the process by which individuals or groups come to adopt extreme political, religious, or social beliefs, which can eventually lead them to support or engage in violent or criminal activities. Radicalisation is not simply about holding extreme views; it is the journey from these views to actions that can pose a threat to public safety and social cohesion. This process typically occurs over time and is influenced by a variety of personal, social, and environmental factors.

2.2. Radicalisation vs. Extremism

It is crucial to distinguish between radicalisation (the process) and extremism (the outcome). Understanding the distinction helps practitioners identify where intervention may be most effective.

- Radicalisation (the process) refers to the gradual adoption of extreme beliefs, which may or may not result in violent action. It is a developmental trajectory influenced by personal, social, and political factors. Radicalisation can be countered at various stages, often through early intervention and engagement.
- Extremism (the outcome) refers to the end state, where an individual has fully embraced extreme ideologies, often leading to behaviours that advocate violence or criminal activity. It is the culmination of the radicalisation process. Extremism can manifest in various ways, including terrorist activity, hate crimes, or membership in violent groups or organisations.

For practitioners, the key is to recognize the signs of radicalisation early, before an individual progress to the point of extremism. Early-stage interventions—such as providing alternative perspectives, fostering resilience, or engaging in community-driven initiatives—are essential in preventing the harmful consequences of radicalisation.

2.3. Root Causes of Radicalisation

The root causes of radicalisation are complex and varied. Understanding these underlying factors is critical for developing effective prevention strategies. While there is no single cause of radicalisation, several common factors contribute to an individual's vulnerability:

- Social Isolation and Marginalisation
- Identity Crisis and Belonging.
- Grievances and Disillusionment.
- Group Dynamics and Peer Influence.
- Online Propaganda and Media.

2.4. Radicalisation in the Context of North Macedonia and Beyond

While radicalisation is a global phenomenon, its specific manifestations and dynamics vary across different regions and communities. In North Macedonia, the legacy of interethnic tensions, political instability, and a history of conflict in the Balkans has contributed to the rise of certain radical ideologies. For some individuals, radicalisation may be fuelled by a combination of ethnic, religious, and political grievances, which can create fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take root.

North Macedonia has also witnessed the influence of global extremist movements, such as jihadist groups, which may attempt to recruit individuals, particularly young people, through both local networks and online platforms. The challenges of integration, social exclusion, and the economic difficulties faced by certain communities are also factors that may increase the vulnerability of individuals to radical ideologies.

Beyond North Macedonia, the broader region of the Balkans has faced similar challenges. The complex interplay of history, ethnic identity, and political instability makes the region vulnerable to various forms of radicalisation, including both religious extremism and nationalist movements. In this context, international cooperation and cross-border initiatives are crucial in addressing radicalisation comprehensively.

By understanding the specific causes and context of radicalisation, organisations can tailor their interventions to the unique challenges faced in their communities. Efforts to counter radicalisation must consider not only local factors but also global trends, ensuring that preventive measures are relevant and effective in the long term.

3. Youth and the prevention of violent extremism

Understanding the push and pull factors that influence youth recruitment into violent extremism is crucial for developing targeted strategies to prevent radicalisation. These factors shape how young people are drawn toward or coerced into adopting extremist ideologies and, in some cases, engaging in violent acts. By examining the conditions that "push" young individuals towards extremist groups and the "pull"



precious

factors that attract them, we can better identify opportunities for intervention, particularly through the medium of sports.

Push factors are the conditions or circumstances that create a sense of vulnerability in young people, making them more susceptible to radicalisation. These factors often stem from personal, societal, or structural challenges and can create feelings of alienation, frustration, and disillusionment, which extremist groups exploit.

Pull factors are the attractive qualities or incentives that extremist groups offer, which appeal to young people's desires for belonging, significance, and a sense of purpose. These factors often make the prospect of joining such groups seem appealing, especially when compared to the alternatives available to them.

By understanding both push and pull factors, organisations can use sports as a powerful tool to counter radicalisation and violent extremism. Through the promotion of inclusivity, identity-building, and community engagement, sports programs can reduce the vulnerability of youth to radicalisation.

Here's how sports can be a transformative force through:

- Inclusion and Social Integration: Sports bring together young people from diverse backgrounds, promoting a sense of unity and shared purpose. This inclusivity directly counters the social exclusion and marginalisation that may serve as push factors.
- Positive Identity Development: Through participation in sports, youth can develop positive self-concepts and alternative forms of belonging that are not tied to extremist ideologies.
- Resilience Building: Sports teach valuable life skills such as perseverance, resilience, and emotional regulation, which are crucial in helping young people, overcome personal struggles and resist the allure of extremist groups.
- Mentorship and Role Models: Coaches, trainers, and community leaders in sports programs can serve as positive role models, providing guidance, mentorship, and alternative pathways to success.

4. The Role of Sports in Preventing Radicalisation

By creating safe, inclusive environments through sports, we can provide young people with the tools they need to build resilience, forge positive relationships, and resist harmful ideologies. Sports not only provide a constructive outlet for energy and frustration but also offer a foundation for personal growth, social cohesion, and community engagement—crucial elements in the fight against radicalisation.

Sports play a fundamental role in fostering positive values, promoting social cohesion, and providing at-risk youth with the tools they need to resist radicalisation. Through structured activities and teamwork, sports help instil core principles such as respect, fairness, and discipline, all of which are essential in combating harmful ideologies. Participation in sports enables young people to develop important life skills—such as communication, conflict resolution, and empathy—that directly contribute to building resilience against the allure of extremism. This section explores how sports act as a powerful tool for social integration, mental well-being, and countering radicalisation, particularly among vulnerable youth.

Fostering Positive Values - Teamwork, Respect, and Fairness

Sports provide a unique environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds come together with a shared goal. Whether playing on a team, participating in a league, or engaging in friendly competition, sports offer a space where teamwork, respect, and fairness are paramount. These values are critical in shaping young people's attitudes and behaviour, particularly when they are exposed to divisive or extremist ideologies.

Teamwork and Cooperation: In sports, success is often the result of collective effort, where individuals must cooperate and support each other to achieve a common objective. This fosters a sense of community and belonging, promoting the idea that working together—despite differences—is essential for progress. In the context of radicalisation, sports can serve as an antidote to the “us versus them” mentality that often fuels extremist ideologies, showing youth that cooperation across divides leads to greater achievements and collective success.



precyous

Respect for Others: Respect for teammates, opponents, coaches, and the rules of the game are integral to most sports. Through sports, young people learn to appreciate diversity, valuing others' skills, perspectives, and backgrounds. This respect for others helps foster an inclusive mind-set, reducing prejudice and intolerance—key drivers of radicalisation.

Fairness and Integrity: Sports also inspire a sense of fairness and integrity. Playing by the rules, accepting outcomes—whether winning or losing—and maintaining honesty are foundational elements of sportsmanship. These values help cultivate individuals who are more likely to approach life's challenges in a constructive way, grounded in fairness and moral principles, rather than resorting to violence or extremism to achieve their goals.

Bridging Divides - Social Cohesion and Unity

One of the most powerful ways that sports combat radicalisation is through their ability to bridge divides, bringing together people from different ethnic, religious, or social backgrounds. In many cases, radicalisation stems from social fragmentation and the alienation of certain groups. Sports, with their inclusive nature, offer a counter-narrative to exclusionary ideologies by creating shared spaces where differences are respected, and unity is prioritized.

Cultural and Social Integration: Sports programs can bring together youth from diverse communities, providing an opportunity for cross-cultural exchange and mutual understanding. In regions with ethnic or religious tensions, such as in North Macedonia, sports act as a neutral space where individuals can focus on shared goals rather than divisive identities. Through team activities, young people learn to collaborate, understand others' perspectives, and break down barriers that might otherwise lead to social fragmentation.

Counteracting Division: Extremist groups often prey on societal divisions, using them to foster hatred and division. Sports, by contrast, encourage individuals to transcend their differences and work together for a common cause. This promotes social cohesion and provides an alternative to the narrative of division and hostility.

Developing Identity and Belonging - A Positive Alternative to Extremism



precyous

For young people at risk of radicalisation, the search for identity and belonging is a significant factor that drives them toward extremist ideologies. Extremist groups offer a ready-made, rigid identity that promises purpose and community. In contrast, sports offer young people a positive and dynamic sense of belonging, identity, and self-worth.

Building Confidence and Self-Esteem: Participation in sports allows youth to achieve personal goals, develop their skills, and gain recognition from peers and mentors. These accomplishments help to build self-esteem and confidence, which are critical in countering feelings of inadequacy or powerlessness—emotions that may drive youth toward extremist ideologies.

Creating a Sense of Purpose: Involvement in sports offers a positive sense of direction and purpose, giving young people something meaningful to invest their time and energy in. Through sports, youth learn to value hard work, persistence, and improvement—qualities that provide a foundation for personal growth and success, as opposed to the false promises of extremism.

Mental Health Benefits - Building Resilience against Harmful Influences

Regular participation in sports has proven mental health benefits, including reduced anxiety, improved mood, and enhanced overall well-being. These benefits are particularly valuable in protecting youth from the psychological vulnerabilities that extremist groups seek to exploit.

Reducing Anxiety and Stress: Physical activity is known to reduce levels of anxiety and depression, both of which are common experiences among young people facing societal challenges. By providing an outlet for stress and negative emotions, sports help individuals build emotional resilience, making them less susceptible to the feelings of alienation and frustration that can lead to radicalisation.

Improving Mood and Emotional Regulation: Regular exercise increases the production of endorphins and other chemicals that enhance mood and cognitive function. Sports also teach young people how to manage setbacks, stay calm under pressure, and work through emotional challenges—skills that are essential in resisting extremist ideologies that promise an outlet for pent-up anger or disillusionment.

Enhanced Self-Esteem: The sense of accomplishment and progress that comes with improving one's skills in sports significantly boosts self-esteem. Positive self-worth makes individuals more likely to engage in constructive behaviours and less likely to be drawn into destructive ideologies that promise empowerment through violence or hate.

Practical Strategies for Leveraging Sports Programs

To fully harness the potential of sports in preventing radicalisation, organisations and community leaders can implement several practical strategies:

Inclusive Sports Programs: Ensure that sports programs are accessible to youth from diverse backgrounds, including marginalized groups. Encourage participation from all sectors of society to promote integration and build social cohesion.

Mentorship and Positive Role Models: Recruit mentors and coaches who can serve as positive role models, offering guidance, support, and mentorship. These figures can help young people navigate personal challenges and provide alternative perspectives to radical ideologies.

Conflict Resolution Training: Integrate conflict resolution and communication skills into sports programs. These skills help young people manage disagreements constructively and peacefully, reducing the likelihood of violence and fostering collaboration.

Community Engagement: Use sports as a platform for engaging communities in dialogues about inclusion, tolerance, and resilience. Sports events, tournaments, or community leagues can bring together people from different backgrounds, fostering mutual understanding and unity.

Building Supportive Peer Networks: Encourage youth to form supportive friendships through sports, which provide a safe space for collaboration, shared achievement, and positive interaction. These peer networks can serve as protective factors against the lure of extremist groups.

5. Framework for Sports-Based Interventions

The section outlines a structured framework for designing and implementing sports-based interventions aimed at preventing radicalisation and promoting social cohesion. It emphasizes several key components essential for creating effective programs:

1. Identification of Target Groups: Understanding the specific needs of at-risk youth and other vulnerable groups is crucial. Tailoring the program to address the unique challenges of these groups ensures relevance and impact.
2. Setting Clear Objectives: Defining the program's goals, such as building resilience, fostering teamwork, and developing leadership skills, helps guide the design and delivery of activities.
3. Designing Activities: The activities should be structured to encourage teamwork, leadership, and resilience, while also promoting positive behaviour. These activities should be engaging, inclusive, and promote a sense of belonging.
4. Creating Inclusive Environments: Ensuring that the environment is supportive and inclusive is critical. This is particularly important for at-risk youth, who need to feel valued and respected within the program.
5. Mentorship and Positive Role Models: Integrating mentorship and providing access to positive role models helps reinforce constructive behaviours and offers guidance for personal development.
6. Community Engagement: Involving the local community strengthens the program's reach and impact, helping participants build connections and support networks beyond the program itself.
7. Measuring Success: The success of these interventions should be measured using both qualitative and quantitative methods. This helps assess the effectiveness of the program and its ability to meet the evolving needs of participants, ensuring its adaptability and sustainability.

Example of a framework:

<p>1. Objective Setting</p>	<p>Primary Goal: Prevent radicalisation and promote social cohesion through sports.</p> <p>Specific Objectives: Build teamwork, leadership, and communication skills; Foster inclusivity and respect; Provide a sense of belonging and purpose; Improve mental well-being and reduce isolation</p>
<p>2. Target Group Identification</p>	<p>Focus on at-risk youth aged 12-18 facing social exclusion or vulnerability to extremist ideologies. Work with communities experiencing ethnic, religious, or socio-economic divides.</p>
<p>3. Program Design</p>	<p>Sports Activities: Organise team sports (e.g., soccer, basketball) to encourage collaboration.</p> <p>Skills Development: Incorporate leadership and conflict resolution activities.</p> <p>Community Engagement: Promote cross-group cooperation to foster inclusivity.</p> <p>Mentorship: Involve positive role models or mentors for guidance.</p>
<p>4. Inclusive Environment</p>	<p>Create a welcoming atmosphere that values diversity. Use sports to break down stereotypes, ensuring all participants feel valued and part of the team.</p>

5. Mental Health & Well-Being	Integrate activities for stress-relief and emotional well-being (e.g., mindfulness, group discussions). Promote physical activity to reduce anxiety and boost self-esteem.
6. Measurement & Evaluation	Quantitative: Track participation, attendance, and skill improvements. Qualitative: Gather feedback through surveys/interviews about social cohesion and personal growth. Feedback Loop: Regularly assess and adjust based on needs and changes.
7. Sustainability & Community Involvement	Involve community leaders and stakeholders in planning. Seek long-term funding/partnerships to ensure program continuity.

6. Sports-Based Initiatives

Sports-based initiatives have proven to be a powerful tool in preventing radicalisation, particularly when they are designed to engage at-risk youth, foster social cohesion, and promote positive values. These initiatives often incorporate various elements, such as structured team sports, youth mentoring, conflict resolution training, and leadership development, all of which work together to counter the factors that contribute to radicalisation. By leveraging the inherent values of sports, these initiatives provide young people with alternative narratives, positive role models, and the skills necessary to navigate challenges constructively.

6.1. Structured Team Sports

Structured team sports such as football, basketball, and rugby are core elements of many sports-based initiatives. These activities offer young people the opportunity to learn teamwork, discipline, and resilience while also fostering a sense of belonging and community.

Teamwork and Cooperation: Team sports require individuals to collaborate, share responsibilities, and work toward common goals. These experiences teach youth that success is often a collective effort, highlighting the importance of mutual respect,

communication, and unity—values that are essential in countering extremist ideologies that promote division.

Emotional Regulation and Discipline: Participating in sports requires individuals to control their emotions, especially in high-pressure situations. These experiences build emotional resilience and encourage youth to remain calm and focused, even in the face of adversity—an important skill for preventing frustration and aggression from escalating into violence.

Inclusion and Unity: Sports teams bring together young people from diverse backgrounds, creating an inclusive environment where individuals learn to accept differences and build connections based on shared interests. This sense of belonging serves as an antidote to feelings of alienation that are often exploited by extremist groups.

6.2. Youth Mentoring

Youth mentoring is another critical component of sports-based initiatives. Mentors—often coaches, trainers, or community leaders—provide guidance, support, and positive role models to young people, helping them navigate personal challenges, develop skills, and set positive life goals.

- **Positive Role Models:** Mentors in sports programs are crucial in shaping the attitudes and behaviours of young people. By providing consistent support, mentors offer a counter-narrative to the harmful influences of extremist ideologies, showing youth that they can achieve success through dedication, discipline, and positive relationships.

- **Personal and Social Development:** Mentoring relationships in sports can help youth develop self-confidence, communication skills, and a sense of responsibility. These relationships can act as a protective factor, preventing young people from seeking validation or belonging in extremist groups by offering guidance on how to build a fulfilling life in mainstream society.

6.3. Conflict Resolution Training

Conflict resolution training is a vital part of many sports-based initiatives, as it equips young people with the tools they need to manage disagreements peacefully and constructively.

- **Negotiation and Communication Skills:** In sports, conflicts naturally arise, whether it's over a disputed call during a game or differing opinions within a team. Conflict resolution training teaches youth how to address these issues calmly and respectfully, using communication and negotiation rather than resorting to aggression or violence.

- **De-escalation Techniques:** By learning to handle conflicts without aggression, young people are better equipped to avoid the kind of emotional outbursts and violent behaviour that often lead to involvement in extremist activities. These skills help foster a culture of peaceful problem-solving and mutual respect.

- **Building Empathy and Understanding:** Conflict resolution training also emphasizes the importance of understanding others' perspectives, which helps build empathy and reduce the risk of discrimination or hostility. This is essential for preventing the "us versus them" mentality that can contribute to radicalisation.

6.4. Leadership Development

Leadership development programs within sports initiatives focus on helping young people develop key leadership skills such as responsibility, decision-making, and the ability to inspire and motivate others.

- **Responsibility and Accountability:** Being part of a sports team requires individuals to take responsibility for their actions, both on and off the field. Leaders within sports programs encourage youth to hold themselves accountable for their behaviour, teaching them the importance of integrity, honesty, and respect for others.

- **Building Confidence:** Leadership opportunities within sports help youth develop the confidence to take initiative, whether as team captains or as individuals driving team goals. This empowerment provides an alternative to the false promises of power and influence offered by extremist ideologies.



precyous

- Community Engagement: Leadership development programs in sports often involve giving back to the community, whether through volunteering or organizing events. This fosters a sense of civic responsibility and a connection to the larger society, reinforcing the idea of collaboration and mutual support over division and conflict.

When combined, structured team sports, youth mentoring, conflict resolution training, and leadership development create a comprehensive approach to preventing radicalisation. Each element supports and enhances the others, providing young people with the skills, values, and networks they need to resist extremist ideologies and build positive futures.

Sports-based initiatives not only provide a constructive outlet for energy and frustration but also create opportunities for young people to connect with others from diverse backgrounds, develop a sense of belonging, and build resilience against the pressures that may lead to radicalisation. By fostering teamwork, respect, and leadership, these initiatives empower youth to make positive life choices and become agents of change in their communities.

7. Tools and Resources

This section provides a comprehensive collection of tools and resources designed to support the implementation of sports-based interventions aimed at preventing radicalisation and promoting social cohesion. These resources are tailored to help organisations build effective programs, empower facilitators, and ensure positive outcomes for at-risk youth. They focus not only on physical skill development but also on the core values of teamwork, respect, and conflict resolution, which are critical in countering extremist ideologies.

1. Activity Templates and Curriculum Guides

Activity Template:

Activity Title:	Team Relay Challenge: Building Trust & Collaboration
Duration:	60 minutes
Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster teamwork and collaboration. • Teach participants how to communicate and resolve conflicts constructively in a team setting.



This project is funded by the European Union



precious

Target Group:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth aged 14-18, from diverse backgrounds
Materials Needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cones or markers to set up a relay course. Stopwatch or timer. Bibs or colour shirts to distinguish teams. Whistle for the facilitator.
Setup:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a relay racecourse with cones to mark start and finish lines. Divide the space into two or more equal sections for team relay lines. Make sure there is enough space for participants to move around safely.
Facilitator's Role:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the activity's rules and objectives. Monitor the progress of teams and ensure safety during the event. Guide the group through a post-activity debrief to discuss lessons learned.

Curriculum Guide:

Age Group:	8-12 Years
Skill Level:	Beginner to Intermediate
Setting:	Community Centres, Youth Clubs, School Sports Programs
Core Values Integrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect: Encouraging teamwork and good sportsmanship. Inclusion: Ensuring accessibility and equal participation for all. Resilience: Teaching perseverance and a growth mind-set.
Week 1: Introduction to Sports & Teamwork	<p>Lesson Plan: Icebreaker activities, basic movement skills, and understanding rules.</p> <p>Activity: Cooperative relay races.</p> <p>Social Development Tip: Emphasize the importance of listening and supporting teammates.</p>



This project is funded by the European Union



precyous

Week 2: Developing Fundamental Skills	Lesson Plan: Dribbling, passing, and coordination drills. Activity: Partner passing games (soccer, basketball, etc.). Social Development Tip: Highlight respect for opponents and referees
Week 3: Building Confidence & Inclusion	Lesson Plan: Small group drills and inclusive team-building exercises. Activity: Modified scrimmages where all players rotate roles. Social Development Tip: Reinforce encouragement and positive reinforcement.
Week 4: Enhancing Resilience & Problem-Solving	Lesson Plan: Handling setbacks, learning from mistakes, and goal setting. Activity: Challenge drills (e.g., obstacle courses with problem-solving elements). Social Development Tip: Discuss examples of athletes who overcame challenges
Week 5: Applying Skills in a Game Setting	Lesson Plan: Strategy discussions, teamwork exercises, and competitive play. Activity: Mini-tournaments with mixed teams. Social Development Tip: Teach coping strategies for winning and losing gracefully.
Week 6: Reflection & Future Growth	Lesson Plan: Self-assessment, feedback sessions, and setting future goals. Activity: Group discussions on what was learned and how to apply lessons beyond sports. Social Development Tip: Encourage participants to mentor younger peers.

2. Training Modules for Coaches and Mentors

Title:	Building Inclusive and Resilient Athletes Through Sports
Duration:	6 Weeks (Flexible for workshops or on-going mentorship)
Target Audience:	Youth Sports Coaches, Mentors, Community Leaders
Module 1:	The Role of a Coach as a Mentor
Objectives:	Understand the coach's role in shaping athletes beyond sports. Learn how to foster a positive and inclusive environment.
Key Topics	Coaching vs. Mentorship: The Dual Role Setting the Right Tone: Positive Reinforcement Techniques



This project is funded by the European Union



precyous

	Building Trust and Respect with Athletes
Activity:	<p>Scenario Analysis: Coaches discuss real-life cases of coaching challenges and solutions.</p> <p>Self-Assessment: Identifying personal coaching strengths and areas for growth</p>
Module 2	Integrating Core Values in Sports Training
Objectives:	<p>Learn how to incorporate respect, inclusion, and resilience into training.</p> <p>Develop techniques for reinforcing character-building moments.</p>
Key Topics:	<p>Teaching Respect: Handling Conflicts and Promoting Fair Play</p> <p>Fostering Inclusion: Adapting Training for Diverse Skill Levels</p> <p>Cultivating Resilience: Encouraging a Growth Mind-set in Athletes</p>
Activity:	<p>Role-Playing: Coaches practice de-escalating conflicts and encouraging sportsmanship.</p> <p>Group Discussion: Identifying key values in famous sports moments.</p>
Module 3	Effective Communication and Motivation Strategies
Objectives:	<p>Learn effective verbal and non-verbal communication techniques.</p> <p>Understand different motivation styles to engage young athletes</p>
Key Topics:	<p>The Power of Encouragement and Constructive Feedback</p> <p>Communication Styles: Adapting to Individual Athletes' Needs</p> <p>Motivating Through Challenges and Setbacks</p>
Activity:	<p>Feedback Workshop: Coaches practice delivering performance feedback using real examples.</p> <p>Motivation Mapping: Identifying athletes' personal motivators and barriers.</p>
Module 4	Structuring Training Sessions for Maximum Impact
Objectives:	<p>Learn how to create engaging and well-balanced training plans.</p> <p>Understand the importance of warm-ups, drills, and cool-downs</p>
Key Topics:	Designing Training Sessions for Skill Development & Teamwork

	Balancing Physical, Mental, and Emotional Growth in Training Incorporating Fun & Engagement in Practices
Activity:	Session Planning Exercise: Coaches create and present a training session incorporating key values
Module 5	Managing Challenges and Conflict Resolution
Objectives:	Equip coaches with tools to handle athlete conflicts and behavioural issues. Understand how to address team dynamics and competition-related stress.
Key Topics:	Dealing with Difficult Athletes and Team Conflicts Handling Pressure and Performance Anxiety in Youth Sports Ensuring Mental Well-Being and Burnout Prevention
Activity:	Case Study Workshop: Coaches analyse and role-play conflict resolution scenarios.
Module 6	Reflection and Continuous Development
Objectives:	Encourage self-improvement and professional development for coaches. Create a network of peer support and knowledge sharing
Key Topics:	Self-Reflection: Evaluating Coaching Methods & Impact Continuing Education & Resources for Growth Building a Supportive Coaching Community
Activity:	Personal Coaching Philosophy Statement: Coaches draft their approach to mentorship and training. Peer Feedback Exchange: Coaches provide constructive feedback on each other's techniques.

3. Evaluation Tools and Impact Assessment

To ensure that sports-based interventions are effective, it is essential to track progress, gather feedback, and measure impact.



Feedback Survey

Name (Optional): _____

Age Group: 8-10 11-13 14-16 17+

Sport: _____

1. Coaching Effectiveness

1. Do you feel encouraged and supported by your coach?
 Yes No Sometimes
2. Does your coach help you understand and improve your skills?
 Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never
3. How well does your coach teach respect and teamwork?
 Excellent Good Fair Poor

2. Personal Growth & Development

4. Since joining this program, how has your confidence changed?
 Increased a lot Increased slightly No change Decreased
5. Do you feel included and valued as part of the team?
 Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never
6. Have you learned ways to handle challenges and setbacks in sports?
 Yes, a lot Yes, a little Not really No

3. Overall Experience

7. What do you enjoy most about training with your coach?

8. What is one thing that could make the coaching better?

9. Would you recommend this program to a friend?

Yes No Maybe

8. Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Implementing sports-based interventions aimed at preventing radicalisation and promoting social cohesion often faces several challenges. These challenges can arise from practical, social, political, and cultural factors that may hinder the effective execution and sustainability of such programs. However, with thoughtful planning and the adoption of specific strategies, these obstacles can be mitigated, ensuring that sports initiatives have a lasting and positive impact. Below are the key challenges and strategies for overcoming them:

Challenges	Mitigation Strategies
<p>1. Limited Funding and Resources</p> <p>One of the most significant barriers to the successful implementation of sports-based interventions is securing adequate funding. Many organisations face budget constraints, making it difficult to provide the necessary infrastructure, equipment, training programs, and logistical support needed for long-term sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversify Funding Source: Organisations can seek funding from multiple sources, including government grants, private donors, corporate sponsorships, international foundations, and crowd-funding platforms. It's also beneficial to explore partnerships with sports clubs, universities, or NGOs that may have access to funding for youth and community engagement. - Develop a Compelling Case for Investment: Advocacy campaigns that highlight the long-term benefits of sports programs, such as enhanced social cohesion, reduced youth violence, and prevention of radicalisation, can persuade stakeholders to invest in sports-based interventions. Use data and success stories to demonstrate the effectiveness of these programs. - Cost-Effective Solutions: Leverage local resources, such as volunteer coaches, community sports facilities, and donations of sports equipment. Additionally, collaborating with schools and community centres can reduce operational costs while ensuring access to facilities.
<p>2. Resistance from Local Communities or Stakeholders</p> <p>Sports-based interventions can face resistance from local</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build Trust through Transparent Communication: Clearly communicate the goals and objectives of the sports program from the outset. Engage with local communities to explain how the initiative

<p>communities or key stakeholders, especially in regions where there are deeply entrenched cultural or political divides. These stakeholders may be sceptical of the program’s objectives or may not view sports as an effective means of preventing radicalisation.</p>	<p>aligns with their values and concerns. Regular updates and open lines of communication ensure stakeholders feel included and informed about the progress and outcomes of the program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involve Community Leaders and Influencers: Engage local leaders, including religious leaders, teachers, or respected community figures, as champions of the program. Their endorsement can help legitimize the initiative and increase its acceptance. Involving them in the planning and decision-making processes fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility toward the program. - Cultural Sensitivity: Tailor the sports program to be culturally relevant, ensuring that it respects the traditions and norms of the community. Adapt the format of sports activities or include culturally specific elements to make the program more accessible and acceptable. This approach fosters an inclusive environment and reduces the risk of alienation.
<p>3. Lack of Trained Personnel</p> <p>Many sports-based interventions struggle with a shortage of qualified personnel who are not only skilled in coaching but are also trained to work with vulnerable youth and handle sensitive issues related to radicalisation, mental health, and community engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invest in Capacity-Building: Provide regular training for coaches, mentors, and facilitators on key topics such as conflict resolution, mental health awareness, youth development, and identifying early signs of radicalisation. Partnerships with local universities or NGOs can provide access to specialized training resources and workshops. - Utilize Peer Mentoring: In cases where professional coaches are unavailable, train older or more experienced participants (such as youth leaders) to mentor younger individuals. Peer mentoring not only reduces the reliance on professional staff but also empowers the youth to take leadership roles within the program, promoting sustainability and community ownership. - On-going Professional Development: Establish a system for on-going professional

	<p>development to ensure that coaches and mentors continue to develop their skills and stay up to date with best practices. Online courses, webinars, and workshops can be accessible ways for staff to enhance their knowledge without incurring significant costs.</p>
<p>4. Political or Cultural Sensitivities</p> <p>Sports programs may run into political or cultural sensitivities, particularly in contexts where tensions between different ethnic, religious, or political groups are high. These sensitivities can manifest as resistance to certain types of sports or as concerns that the program could inadvertently reinforce divisions or biases.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusive Program Design: Design the sports program in a way that emphasizes inclusivity, mutual respect, and unity. Encourage the participation of diverse groups and avoid sports or symbols that might be associated with one particular ethnic or political group. The emphasis should be on universal values such as teamwork, fair play, and collaboration, which transcend political and cultural differences. - Neutral Ground for Activities: Ensure that sports programs are conducted in neutral spaces, such as community centres or schools, where political or cultural affiliations are less likely to dominate. This creates an environment where participants are not divided by external factors, and everyone is seen as equal. - Promote Dialogue and Conflict Resolution: Use sports as a vehicle for dialogue. Activities that foster communication, understanding, and conflict resolution skills can be integrated into the sports sessions. Facilitate discussions on cultural sensitivity, diversity, and respect to help break down misconceptions and promote cooperation.
<p>5. Sustainability and Long-Term Support</p> <p>Ensuring the long-term sustainability of sports-based interventions can be difficult, especially if programs rely heavily on short-term funding or temporary partnerships. Without continued investment and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop Partnerships with Local Institutions: Build strong, lasting relationships with local schools, universities, community centres, and government agencies. These partnerships can provide continued support and help embed sports-based interventions within the fabric of the community, ensuring that programs are not reliant on external funding.

<p>support, these programs risk losing momentum and impact over time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a Sustainability Plan: From the outset, develop a clear sustainability plan that outlines strategies for securing funding and resources long term. This might include engaging in income-generating activities, such as hosting tournaments, offering coaching certifications, or seeking grants from international donors interested in youth development and radicalisation prevention. - Evaluate and Adjust Programs Regularly: Implementing regular monitoring and evaluation helps assess the effectiveness and relevance of the program. Feedback from participants, mentors, and community leaders can be used to refine the approach and address emerging needs, ensuring the program remains relevant and impactful.
---	--

9. Best Practices & Examples of Successful Sports-Based Initiatives

Sports-based initiatives have emerged as powerful tools in preventing radicalisation and promoting social cohesion, particularly among at-risk youth. These programs offer a positive alternative to extremist ideologies by fostering teamwork, leadership, inclusivity, and a sense of belonging. Below, we highlight best practices and successful examples of sports-based initiatives that have effectively engaged young people, reduced radicalisation, and promoted social harmony.

Football for Peace (United Kingdom)	
<p>Location/ Geographical Scope</p>	<p>The initiative has been implemented in various regions globally, with notable projects in the United Kingdom, Jordan, Lebanon, and South Africa.</p> <p>The program operates in high-risk areas of social division and youth radicalisation, primarily focusing on Europe and the Middle East.</p>
<p>Organisation in Charge of good</p>	<p><i>Football for Peace</i> (a UK-based non-profit).</p>

practice/ Implementer	Local sports organisations, community groups, and schools.
Duration of practice/project	On-going, with various individual projects running for different lengths depending on funding and local needs (from a few months to several years).
Short summary of the practice	<i>Football for Peace</i> is a global initiative that brings together young people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds to play football. The program's goal is to foster peace, respect, and mutual understanding by using football as a platform to engage at-risk youth. It promotes intercultural dialogue, teaches conflict resolution, and helps prevent radicalisation through positive sports-based interactions.
Resources	<p>Private donations, partnership with football clubs, international organisations, and governmental grants.</p> <p>Football pitches, training kits, and educational resources for both sport and conflict resolution.</p> <p>Professional coaches, community leaders, youth mentors, psychologists, and peace facilitators.</p> <p>Conflict resolution training, leadership programs, and community engagement workshops.</p>
Detailed information of the practice	<p>The program engages young people aged 12-18, many of whom are from marginalized communities, in football tournaments, coaching sessions, and leadership activities. Participants are encouraged to work together as teams, regardless of their background or religion, to build trust and cooperation. Alongside the football sessions, there are workshops on peace building, personal development, and countering extremism.</p> <p>In addition to football activities, the program fosters dialogue between different communities and provides leadership opportunities for youth participants to become ambassadors for peace within their communities. Mentorship programs are also integrated, where older participants guide younger ones in both football and life skills.</p>
Results Achieved	<p>Significant improvement in relationships among young people from diverse communities and backgrounds.</p> <p>There have been reports of decreased involvement in extremist groups or ideologies among participants.</p>

	<p>Increased cooperation between local communities and authorities, as well as improved relationships between youth and law enforcement.</p> <p>Participants developed leadership skills and a sense of responsibility, with many going on to help others through the program.</p>
<p>Potential for learning or transfer</p>	<p>The program can be expanded to other regions with a high risk of radicalisation, such as urban areas in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa.</p> <p>The model is easily transferable to other sports (basketball, rugby) and can be tailored to different cultural contexts.</p> <p>Long-term impact through local partnerships with schools, sports organisations, and community groups ensures the initiative's continuation and growth.</p>
<p>Useful links - website</p>	<p>https://www.football4peace.org.uk/</p>



This project is funded by the European Union



precyous

Sport against Racism Ireland (SARI)	
Location/ Geographical Scope	Sport Against Racism Ireland (SARI) operates primarily in Ireland, with its initiatives taking place in various communities across the country, especially within urban and diverse regions.
Organisation in Charge of good practice/ Implementer	The program is implemented by Sport Against Racism Ireland (SARI), a non-governmental organisation that uses sports, particularly football, to address social issues, with a focus on combating racism and promoting social inclusion.
Duration of practice/project	SARI has been active since 1997 and continues to run a variety of initiatives across the country. The specific duration of each individual practice or event varies, but many of the on-going programs are sustained year-round or involve seasonal tournaments and activities.
Short summary of the practice	SARI uses football as a platform to bring together young people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, fostering mutual respect, understanding, and tolerance. The program combats discrimination and xenophobia, providing spaces for inclusive sports tournaments, workshops, and community-building events. SARI also emphasizes mentorship through experienced coaches and community leaders, guiding youth both on and off the field. These mentors assist participants in overcoming challenges like racism, social isolation, and radicalisation, empowering them to act as ambassadors of tolerance.
Resources	Coaches, mentors, community leaders, volunteers. Fundraising, donations, and partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organisations. Football kits, tournament equipment, educational materials (for workshops and activities). Collaborations with schools, community centres, local sports clubs, and international organisations.
Detailed information of the practice	SARI's core activities include: 1. Football Tournaments: The organisation organizes football tournaments where teams are intentionally diverse, representing various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. These events are opportunities for youth to build relationships, break down barriers, and challenge racial stereotypes through sport.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Inclusive Events & Workshops: In addition to sports, SARI facilitates workshops aimed at raising awareness about the harms of racism, promoting social cohesion, and fostering discussions on diversity, inclusion, and equality. 3. Youth Mentoring: Coaches and community leaders mentor young people in personal development, offering guidance on handling issues like discrimination and promoting community leadership. These mentors help young participants develop life skills, leadership qualities, and the ability to challenge prejudice in their communities. 4. Collaborations with Schools and Local Organisations: SARI works closely with local schools and community centres, involving them in sports activities while also offering educational programs that engage students in discussions on racism and xenophobia. These partnerships ensure that young people are supported not only in sports but also in developing their social and emotional skills.
<p>Results Achieved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reduction in Racism: SARI has successfully reduced incidents of racial discrimination and xenophobia among young people by using sports as a medium to encourage interaction and understanding. ○ Enhanced Social Cohesion: The initiative has helped build stronger relationships among young people from different backgrounds, leading to increased community integration and social cohesion. ○ Empowered Youth Leaders: Many participants have gone on to become leaders in their communities, spreading messages of tolerance and diversity. ○ Skills Development: Through mentoring and engagement in sports, participants develop leadership, teamwork, and conflict resolution skills.
<p>Potential for learning or transfer</p>	<p>The SARI model of using football as a tool for promoting social cohesion and combating discrimination is highly transferable to other countries and communities facing similar issues. The approach is flexible and adaptable, making it possible to apply it to various settings, including other sports or youth-focused programs. The integration of community partnerships,</p>

	mentorship, and educational initiatives further enhances the model's scalability and impact.
Useful links - website	https://www.sari.ie/football-for-unity

EJO Project	
Location/ Geographical Scope	Burundi, Kosovo, Senegal, Liberia.
Organisation in Charge of good practice/ Implementer	The program is implemented by PLAY International, a major education through sport project benefiting more than 80,000 children in 4 countries.
Duration of practice/project	The project rolled out in 2022
Short summary of the practice	<p>EJO combines formal and informal education by co-creating educational content tailored to each country's socioeconomic context. The program utilizes "Playdagogy," an active and participatory pedagogical method developed by PLAY International, to engage children in learning through sports. This approach aims to address challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, limited learning time, and unfavourable social climates. The objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve children's education by integrating socio-sport activities within non-formal education sectors. - Provide training for education professionals in education-through-sport methodologies. - Organize "Playdagogy" sessions to foster inclusive sports activities during and outside school hours. - Evaluate the impact of these educational methods through collaboration with academic institutions.
Resources	<p>Funding from French Development Agency (AFD) and other partnerships.</p> <p>PLAY International's expertise in education through sport.</p>

	<p>Sports equipment (balls, cones, nets, etc.) and educational materials tailored to local contexts.</p> <p>Training resources for local educators on sport-based learning methods.</p> <p>Collaboration with schools, community organizations, and local NGOs.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation tools to track progress and impact.</p> <p>Local educators, sports facilitators, and researchers to implement and assess the program.</p>
<p>Detailed information of the practice</p>	<p>The EJO initiative focuses on delivering education in a fun, inclusive, and engaging way using sports as a medium.</p> <p>The program's target is to engage 80,000 children, with a special emphasis on 32,000 girls.</p> <p>Activities are designed to be inclusive, catering to vulnerable children, including those with disabilities and from minority communities.</p> <p>The incubator model will also help expand the program to other West African countries beyond the initial four.</p> <p>The initiative promotes Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), aiming to make quality education accessible to marginalized groups.</p>
<p>Results Achieved</p>	<p>80,000 children will benefit from the program, with 32,000 girls being directly engaged.</p> <p>Improved access to quality education for vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Increased social inclusion for children with disabilities and those from minority communities.</p> <p>Enhanced life skills for children, such as teamwork, leadership, and resilience, gained through sports activities.</p>
<p>Potential for learning or transfer</p>	<p>Scalable: The incubator model allows for the program's expansion to other West African countries and potentially beyond.</p>



This project is funded by the European Union



precyous

	<p>Adaptability: The approach can be adapted to different cultural contexts or regions with similar educational challenges.</p> <p>Replication: The integration of sports into education can be replicated in other regions or countries that seek to improve access to education for marginalized communities.</p> <p>Learning Opportunity: The program provides insights into the power of sports as a tool for social change and educational development.</p>
Useful links - website	<p>https://www.play-international.org</p> <p>https://www.afd.fr</p>

Sports and Youth Development in Gostivar	
Location/ Geographical Scope	A programme which utilises sports to develop youth engagement skills and strengthen social cohesion in Gostivar, North Macedonia.
Organisation in Charge of good practice/ Implementer	The program is implemented by Young Cities who are focused on five fundamental principles underpinning everything they do, ensuring that their work with cities and young people remains pioneering and impactful.
Duration of practice/project	In 2020, the municipality of Gostivar created a local policy that focuses on preventing violent extremism with a number of strategic policies – one of them prioritising strengthening youth resilience to radicalisation. As a part of the plan, sports is listed as a tool for developing youth engagement capacities among physical education (PE) teachers and local coaches, and for strengthening social cohesion amongst young people in the culturally diverse city.
Short summary of the practice	Young Cities supported Gostivar authorities by working with them as well as local experts to train PE teachers from all schools in the municipality to develop skills to develop a programme for youth engagement through sports. The 12 teachers trained received further mentoring while working directly with a small group of elementary school students. They put their newly acquired skills to the test by independently organising and leading a three-day summer camp for a multi-ethnic youth group. Young Cities will also team up with the municipality to support the opening ceremony of a new sports field where youth will be invited to make the space their own, and participate in activities with peers from different parts of Gostivar. To ensure sustainability, an educational programme for youth engagement and social cohesion through sports was created as a reference point for teachers during the school year.
Resources	<p>Coaches, mentors, community leaders, volunteers.</p> <p>Fundraising, donations, and partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organisations.</p> <p>Football kits, tournament equipment, educational materials (for workshops and activities).</p> <p>Collaborations with schools, community centres, local sports clubs, and international organisations.</p>

<p>Detailed information of the practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training of PE Teachers: 12 PE teachers from all municipal schools trained with support from Young Cities and local experts. Training focused on youth engagement through sports, inclusivity, and social cohesion. Continued mentoring provided during practical implementation. - Pilot Implementation: Teachers applied new skills by leading a three-day multi-ethnic summer camp for elementary school students. Focused on teamwork, confidence-building, and inter-ethnic collaboration. - Infrastructure and Community Engagement: Young Cities partnered with the municipality for the opening of a new sports field. Youth invited to co-create the space and participate in inter-community sporting activities. - Educational Programme Development: An educational programme was developed to support teachers during the school year, that includes modules on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth communication ● Leadership ● Teamwork ● Inclusion
<p>Results Achieved</p>	<p>Strengthened capacity of teachers to engage youth meaningfully. Created opportunities for inter-ethnic interaction and friendship.</p>



This project is funded by the European Union



precious

	<p>Improved youth leadership, teamwork, and communication skills.</p> <p>Fostered a positive model of extracurricular engagement for peacebuilding.</p>
<p>Potential for learning or transfer</p>	<p>The Gostivar youth engagement through sports initiative provides a replicable and scalable model for other multi-ethnic or divided communities seeking to build youth resilience and social cohesion. Key transferable elements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PE teachers were capacitated to independently design and deliver extracurricular youth programmes—an approach that can be adapted for other educators or community facilitators. - A structured programme with modules on communication, leadership, and teamwork serves as a reusable template for similar initiatives. - Collaboration between local government, NGOs, and educators demonstrates a successful model of multisector cooperation. - The participatory design of a new sports field encouraged youth to take ownership—this principle can be applied to civic spaces elsewhere. - The use of non-formal education and sports to counter youth disengagement and radicalisation offers a cost-effective strategy with high social return. - Grounded in consultations and youth-focused research, making it adaptable to contexts with available local data.
<p>Useful links - website</p>	<p>https://youngcities.com/city-grants/sports-youth-gostivar/</p>



This project is funded by the European Union



precyous

Sports Bon Ton: An inclusive sport program in Macedonia	
Location/ Geographical Scope	A programme which utilises sports to develop youth engagement skills and strengthen social cohesion in Gostivar, North Macedonia.
Organisation in Charge of good practice/ Implementer	The program is implemented by Young Cities who are focused on five fundamental principles underpinning everything they do, ensuring that their work with cities and young people remains pioneering and impactful.
Duration of practice/project	In 2020, the municipality of Gostivar created a local policy that focuses on preventing violent extremism with a number of strategic policies – one of them prioritising strengthening youth resilience to radicalisation. As a part of the plan, sports is listed as a tool for developing youth engagement capacities among physical education (PE) teachers and local coaches, and for strengthening social cohesion amongst young people in the culturally diverse city.
Short summary of the practice	"Sports Bon Ton" is an inclusive sports programme in North Macedonia that promotes social inclusion of people with disabilities through traditional games and sports. It encourages physical activity for health and wellbeing, builds a sense of community, and fosters mutual respect through moral norms in sport. The project works with children and adults of all ages with different types of disabilities and includes a volunteer program for sports science students.
Resources	<p>Human Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained facilitators and adaptive PE teachers • Sports science student volunteers <p>Material Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to sports facilities (e.g. for volleyball, swimming, bowling) • Traditional sports equipment (e.g. rope for tug-of-war, tools for traditional games) <p>Community and Institutional Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day-care centres, kindergartens, primary and secondary schools

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with families and community partners
<p>Detailed information of the practice</p>	<p>The <i>Sports Bon Ton</i> programme is built on the belief that sports can be a powerful tool for promoting social inclusion, health, and personal development for people with disabilities. It integrates traditional games with modern sports disciplines to offer an inclusive and culturally rooted approach to physical activity across all age groups. The programme is structured into three interrelated components, each serving a unique purpose within a unified vision of inclusive sports education.</p> <p>1. Adaptive Sports and Physical Education Programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The first component of the programme focuses on introducing adaptive sports and physical activity sessions for people with disabilities, including children in kindergartens, primary and secondary school students, and individuals attending day-care centres for people with disabilities. These sessions are thoughtfully designed to respond to different physical, cognitive, and developmental needs. - Activities include both modern and traditional sports such as football, volleyball, swimming, bowling, tug-of-war (pooling on rope), and the traditional Macedonian game "mosque." The emphasis is not only on physical activity but on inclusion, participation, and enjoyment. By making these games accessible to all participants, the project ensures that sport becomes a space of equality and expression, helping participants develop motor skills, coordination, and social connections in a supportive and safe environment. <p>2. Volunteer Programme for Sport Science Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The second key element of the project is a structured volunteer programme for students of sport sciences. These students receive training and hands-on experience working directly with people with disabilities, gaining practical skills in adaptive physical education and inclusive instruction. More than just assisting in activities, volunteers are encouraged to build meaningful relationships with participants—engaging in conversation, offering

	<p>encouragement, and helping create a positive, respectful atmosphere.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This component serves a dual purpose: it strengthens the capacity of future educators and coaches while also fostering empathy, responsibility, and community engagement. Through their involvement, students not only support participants but also begin to reshape their own perceptions of disability and inclusion, becoming advocates for change within their professional fields. <p>3. Individualised Adapted Physical Education Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The final phase of the programme is focused on providing individualised adaptive physical education plans tailored to the unique needs, abilities, and goals of each participant. This person-centred approach acknowledges the diversity within the disability community and ensures that each individual receives the attention and support necessary to thrive in a sports setting. - By aligning sports activities with each participant’s personal goals—whether that involves improving physical health, gaining independence, or developing new skills—the programme promotes not only physical development but also psychological empowerment and self-confidence. Participants are encouraged to explore different sports, identify those they enjoy, and build a sense of ownership over their progress. This approach helps cultivate a sense of belonging within the sporting community and challenges the societal perception that people with disabilities are passive recipients rather than active agents of change. - Together, these three components—adaptive group sports, volunteer engagement, and personalised plans—form a comprehensive and sustainable model of inclusive sports education. The programme fosters positive social attitudes, breaks down barriers between people with and without disabilities, and nurtures a shared sense of community and respect.
<p>Results Achieved</p>	<p>Inclusive sports sessions conducted across educational and care institutions.</p> <p>Increased physical activity participation among people with disabilities.</p>

	<p>Volunteers developed practical inclusive education skills and social awareness.</p> <p>Improved mental and physical well-being of participants.</p> <p>Enhanced social interaction and reduction of stigma.</p> <p>Built positive role models within the disability community.</p> <p>Demonstrated how traditional games can be adapted for inclusion.</p>
<p>Potential for learning or transfer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combines traditional and modern sports in an innovative way to promote inclusion. - Emphasizes volunteer-based social learning – an effective model for developing inclusive mindsets among future educators or coaches. - Demonstrates how individualized programming can address a range of physical and psychological needs. - The use of non-formal education and sports to counter youth disengagement and radicalisation offers a cost-effective strategy with high social return. - Grounded in consultations and youth-focused research, making it adaptable to contexts with available local data.
<p>Useful links - website</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read more: Including persons with disabilities in sport on sportanddev - Related article: Disability inclusion a major development focus for Vanuatu Vol... - Related article: Mixed-ability sport project in Ghana

10. References

1. IOM Resources on Counter-Radicalisation:

<https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd12616/files/documents/TRD%20-%20PVE%20Infosheet.pdf>

2. RAND Corporation Reports on CVE and Sport:
https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/tools/TL200/TL243/RAND_TL243.pdf
3. IASD Resources on Sport and Development: <https://www.sport-for-development.com/home>
4. PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM (PVE) United Nations Development Programme: https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-06/undp_pve_annual_report_2022_0.pdf
5. Good Practices on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE):
https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/position-papers/170622-nrc-position-paper_cve-and-humanitarian-action---fv.pdf
6. UNODC - Radicalisation and Violent Extremism: A Framework for Action:
https://www.unodc.org/res/terrorism/aboutus/UNODC_TPB_New_Global_Programme_abridged_online.pdf
7. UNODC - Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport; Technical Guide
https://www.unodc.org/documents/dohadecommunication/Sports/PVE/PVE_TechnicalGuide_EN.pdf
8. VIOLENT RIGHT WING EXTREMISM IN THE WESTERN BALKANS: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-08/ran_vrwe_in_western_balkans_overview_072022_en.pdf
9. Preventing Violent Extremism through Major Sporting Events A Handbook for Organizers https://www.unaoc.org/wp-content/uploads/SportsHandbook_Final_final.pdf
10. Sport For Community Development Collection of Good Practices
<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/0363b0aa-c000-4ad0-bdca-df82246a58cc/Sport%20CD%20-%20Best%20Practices%20collection.pdf>

precious.mk



The content of this publication represents the views of the author only and is its sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.