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YOUTH ANTI RADICALISATION THROUGH SPORT IN EUROPE (YARSPE)

YARSPE

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Analytical Report 2022

YARSPE

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Introduction

The Youth Anti Radicalisation through Sport in Europe (YARSPE) program is supported by the pilot initiative of the European Parliament, the so-called "Monitoring and coaching, through sports, of youngsters at risk of radicalization" (EAC/S19/2019). YARSPE aims at creating tools for coaches, teachers, and sports associations to prevent radicalisation among youth by collaborating with local organisations, institutions, and public authorities, and preventing discrimination and extremism of all forms by organising sports activities for young people at risk of different forms of radicalisation.

Organisations from the Czech Republic (INEX – Sdruzeni Dobrovolnych Aktivit), Hungary (Subjective Values Foundation), Italy (GEA), The Netherlands (Fare Network) and Poland (Fundacja dla Wolności) joined the program that was implemented between January 2020 and December 2022.

In the first phase of the program, the participating organizations conducted desk research on their specific countries about the national context and the existing policies concerning the prevention of radicalisation among youth and stakeholders. In addition, monitoring and coaching practices on preventing radicalisation that is adaptable to different national contexts were also realized. The data collected by partners was systematized by the evaluators of YARSPE in the study "Comparative research on national context and the existing policies concerning the prevention of radicalization among youth and stakeholders mapping in 5 EU countries". The first chapter of this study is built upon the main conclusions of the comparative report.

After introducing the objectives, approach to evaluation and target group of the impact assessment in the chapter "Methodology", we describe the findings of the evaluation that focused on the various training activities of the YARSPE program.

Teachers, coaches, policymakers, and community activists joined 10 national workshops that aimed at the promotion of a shared complete meaning of radicalization. Trainers of the workshops encouraged the participants to avoid dangerous simplifications, prejudices and stereotypes towards certain groups and certain factors, to understand the push and pull factors and recognise the signs of radicalisation. The evaluators of YARSPE created an online survey and collected feedback from the participants of these workshops. The third chapter of the study ("A2.1 Training in radicalisation") introduces the findings of this data collection.

Partner organisations involved young people and educated them on the dangers of getting involved with extremist groups and trained them to be aware of the different recruitment tactics. Altogether, 10 peer education learning training courses were held in schools. The methodology of the quantitative data collection and experiences of the program are introduced in the chapter "A2.2 Peer education learning training in radicalisation".

Partners of the YARSPE program implemented 40 coaching sessions as well. These activities supported young people in communities at risk and were aimed at boosting mutual knowledge and forcing social cohesion and social inclusion between different members of the communities. In this case, evaluators conducted online interviews with trainers of the coaching sessions. Findings of the evaluation and detailed description of our methodology can be found in the chapter "A2.3 Increasing social cohesion in communities at risk through sport".

Feedback from the trainers about the training sessions that aimed at increasing the resilience of youth from communities at risk was also collected. Altogether, 16 non-formal education workshops and 16 coaching sessions were held to support young people to develop critical thinking and counter-narratives to extremism and discrimination that can lead to violent radicalisation. The trainers would have primarily liked to give participants references and contacts of support workers in case they are targeted by far-right groups or felt that a person close to them is vulnerable to radicalisation. The findings of the evaluation of these activities can be found in the chapter "A3: Increase the resilience of youth from communities at risk".

At the end of the study, we summarise the general findings of the evaluation of the YARSPE program. In addition, we aim at merging theory, policy and practice on the topic and give recommendations for organisations that would like to conduct similar activities in the future.

Defining radicalisation

Radicalisation belongs among the most complex social processes. It has gained popularity after several jihadist terrorist attacks that took place in the first years of the 21st century in the West and since then, it is subject to fierce discussions on how to define it and most importantly, how to prevent and counter its manifestations. While the process of radicalisation has been studied heavily, academics and practitioners have less information on how to best prevent and counter it while establishing a causal link between the measures adopted and the desired impact. This is further complicated by the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon that interlinks the personal (micro-), group (meso-) as well as government and society (macro-) levels at the same time.

There is no universally agreed-upon definition of radicalisation. In this project, we understand **radicalisation** as "a process whereby people adopt an extremist belief system – including the intent to use, encourage or facilitate violence – to promote an ideology, a political project or a cause as a means of social transformation" as defined by the Centre for the Prevention of Radicalisation Leading to Violence (n.d.). Since the project's focus is on radicalisation prevention, the concept of **polarisation** is also highly relevant. Polarisation can be understood as "a thought construct, based on assumptions of 'us' and 'them' identities" in which differences between those two groups are emphasised and often exaggerated while neglecting what they have in common. This negative stance increases the risk of growing hostility and segregation, hate speech, and ultimately hate crime. The polarisation process can be thus understood as a breeding ground in which individuals or groups can be radicalised and open to violent solutions (Lenos et al., 2017).

Another definition of radicalisation embodies this close relationship between polarisation and radicalisation. Schmid (2013) reconceptualised radicalisation as "an individual or collective (group) process whereby, usually in a situation of political polarisation, normal practices of dialogue, compromise and tolerance between political actors and groups with diverging interests are abandoned by one or both sides in a conflict dyad in favour of a growing commitment to engage in confrontational tactics of conflict-waging". He further elaborates on these tactics that range from non-violent pressure and coercion to violence and even terrorism and war crimes. In addition, adoption of "more radical or extremist positions involving a dichotomous world view" as well as the rejection of the existing political order are generally present.

It is essential to identify the most appropriate target groups for the project's intervention including sports activities aimed at preventing discrimination and extremism of all forms against young people who are at risk of radicalisation. Identifying specific vulnerable groups and individuals can be a demanding and controversial task as it brings along the risk of labelling and stigmatising those subjects. Even an honest effort to prevent radicalisation may contribute to the vulnerable groups' isolation and marginalisation which can paradoxically increase their vulnerability instead of reducing it. That is why we believe attention should be better paid to the conditions under which individuals are more likely to radicalise instead of pointing to groups (often minorities) based on some shared characteristics. In this regard, push, pull, and personal factors are of major importance for the appropriate targeting of the project's intervention.

Factors of radicalisation

The YARSPE program has the aim of preventing radicalisation by increasing knowledge, introducing tools and methods, and giving appropriate advice and assistance. The consortium aims at supporting 1) the key actors working with youth and 2) the young people who are not already radicalised but might be vulnerable to violent extremism and are at risk of radicalisation. To prepare and implement the prevention effectively, knowledge about the push, pull and personal factors that might contribute to radicalisation and drive people towards violence is crucial. These categories reveal radicalisation giving us the chance to understand the root factors and improve our preventive efforts.

The **push factors** can be thought of as the structural, political, or sociological causes explaining what drives people to violent extremism, such as perceived grievance, social exclusion, sense of injustice or perceived threat to a group, or even factors such as poverty or unemployment that a larger group shares due to some structural condition. **Pull factors** explain what makes violent extremism appealing to the groups and individuals who embrace the related attitudes and behaviour. Consumption of extremist propaganda, peer pressure, belonging and identity needs, or material rewards are some examples. Finally, **personal factors** – that can also be understood as personal push factors – refer to rather individual characteristics that make their holder more vulnerable to radicalisation

than his or her comparable peers and those include mental health issues, specific personality traits or demographic characteristics.

In the five countries of the YARPSE program (Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, and Poland), numerous factors of radicalisation were identified based on the previously mapped processes of radicalisation into far-right extremism or jihadism or as derived from the official documents and de-radicalisation policy. These conditions suggest where the effort of radicalisation prevention should be directed. Among the push factors, relative deprivation was prevalent, especially for the far-right radicalisation in Poland or Hungary. However, rather than an objective socio-economic hardship, fear of loss of its own g (ethnically defined) or class position and prestige were the risk factors. Increased alienation and discrimination coupled with higher expectations can be felt among the second and third-generation Muslim populations in the Netherlands and it is projected to be more relevant for Italy or the Czech Republic in the future. Less known but increasingly important is the factor of higher emancipation of those immigrant generations that can make them more sensitive to discrimination and inequality and thus more susceptible to violent extremism. Individuals can also be driven into far-right extremism by sensed discrimination. Finally, a perceived threat to a group was present, in this case with the reference group of the Muslim umma (community) for whose defence a part of the Italian Muslim community believed it would be justified to use violence.

The factors that made violent extremism in the five countries appealing (pull) were mostly related to the factors of identity and belonging as part of the specific group dynamics. In many instances, the individuals radicalised from below under influence of their friends, families, or neighbourhood. This is a typical path of joining a violent extremist group in which a belief in the group ideology may come only after joining the group and not the other way around. Online or offline propaganda as the more top-down approach of radicalisation is still of high significance while (charismatic) radical preachers play an important role in the process and are thought to continue to do so especially in the Netherlands and to a lesser extent in Italy or the Czech Republic. In the three Central European countries, far-right propaganda is increasingly advocated by the political mainstream, disseminated primarily via the online space and in the cases of Hungary and Poland even by the state-run broadcasting that is often imbalanced from a political and ideological perspective. Finally, emotional rewards such as fame or adventure should not be underestimated as the pull factors.

The personal (push) factors are the most difficult to monitor as these are relevant for single individuals but at the same time may play the decisive part in the equation explaining why it is just them who join violent extremist groups or adopt radical ideas, unlike their peers in an otherwise similar situation. The factor of mental health could be identified as a risk factor for jihadist radicalisation in the Netherlands or coercive patterns of upbringing and child abuse as a potential risk factor. Also, the perceived lack of meaningfulness could help to explain the radicalisation of the Dutch foreign fighters joining jihadist groups in Syria. Characteristics such as male (gender), youth (age) and usually home-grown radicalisation (country of residence) are also over-represented, but problematic as the risk predictors due to their broad distribution in the population.

Sport as a tool for the prevention and countering of violent extremism

In 2018, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Justice Section published a desk review on sports and the prevention of violent extremism. One of its goals was to map sports initiatives as a tool for violent extremism prevention that "target risk factors and protective factors and/or may be used as a vehicle for social development and community engagement, especially for those youth most at risk of being radicalised on a path towards violent extremism" (UNODC, 2018, p. 4).

Two basic categories of sports-based activities were identified. One was related to **social development** and sought longer-term sustained impact, while the other was rather **diversion-based** with activities in the short term. We have gathered the variables that were addressed in the meta-study and in correspondence with the previous chapter, sorted them out as either related to the push- or pull-related factors of radicalisation.

Pull factors

Sport especially in the area of (1) the dynamics, (2) consumption of extremist propaganda and the related issue of (3) charismatic leaders and recruiters. Regarding the group dynamics, to give the participants a better sense of identity and of group belonging appeared among the initiatives' outputs since radicalisation is often a group process related to a given area or a shared activity. Similarly, the sport has been used to promote radical ideologies such as in Hungary where neo-Nazism has been spread through sports clubs and amateur leagues (see above).

The role of sport in countering extremist propaganda and delivering positive counter-narratives was also mentioned as part of the intervention. Team sports

were considered as a tool to increase resilience to ideological narratives promoting terrorism or violence. One project aimed to assist the children and youth to "overcome negative images and stereotypes about those who have different abilities, religions, and backgrounds to build acceptance and tolerance" (UNODC, 2018, p. 45).

The role of charismatic leaders and recruiters have also been highlighted in the previous chapter which can be exemplified by the Salafist agitators in the Netherlands that are supposed to connect more easily with the youth due to their common background. In this regard, the sport may offer those people positive role models "as 'testimonials' against violence and radicalisation" (UNODC, 2018, p. 27). Successful sport role models are useful as positive examples to counter the messages of violence.

Push factors

The sports-based initiatives offered numerous incentives to the participants that could be perceived as addressing the factor of relative deprivation of a social group. This can also be framed as a sense of justice, inequality, marginalisation, grievance, social exclusion, or frustration among others. Similar feelings could also be experienced by individual persons which can be ranked under personal factors (the factor of mental health) in the case these were not linked to the community as such due to structural causes. The research discussed the role of sport in positive development opportunities for the youth, in promoting social reinsertion, "active tolerance and responsible citizenship in communities experiencing different forms of conflict and violence" (UNODC, 2018, p. 44). The intervention was also designed to "overcome negative images and stereotypes about those who have different abilities, religions, and backgrounds to build acceptance and tolerance." The sport could also serve to "integrate migrants and asylum-seekers within local communities". Some of the initiatives sought better cohabitation of different cultures by furthering "intercultural understanding and dialogue" and "bridging cultural divides".

The other push factors that are mostly related to the state police (increasing frustration and sense of justice mainly derived from the aggressive foreign policies and the perception of Western dominance in world politics or state repression) or structural factors such as poverty, unemployment and education did not seem to be incorporated in the initiatives as the

variables to be dealt with.

Personal factors

Most frequently, the sports-based interventions summarised in the meta-study by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Justice Section targeted person-related factors that can be grouped under (1) mental health and (2) personality traits and cognitive structure.

From the area of mental health, factors such as low self-esteem, alienation, or search for meaning seemed to be considered relevant given the desired outputs of the projects. The interventions were planned to contribute to the participants' feelings of confidence and self-esteem. It also sought to provide them with a feeling of purpose.

On top of that, the participants were supposed to acquire new (life) skills. The following skills appeared in the meta-analysis: "skills related to physical ability, intercultural communication, teamwork and leadership", discipline, self-control, anger and stress management, communication skills, making improved life choices, acceptance, and tolerance. These can be thought of as a way of increasing young people's resilience so that they are less susceptible to the numerous push and pull factors of radicalisation to violent extremism. Some of those skills can be attributed to the factor of personality traits and cognitive structure, which addresses the cognitive area involving thinking and decision-making. Factors from the literature review such as critical thinking and encouraging prosocial thinking fall under this category.

Another UNODC (2020) publication Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport: Technical Guide identifies five zones for the prevention of violent extremism through sport (see the figure below). The figure depicts these five zones as the outer layer of the circle. At the core of this circle is the individual surrounded by risk factors in different categories (personal, social, political, ideological/religious, cultural/identity, recruiting factors and group dynamics). The two middle layers are represented by the main preventive elements that stand between the individual and deviance or harm. These can be understood as "the relationships between sources of risk and areas of opportunity for gaining support, knowledge, positive participation experiences and care", while each element "mitigates risk and promotes individual resilience in relation to a particular risk factor" (ibid., p. 27).

All five key preventive factors are related to societal resilience and empowerment through sport. The following zones were identified by UNODC (2020, pp. 26-31):

Zone 1

Safe spaces and social safety. The first zone is based on "providing youth with institutionalized protection and creating safe spaces for meaningful sports interventions. Sports gradually transform risk into empowerment. This space goes beyond the physical location and involves factors such as trust and confidentiality.

Zone 2

Social inclusion. This factor promotes "cultures of unity and safety through sport" to prevent extremists from exploiting strife over identities and societal diversity. It encourages shared interaction between people from different backgrounds.

Zone 3

Education. In this zone, education on the push and pull factors towards violent extremism comes to the fore as well as the question of what measures to employ to stay safe.

Zone 4

Resilience. Intervention works on the resilience of youth "through various skill-building opportunities" intending to increase their protection against recruitment and attraction to violent extremism. This factor thus addresses young people's vulnerability to violent extremism.

> *"When they leave the programme, the new skills they have gained will contribute towards positive social and economic mobility, thus countering the primary root causes of risks relating to violent extremism. This resilience will provide young people with the psychosocial and emotional support that they need throughout the process." (ibid., p. 30).*

Zone 5

Empowerment. This zone is about giving a voice to marginalized and at-risk youth. In practice, they should "confidently voice their ideas and develop practices towards good decision-making."

Evaluation methodology

Numerous problems are associated with the evaluation of projects aimed at preventing radicalization (Dawson, Edwards and Jeffray 2014, UNDP Jeffrey First, it is not entirely possible to determine that radicalization has been averted – thus to measure something that did not happen. This affects the possibility to evaluate the achievement of the ultimate goal of the project instead of mere outcomes. Second, the prevention of violent extremism is a sensitive area that brings along the risk of stigmatising participants if they are openly approached as risk clients in need of intervention. That is why it is necessary to pay special attention to the framing of the project and the terms used when interacting with the participants. Below, we explain how we have addressed these challenges in developing the evaluation strategy for this project.

Before embarking on the design of the methodology, each project in the field of preventing violent extremism requires the adoption of a clear definition of radicalisation. We work with the definition according to which radicalization refers to "a process whereby people adopt an extremist belief system – including the intent to use, encourage or facilitate violence – in order to promote an ideology, a political project or a cause as a means of social transformation" (Centre for the Prevention of Radicalisation Leading to Violence (n.d.). Prevention of violent extremism can be defined simply as "depriving violent extremism of its breeding ground by enhancing the capacity of individuals and communities to resist it".

Next, it was necessary to understand the context in terms of the manifestation of violent extremism – mainly far-right and jihadi - in the four countries including the identification of the target groups and the push and pull factors that increase the risk of their radicalisation into violent extremism, violence as spaces where the individuals can be exposed to extremist ideas and groups. We also researched policies on the prevention of violent extremism in those countries. Finally, we conducted a review of the theoretical literature discussing the role of sport in radicalization prevention. An understanding of the context enabled a theory of change to be defined. This theory served as the basic framework for the project value.

A theory of change explains how and why an intervention will lead to a specific change in the project. It helps to identify and test the underlying assumptions about the variables we work with. The theory of change is created by drawing links between the planned activities, their immediate outputs, desired outcomes,

and final impact. Each link represents a hypothesized relationship between the variables. By outputs, we mean the immediate results of the given activity. These activities are planned to achieve outcomes and the short- and medium-term effects of the intervention, while an impact refers to the ultimate change a project aims to achieve. As mentioned previously, the field of radicalisation prevention is especially challenging in terms of evaluating the project impacts. It is therefore suggested to rather look for contribution to impact through the observed outcomes rather than finding evidence that the project achieved the desired impact – radicalization prevention (UNDP 2018). In this regard, attention should be directed to protective factors that could decrease the vulnerability of a person towards violent extremism.

In the table below, we present the theory of change designed for our project working its way up from the target audience engaged through specific activities to the desired outcomes and impact. It might be noticed that we avoid the concept of radicalization prevention altogether. Instead, we aim to achieve outcomes in terms of increasing knowledge and awareness, social cohesion or inclusion or the participants' empowerment. The final impact is defined in terms of increased individual or community resilience. Even though, unlike radicalization prevention, this concept is significantly more accessible for measurement, it might still be impossible to determine the achievement of this ultimate change in the course of the project.

For individual work packages, we use different approaches to evaluate their impacts. To meet the challenges inherent in evaluating projects in this area, we had to seek innovative approaches to both data collection and analysis. We elaborate on them in more detail in individual chapters discussing their design, execution, and findings in terms of achieved outcomes. For clarity, we briefly mention the individual approaches here as well. For the work packages A2.1 and A2.2 that aimed at increasing knowledge and awareness of the phenomenon of radicalisation, we used a survey to measure the achieved changes. The design of the survey was inspired by the so-called KAP Survey (Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices) that are useful to identify baseline knowledge and measure the effectiveness of interventions that seek a correction or change in knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, and practices, but also to identify potential myths, misconceptions, or beliefs (see Andrade et al. 2020). This property of the instrument was particularly useful for our purposes since this work package
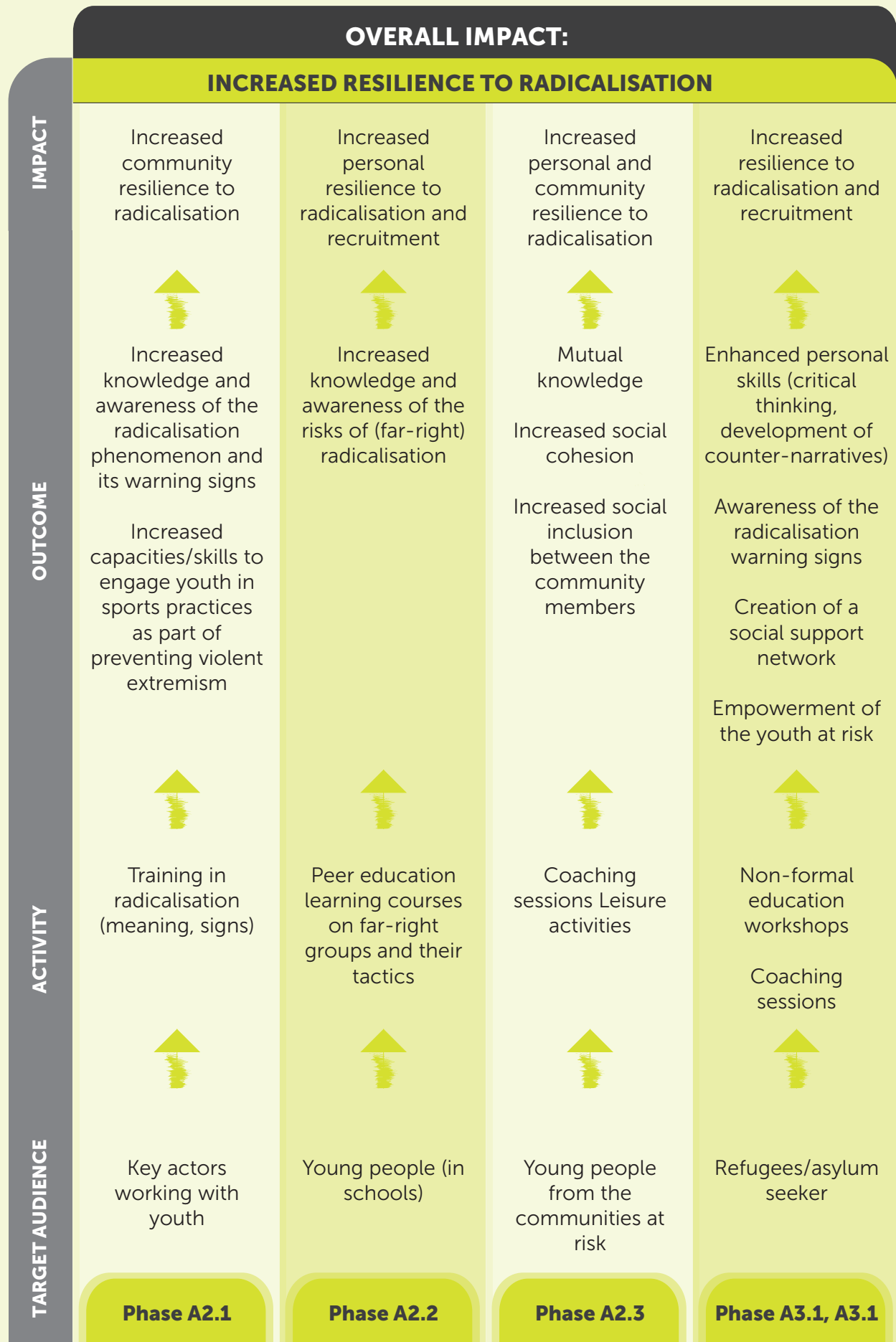
aimed at increasing knowledge of the radicalization phenomenon while avoiding dangerous simplifications that associate radicalization only with terrorism and religious-driven factors. One part of the questionnaire, therefore, took the form of statements based on myths about radicalization, to which respondents expressed their agreement or disagreement using a Likert scale. Standardised questionnaires based on declarative statements are typical for KAP surveys.

In the work packages A2.3 and A3.1, A3.3, we aimed at achieving different outcomes – especially increasing the social inclusion of the participants and teaching them skills reducing their vulnerability to violent extremism and thus increasing their resilience. For this phase of the project, we collected data through interviews with the trainers from the partner organizations delivering the activities. This approach did not directly embody the method of Outcome Harvesting, but it was inspired by it. In principle, Outcome Harvesting looks for evidence of what has changed – despite initial assumptions or hypotheses – and then works backwards to determine whether and how the intervention has contributed to these changes. It is typically used in projects with complex contexts, where we do not have a full understanding of the relations between cause and effect. Moreover, it is particularly useful to evaluate

social change interventions. Informants, ideally field staff that are positioned closest to the activities and participants, are engaged to collect data on the change they observed throughout the project since they have the best knowledge about the actual impact of the intervention (see Better Evaluation 2021). Given that our project is set in the field of radicalization prevention characterized by high complexity, the outcome harvesting approach led us to an approach that is similarly open to unexpected changes and is not limited to the assumed relationships depicted in the theory of change. We conducted interviews with the trainers that started with open questions asking about any change they observed in terms of attitudes and behaviour of the participants before we moved on to the questions probing into the achievement of the desired outcomes shown in the theory of change.

Throughout the project, when designing the activities, and conducting or evaluating them, we took particular care to mitigate the potential risk of the participants feeling stigmatised by the engagement in the project. This was mainly achieved by avoiding the term radicalisation. Instead, the topic was approached through different but related concepts such as exclusion and discrimination as the breeding ground of radicalisation, when educating the youngsters.

Theory of change of the YARSPE program

OVERALL IMPACT:

INCREASED RESILIENCE TO RADICALISATION

IMPACT	Increased community resilience to radicalisation	Increased personal resilience to radicalisation and recruitment	Increased personal and community resilience to radicalisation	Increased resilience to radicalisation and recruitment
	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
OUTCOME	Increased knowledge and awareness of the radicalisation phenomenon and its warning signs Increased capacities/skills to engage youth in sports practices as part of preventing violent extremism	Increased knowledge and awareness of the risks of (far-right) radicalisation	Mutual knowledge Increased social cohesion Increased social inclusion between the community members	Enhanced personal skills (critical thinking, development of counter-narratives) Awareness of the radicalisation warning signs Creation of a social support network Empowerment of the youth at risk
	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
ACTIVITY	Training in radicalisation (meaning, signs)	Peer education learning courses on far-right groups and their tactics	Coaching sessions Leisure activities	Non-formal education workshops Coaching sessions
	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆
TARGET AUDIENCE	Key actors working with youth	Young people (in schools)	Young people from the communities at risk	Refugees/asylum seeker
	Phase A2.1	**Phase A2.2**	**Phase A2.3**	**Phase A3.1, A3.1**

Introduction

Within the framework of the YARSPE program, altogether 10 (2 per partner) national workshops were held in the first half of the year. The meetings aimed at preparing teachers, coaches, policymakers, and community activists: to promote a shared complete meaning of radicalisation that avoids dangerous simplifications, prejudices and stereotypes towards certain groups and certain factors, to understand the push and pull factors, recognise the signs of radicalisation, support young people, peer learning and identify sports practices that are adaptable to their context. This chapter summarizes the experiences of these workshops.

Methodology

A total of three questionnaires were designed to map the experiences:

1. The first questionnaire was completed before the meetings. The questions were designed to explore participants' prior knowledge of the phenomenon of radicalisation, the related process, and its consequences. This questionnaire will be referred to as the "input questionnaire".

2. The second questionnaire was completed immediately after the workshops so that participants could give feedback on the impact of the meetings on them. At the same time, they were also able to give their views on the organisation of the workshops and the quality of the speakers. This questionnaire will be referred to as the "output questionnaire".

3. The third questionnaire was sent to participants in about the second month after the workshop. The questions in the questionnaire were essentially the same as those in the first questionnaire (i.e., completed before the meetings). By comparing data from the two surveys, we sought to assess the (longer-term) impact of the workshops. To measure changes, we used mostly Likert-type questions. This questionnaire will be referred to as the "follow-up questionnaire".

The questionnaires were written in English, then the questions were translated by the partners into their native languages. The questionnaire was available for respondents online. The workshops were organised at different times in different countries (but respondents answered the same questions).
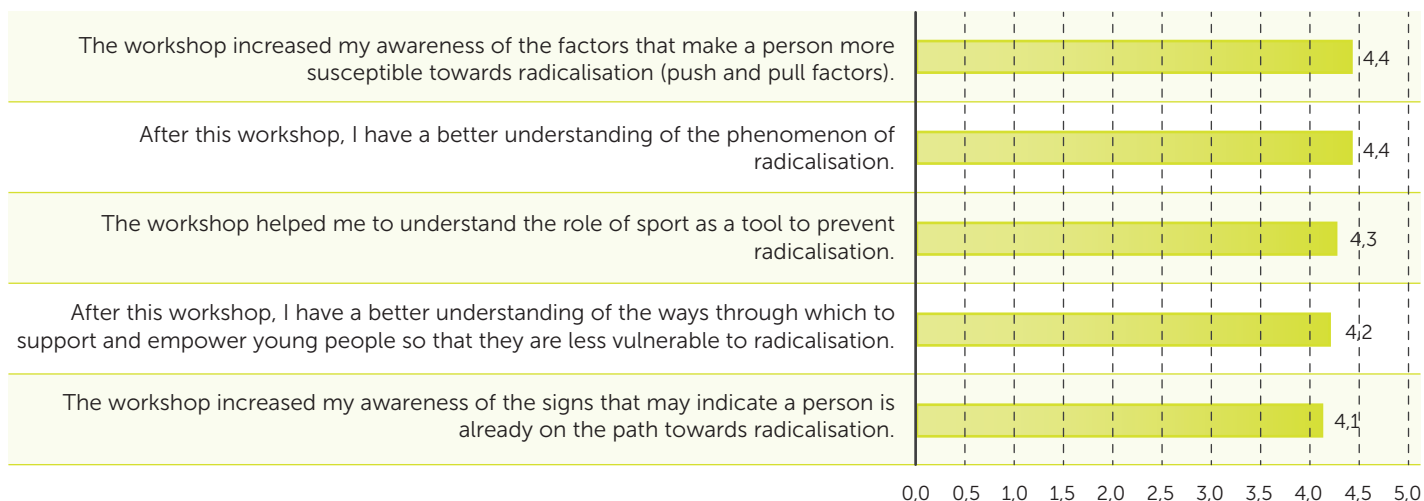
In Hungary and the Czech Republic, the evaluators themselves joined the training sessions. In these cases, they informed the participants about the objectives and the methodology of the evaluation. In Poland and Italy, this was done by the training organisers.

The number of responses in the input questionnaires was relatively high, with a total of 54 respondents. The number of respondents in the case of the output questionnaire was 50. In the follow-up, however, a lower response rate was achieved; a total of 32 people completed the questionnaire. (Only three NGOs out of the four distributed the questionnaire to the workshop participants due to technical reasons) As can be seen, it was more difficult to reach participants after a longer period, and they were less motivated to answer the questions in the second month after the training. This decreasing number of responses is in line with what we have seen in our previous evaluations.

Due to the small number of responses, no multivariate analysis was conducted, and only descriptive statistics are presented below.

Results

First, we discuss the results of the questionnaires completed after the workshops. The figure below shows participants' views on the impact of the training sessions.

The workshop increased my awareness of the factors that make a person more susceptible towards radicalisation (push and pull factors).	4,4
After this workshop, I have a better understanding of the phenomenon of radicalisation.	4,4
The workshop helped me to understand the role of sport as a tool to prevent radicalisation.	4,3
After this workshop, I have a better understanding of the ways through which to support and empower young people so that they are less vulnerable to radicalisation.	4,2
The workshop increased my awareness of the signs that may indicate a person is already on the path towards radicalisation.	4,1

0,0 0,5 1,0 1,5 2,0 2,5 3,0 3,5 4,0 4,5 5,0

n=50 (HU=15, CZ=11, PL= 24). Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.

The results indicate that participants had very positive opinions about the workshops. They felt that the training had given them a better understanding of what makes people prone to radicalisation (4.4) and a better understanding of the phenomenon of radicalisation (4.4). Another positive outcome was that they gained insight into the role of sport in preventing radicalisation (4.3). Participants expressed that after the workshops they felt more aware of how to support young people who are vulnerable to radicalisation (4.2). They are also better able to identify when a young person is becoming radicalised (4.1).

These positive results explain why, as shown in the figure below, the overall assessment of the workshop was very positive.

What is your overall assessment of the event?	4,2

0,0 0,5 1,0 1,5 2,0 2,5 3,0 3,5 4,0 4,5 5,0
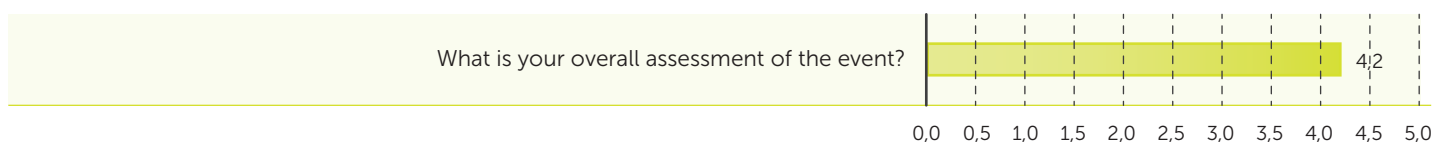
n=50 (HU=15, CZ=11, PL= 24). Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.

Participants were satisfied with the preparation, the organisation, and the content of the workshops, as indicated by the average scores in the table below, which all ranged between 4.0 and 4.5. It is worth highlighting that respondents assessed the content (4.5) and the structure (4.5) of the training courses very positively. The invited speakers received a similarly positive rating (4.5). Workshop participants also expressed their satisfaction with the technical organisation of the meetings. We would like to highlight as well that, according to the feedback, respondents' expectations were met: an average score of 4.3 was given to the statement related to this question.

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements... n=50 (HU=15, CZ=11, PL= 24). Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.	
The content was easy to understand.	4,5
The workshop had a clear structure.	4,5
The presenter was well prepared.	4,5
The workshop was well organised.	4,4
The instructions received before the workshop were sufficient.	4,4
The objective of the workshop was clear.	4,4
The workshop format encouraged interaction and discussion.	4,4
The workshop met my expectations.	4,3
The length of the workshop was adequate for the topic and objectives.	4,0
AVERAGE of the statements	**4,4**

As mentioned earlier, we were able to compare the results of the input and the follow-up questionnaires, which provided an opportunity for further analysis. The tables below show these data, highlighting the significant changes (with the arrows showing the direction of change).

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements... Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.	PRE (n=54)	FOLLOW-UP (n=32)	
I understand what the term radicalisation means.	3,91	3,95	
I know what factors make a person vulnerable to radicalisation.	3,26	3,97	⬆
I know in what spaces a person is vulnerable towards ideas of violent extremism.	3,24	3,94	⬆
I am aware of the warning signs to watch for that could indicate that a person is on the path towards radicalisation.	2,98	3,68	⬆
I understand the ways sports can contribute to radicalisation prevention.	2,94	4,19	

Participants thought, both at the beginning of the workshops (3.9) and in the following months (4.0), that they were aware of the meaning and the content of the term radicalisation - no significant change was noted in this respect. The lack of change is probably because people attending the training had already been interested in the phenomenon of radicalisation and therefore already had (basic) information on this issue.

On all other issues, however, there has been a significant change. That is after the training respondents

- were more likely to be aware of the factors (input

questionnaire: 3.3 -> follow-up questionnaire: 4.0) and spaces (input questionnaire: 3.2 -> follow-up questionnaire: 3.9) that contribute to radicalisation and violent extremism,

- were more likely to think that they could identify when someone is radicalised (input questionnaire: 3.0 -> follow-up questionnaire: 3.7),

- were more likely to be aware of how sport can contribute to the prevention of radicalisation (input questionnaire: 2.9 -> follow-up questionnaire: 4.2). It is worth pointing out that it was this statement where we measured the biggest change.

As can be seen above, the questions in the questionnaires, on the one hand, allowed respondents to give a subjective description of the impact of the meetings on them. However, we also wanted to know to what extent the training sessions had succeeded in transferring knowledge about the phenomenon of radicalisation and the target group concerned. The table below shows the responses to these questions. In this case, arrows indicate significant changes (and their direction).

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements... Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree			
	PRE (n=54)	FOLLOW-UP (n=32)	
In most cases, radicalisation in the Western world results from the brainwashing of vulnerable youth by religious preachers or charismatic leaders.	2,98	3,16	
A single factor (cause) can explain a person's radicalisation into violent extremism.	2,15	1,50	⬇
Radicalisation into violent extremism may be caused by a person's need of belonging somewhere.	4,06	4,25	
In most cases, terrorist attacks in the Western world are perpetrated by foreigners.	2,28	2,13	
Religious beliefs and practices are the direct cause of a person's propensity for violence.	2,26	2,00	
Discrimination and marginalization of a minority group in a society increase the risk of its members' vulnerability towards radicalisation.	3,92	4,28	⬆
Radicalisation is largely associated with severe mental illness.	2,53	2,25	⬇
Young people may radicalize if they believe their societal group (white race, Muslim community or other) is under threat.	3,76	4,16	⬆
People are also drawn to violent extremism in search of positive factors, such as fame and adventure.	3,37	3,69	⬆
Women are almost never radicalized into violent extremism.	1,89	2,13	

As a result of the workshops, the participants gained more in-depth knowledge of radicalisation, as they

- are more likely to believe that radicalisation cannot be explained by a single cause (input questionnaire: 2.2 -> follow-up questionnaire: 1.5).
- have more information about the relationship between discrimination and marginalisation, and radicalisation (input questionnaire: 3.9 -> follow-up questionnaire: 4.3).
- are less likely to associate radicalisation with mental illness (initial questionnaire: 2.5 -> follow-up questionnaire: 2.3).
- have a more accurate perception of how young people's radicalisation may be influenced by a sense of threat (input questionnaire: 3.8 -> follow-up questionnaire: 4.2).
- are more likely to think that positive factors can also contribute to radicalisation (input questionnaire: 3.4 -> follow-up questionnaire: 3.7).

Introduction

The next phase of Work Package 2 consisted of running ten peer education learning training courses in schools with the aim of testing the previously identified tools in the local contexts and increasing the knowledge and awareness of the risks of radicalisation. The participants of the courses were educated on the dangers of getting involved with radical groups and learned about the different tactics these groups use.

Methodology

A survey was prepared to evaluate the level of knowledge and awareness in the field of radicalisation among the participants. We used a shortened version of the survey originally prepared for phase A2.1 that we also simplified for this age group in terms of the vocabulary employed. Again, the content consisted of a set of statements for which the participants were asked to express their level of agreement or disagreement using the Likert scale. The statements focused on common myths about radicalisation, the push and pull and factors of radicalisation as well as the role sport plays in preventing radicalisation (see Annex).
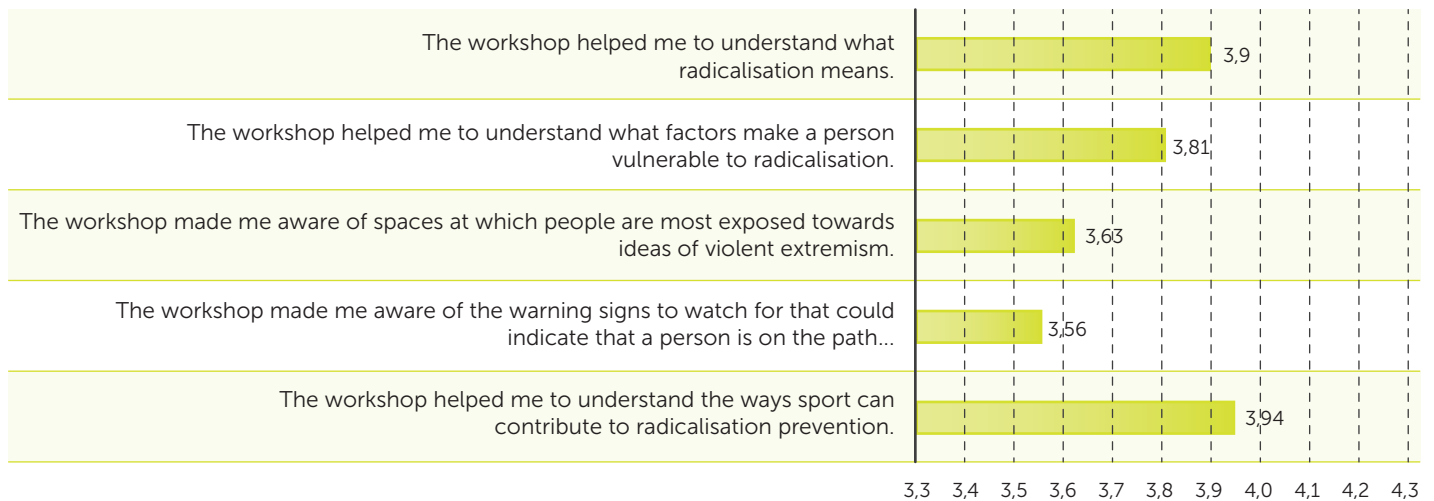
Unlike the previous training, we decided to distribute the questionnaires only after the workshops for the following reason. Two of the four NGOs conducting the activities used the same target group for this session as for the subsequent coaching sessions for young people from the communities at risk (phase A2.3). To educate these participants perceived as at risk on the topic of radicalisation had to be approached in a sensitive way that would not stigmatise them in any way. It was thus possible to distribute the questionnaire only after the activities has been already underway for some time so that the participants had time to get familiar with each other and the trainers could gradually gain their trust later enabling them to put more sensitive topics on the agenda. The character of the target group is also why some of the NGOs approached the issue by using a different vocabulary and concepts focusing on issues such as discrimination or exclusion as the breeding ground of radicalisation instead of working with the topic of radicalisation directly. This decision prevented us from measuring the actual change in the level of knowledge and awareness in relation to the educational activity, while we attached more importance to avoiding doing harm to the young participants. To partially mitigate this gap, we added a set of statements in which they were to subjectively evaluate how the workshop helped them to understand different topics in the field of radicalisation.

Due to technical reasons, only three NGOs out of the four distributed the questionnaire to the workshop participants. In total, we got responses from 88 people. In this case too, due to the low number of responses, we opted for descriptive statistics instead of multivariate analysis.

Results

In the first part of the survey, we explored how the participants subjectively evaluated the workshop in terms of the knowledge newly gained in the field of radicalisation. They generally agreed that the workshop helped them to understand what radicalisation meant, the factors that made a person vulnerable to radicalisation and the way sport could contribute to radicalisation as shown in the graph below. They expressed lower but still high confidence that they learned through the workshop about the spaces at which people were most exposed to violent extremism and the warning signs indicating that a person could be on a path towards radicalisation.

The workshop helped me to understand what radicalisation means. — 3,9

The workshop helped me to understand what factors make a person vulnerable to radicalisation. — 3,81

The workshop made me aware of spaces at which people are most exposed towards ideas of violent extremism. — 3,63

The workshop made me aware of the warning signs to watch for that could indicate that a person is on the path... — 3,56

The workshop helped me to understand the ways sport can contribute to radicalisation prevention. — 3,94

3,3 3,4 3,5 3,6 3,7 3,8 3,9 4,0 4,1 4,2 4,3

N=88 (CZE=9, IT=39, PL= 40). Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.

The following section of the questionnaire helped us to verify the actual knowledge of the subject even though, as explained above, the fact we distributed the questionnaire only once, did not allow us to determine the actual effect of the workshop. The measured level of knowledge could have been affected by previous knowledge of the topic and even certain randomness in giving the answers cannot be ruled out.

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements... Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.	POST (n=88)
Religious beliefs and practices are the main cause of a person's willingness to use violence.	2,67
Discrimination and feelings of exclusion of a minority group in a society increase the risk of its members' radicalization.	3,85
Radicalization into violent extremism may be caused by a person's need of belonging somewhere (to have a group of friends/peers with shared interests).	3,67
People never join extremist groups to gain positive experiences and emotions, such as fame or adventure.	2,83
Women are almost never radicalized into violent extremism.	2,30
Certain places, such as cyberspace, religious sites, or football stadiums, pose a greater risk of radicalisation by exposing a person to ideas or actions of violent extremism.	3,73
Engaging in sports activities can help a person not to fall for extremist groups and their ideas.	3,75

N=88 (CZE=9, IT=39, PL= 40). Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.

In the table, we show the average values of the answers for each statement. After the workshop, the participants were, on average, aware of some of the factors that can "push" a person towards adopting extremist beliefs, such as discrimination and feeling of exclusion or pull factors such as the need for belonging. Most of the participants were able to refuse the myth that religious beliefs and practices are most frequently behind the person's willingness to use violence and to acknowledge that joining extremist groups can be also motivated by positive factors, such as fame or adventure. However, for these two statements, the greatest number of participants chose the answer "not sure" which shows that the workshop focused more on other aspects of the topic. On average, the participants were able to acknowledge that some spaces might pose a greater risk of exposing a person to ideas and actions of violent extremism as well as the positive role sport can play in preventing radicalisation.

As mentioned above, the limitations brought about by the partial overlap of the target group for the A2.2 and A2.3 phases of the project, affected the evaluation of this work package whose findings need to be approached with caution. However, the most important work took place in the next phase of the project in which the NGOs worked directly with the youngsters during their coaching and leisure sessions. We discuss these activities and their outcomes in the next chapter.

A2.3 Increasing social cohesion in communities at risk through sport

Introduction

In the next phase, the project aimed to increase social cohesion and social inclusion in a group of young people from communities at risk by implementing coaching sessions followed by leisure activities. Each of the partner countries approached these sessions in their own way in respect of their target audience as well as their experiences in the field. This diversity in the implemented activities helped to evaluate how the different sports activities could have impacted the observed changes in terms of attitudes, behaviour, or skills of the participants. Before summarising the findings for this project phase, we will describe each organization separately to account for their unique approaches to working with the youth through sport and leisure. The length of the respective subchapters depends on the specificity of the sport and thus the design of the training sessions. While some sporting activities, such as climbing or swimming, do not require detailed descriptions, other sports such as capoeira deserve greater attention in terms of their use in support of social development.

Methodology

Evaluation of this phase was built around the concept of social cohesion. The Council of Europe understands social cohesion as "a society's capacity to ensure the wellbeing of all its members by minimising disparities and avoiding marginalisation; to manage differences and divisions and to ensure the means of achieving welfare for all" (Council of Europe 2010). The concept can be divided into three dimensions: socio-cultural, economic, and political. In this case, we focus on the sociocultural dimension of the concept is comprised of the:

"social relations across divides such as coexistence, tolerance and acceptance of differences; group identity and belonging within a larger whole; social capital which encompasses mutual trust, reciprocity and other assets that accrue from networks and associational life and facilitate cooperation around shared goals; and norms that moderate and influence sociocultural life." (Catholic Relief Service 2019).

This definition exemplifies the complex nature of social cohesion which complicates any efforts for a meaningful operationalisation and measurement of the process. A UNICEF report "Towards a Child-led Definition of Social Cohesion" pointed to the fact that despite many attempts to define social cohesion, there was none that would explore the meaning of the concept for children – a gap the report aimed to remedy by asking the following questions: "What does social cohesion mean to a child?" and "What are the indicators of successful cohesion as described by a child?". Based on the meaning expressed by the children themselves, it described social cohesion as a situation in which "child feels an environment is safe, happy and comfortable, and they can build bridges with other children" while:

"1. They feel consulted, listened to and understood, 2. They have good relationships with adults, 3. They are treated equally, 4. Friends are present, 5. Trust is present both vertically and horizontally, 6. They have and understand clear structures of help, 7. There is freedom of expression and participation, 8. Everyone is included in activities, 9. There is an absence of violence and bullying, both vertical and horizontal."

The children were also asked about the factors indicating a good environment in the youth centres which led to the identification of the following indicators (followed by a brief description):

- Inclusion: "if all children are playing together and no one is left out"
- Behaviour: "if they are treating each other well, and the room well"
- Facial expressions: "if they are laughing and smiling a lot"
- Body language
- Attitudes: "if they are positive, taking things easily, have a sense of humour"
- Attendance: "if they are happy, they will come back"
- Activities: "through drawing and music they will show their feelings"
- Consultation: "ask them what they like and don't like and get feedback" (UNICEF 2019).

Since the target audience in our project were young people, we have largely built our understanding of social cohesion upon the above-described conceptualisation.

The evaluation consisted of semi-structured interviews with the trainers from each partner organisation that took part in conducting the activities and had the opportunity to observe the behaviour of the children throughout this project phase. The interviews were conducted by two researchers via online video conferences. This chapter includes occasional quotations (in italics) from the interviewees.

In the first part of the interview, the trainers were asked to describe the target group and the activities they organised for them. They were also asked for their subjective evaluation of what worked and what did not work during the coaching sessions and leisure activities while paying particular attention to the role played by sports activities in those achievements. In the second part, the interviewed trainers responded to several statements, that corresponded to the different elements of the social cohesion conceptualisation we have adopted (see above).

Based on their observation of the participants' behaviour they expressed their opinion on whether they:

- got to know each other well
- showed support to each other and/or treated everyone equally
- worked well together (cooperated to achieve common goals)
- had fun with each other and/or were in good mood (could be observed in facial expressions - if the participants were laughing and smiling a lot)
- did not leave anyone out
- were able to work out the conflicts and disagreements among participants
- interacted beyond the planned events (as part of the project)
- became (good) friends
- attended the events regularly

On top of that, they commented on the occurrence or absence of several negative phenomena among the participants, such as:

- lack of cooperation
- tension or conflict among the participants
- bullying or any form of discrimination ("leaving someone out")
- selfishness
- participant/s stopped attending or did not attend all events
- display of negative emotions (anger, anxiety...) based on body language, facial expressions, and behaviour.

At the end of the interview, the trainers could reflect on their overall experience by giving recommendations for any future similar activities conducted by other organisations.

Activities and outcomes by individual countries

A. The Czech Republic and the Football3 method

Target audience

The participants were recruited based on collaboration with local youth clubs that were usually located at the peripheries of large cities – with some of these areas inhabited by people of lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The participating children were on average 10 to 16 years old, some of them belonged to the Roma ethnic group. The majority of them knew each other before the activities' commencement.

Activities

The work with the youngsters comprised two types of activities. First, football training was run by social workers in the local youth clubs, which focused on certain soft skills development such as communication and on fostering specific prosocial behaviour and attitudes. Second, a large tournament conducted by the hosting NGO "Fotbal pro rozvoj" as part of the league of fair-play football was organised while following the Football3 method. This concept of the league of the fair play follows a specific set of rules designed specifically to cultivate positive social attitudes among the participants.

The football game is played without referees while the participants are encouraged to come up with their own rules before the match and to reflect on them after the match. If any situation occurs that requires a solution, both teams must agree on the appropriate settlement among themselves directly on the pitch. There are also mediators present that help them to facilitate these discussions. After the match is finished, both teams sit down to reflect on the game and give each other so-called fair-play points. The result of the match is then set by combining match points and fair-play points.

As for the fair-play points, these are assigned in four categories as follows:

- active participation in the discussion - observed behaviour such as active listening, respecting the opinion of other participants, not dominating the discussion and inclusion of all players in the agreements;
- equal participation of boys and girls in the teams;

- fair-play of the other team – the teams argue whether their opponents deserve to obtain an extra point for fair play and respectful behaviour;
- fair play of own team – each team decides whether their team deserves an extra point for fair play and respectful behaviour.

Mediators oversee the rightfulness of the points attribution by both teams, which they can validate or adjust as they see fit. This whole process is built to support social integration, a reflection of the participants' emotions as well as paying respect to the adversary team around the match regardless of its result.

This method has been developed to help the participants develop prosocial attitudes, and work properly with their emotions but also as a short-term preventive tool to divert their attention from potentially negative behaviour by engaging them in the right way in terms of the activities as well as surrounding people.

Outcomes

The positive change that could have been observed during this phase was mostly about a shorter-term and immediate impact on the participants. Most importantly, the regular organisation of the sporting sessions created a safe space for the participants where they could communicate their ideas and emotions freely. Through the specific rules of the Football3 method, they were able to learn and adopt different social skills such as communication, teamwork, and emotional intelligence in terms of understanding and working with their emotions. They developed new friendships, and they were also able to develop a sense of community and belonging in the group. It was also supposed that their engagement in the sessions could have a positive impact in terms of desisting from potentially deviant behaviour - such as delinquency, drug abuse, truancy, or early parenthood – mostly resulting from spending time with people that could negatively affect their behaviour. Importantly, during the evaluation, it was observed that a continuous, long-term engagement was needed to achieve and record any lasting change in the youngsters' attitudes and behaviour. On the negative side, in a few cases, the participants also displayed negative behaviour and attitudes such as frustration resulting from losing the game, one case of bullying or more frequently, there was selfishness on part of some of the participants related to them dominating on the pitch or during the discussion.

During the evaluation, it was important to isolate the specific role of sport in achieving the desired or any other observed outcomes. In this case, the choice of football as the key activity to engage the participants and use it to develop different social skills, had several advantages. Football is an easy game which facilitates the players' engagement. Since it attracts many people, it can foster integration and inclusion. The specific rules of the Football3 method support the feeling of ownership as the participants can influence the outcome of the game by participating in the development of rules and by striving for other goals than just winning the game in terms of the goals scored.

On the other hand, football as a competition between two teams inevitably creates some tension and conflicts between the two sides. However, the method of the league of fair play supports the creation of a safe space where the teams can work out the conflicts together while still adhering to the principles of fair play. The biggest challenge was observed in the tension between the fact that football is a competitive game that each side wants to win and the other goals of the Football3 method in support of the participants' integration with less focus on the result. This tension manifested differently throughout the sessions. While some players were seen disengaging from the activities including the debriefings as they preferred a greater level of competition, in other instances, there were cases in which the older participants helped the younger ones by creating specific rules to account for their weaker position and increasing their engagement. Nevertheless, striking the right balance between competition and enjoyment in support of wider social goals proved to be the greatest issue to be addressed in the future use of the method.

B. Hungary and capoeira sessions

Target audience

On behalf of the Subjective Values Foundation, a series of capoeira training sessions were held in Budapest in April-May 2022, under the guidance of capoeira instructors. The sessions were attended by disadvantaged students (with their parents' permission) from a primary school cooperating with the programme. As one of our interviewees put it, the participants (mostly Roma) "were from very troubled families" who live in difficult financial circumstances. The participating youngsters were in the first, second, third and fourth grades of primary school, i.e., between 6 and 10 years of age.

Activities

Instructors divided the training capoeira sessions into two parts: separate classes were held for the younger and the older children. In total, ten sessions were organised, each lasting one and a half hours. The capoeira instructors consulted the staff of the Subjective Values Foundation several times on planning the training sessions and on how to deal with any difficulties that might arise. This subchapter summarises the main experiences of the trainers.

Below, we outline the specific characteristics of capoeira that make it a useful tool to engage and mobilise young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. According to our interviewees, this martial art is flexible since there are no predetermined, unchangeable sequences of movements. For young people who reject rigid rules and compulsory exercises, this feature can make the training especially attractive. Another advantage of the flexibility is that the participants do not have to worry about making a mistake when practising a particular movement sequence. Finally, it is worth mentioning that this openness also allows creativity to be developed. This is how the interviewees explained the merit of capoeira:

"In capoeira, we are lucky because it gives a huge amount of freedom. For example, take the cartwheel. [...] Then a little girl stood in front of me and said she didn't know how to do that. And I told her that if you do anything, it's accepted in capoeira. So, there's no such thing as raising your legs this high or that high."

"One of the girls said look, look, I made up a move like this. And then she could rightly feel that she had not only participated, but she had added to the capoeira universe by inventing a sequence of movements. And you could say that yes, she did add to capoeira."

Since there is no hierarchy between capoeira practitioners, this sport promotes equality. Athletes with different backgrounds, talents and interests are an equal part of the martial arts community. According to one capoeira instructor:

"it doesn't matter if your social status is low or high. It doesn't matter how educated you are, whether you believe in this or that. So, the love of this sport can bring together people from very, very, very mixed, and diverse backgrounds. And it constantly puts capoeira practitioners in a position where they have to be tolerant of what the other person is doing. When two capoeira practitioners meet anywhere in the world, it doesn't matter how much they're paid, where they're from, what kind of person they are, how old they are, or how much they weigh. It makes absolutely no difference. Those are boundaries that capoeira, thank God, break down."

Inherent to this idiosyncratic communal character is the fact that capoeira also teaches respect to, and acceptance of, others. Furthermore, it develops one's sense of responsibility, as it is only the athlete who is responsible for his or her own self-development and achievements as exemplified in the quotation below:

"if you practice, you will improve, you will feel it and others will see it. Here it is only yourself to address like: "Look, if I couldn't do this or I didn't do that, it's because I didn't put enough effort into it. I think this creates a framework, a foundation, where they learn that you can't keep making excuses endlessly. If you put the work in, it comes back. It's that simple, and it's easy to stick to."

Capoeira can also foster the practitioners' self-control. Although this sport teaches you to fight, it does not aim to foster leashing aggression in an uncontrolled way. As one interviewee described it: "because you can handle things not only by punching or kicking, you can just stop your foot when you could punch or kick [your opponent]. But you don't [kick or punch], because you choose not to, or you [choose instead to] protect him."

On top of that, it promotes a healthy lifestyle by emphasising the importance of body integrity and continuous improvement. If someone commits to capoeira, they "will respect their own body, they won't use substances or, say, get involved in situations where they know the consequence will be that they can't go to practice or they'll be locked up." Finally, it helps to build stamina among athletes. Young people learn that with constant practice and development, they can achieve their goals. In other words, if "you don't succeed the first time, you won't succeed the second time, you might even fail the whole lesson, and that's okay because there's always a next time when you have the opportunity to practise. And you just have to trust it and practice and you will succeed".

To conclude, we believe that these characteristics of capoeira contribute to making the spirit and the values of this martial art attractive among disadvantaged young people facing exclusion and rejection. They also contribute to the development of the skills needed to cope successfully with difficult life situations and challenges.

The goals of the capoeira training sessions were set by the instructors in line with the above-described benefits of the sport. First and foremost, they aimed to give participants a positive experience and, at the same time, a sense of achievement. They believed that this was an important prerequisite for fostering commitment to training and this martial art. Moreover, it was expected that the experience of success could also contribute to a positive self-image. As one of the trainers put it:

"We met beforehand and discussed that the main thing would be to counterpoise their own secondary labelling. Because often, even school educators, and the whole school system registers and labels

these kids as unmanageable, hyperactive, and ones with attention deficit. This is what these young people have to deal with on a daily basis. But no, even though they say I'm bad, even though they say I'm unmanageable if I have a goal, I can achieve it."

A further aim was to strengthen the relationships between the participants and to use the sessions as a community-building tool.

Outcomes

Overall, the observed change in the participants' attitudes and behaviour throughout the sessions indicates success in accomplishing the goals set at the beginning. Cooperation between participants has greatly improved and group cohesion has become stronger. According to the instructors' feedback, at the end of the sessions, the participating young people themselves came to the conclusion that they had succeeded in completing the tasks because they had: "worked together and cooperated. The children said it themselves and nodded because it was a team effort and the sincere joy on their faces showed that they had succeeded". A further sign of the development of cooperation was that the potential tensions and conflicts were overcome and the young people "could solve the tasks and encourage each other when they would beat or pick on each other for half an hour before". Successfully completing a task was a positive experience for the participating youngsters. One trainer reported that after a successful exercise, "it was a great joy and great happiness, and they loved it and had fun." It is worth stressing, however, that to bring about a change in the self-image (as will be highlighted later in the findings section when summarising the trainers' recommendations), it is likely that many more sessions need to be organised. Therefore, a change in this domain could not be reported in the evaluation.

Moreover, the group interview revealed a few unintended effects of the capoeira sessions. The exercises that aimed to develop cooperation also strengthened the participants' sense of responsibility, since "when someone took on a role in a group, he/she had a responsibility to make the whole group win, to make the whole group get ahead". One of the instructors assumed that learning a new sport also strengthened participants' curiosity and openness. After all, the training sessions "can trigger a curiosity in them that if this was good, then other things could be good too. Even if capoeira is not their sport. But it can encourage them to go seeking and exploring the world."

Our interviewees also felt that the training sessions provided an opportunity to develop empathy in young people. Participants sometimes picked on and made fun of each other, which occasioned discussions about

the causes and effects of stigma and exclusion. One of our interviewees described it the following way:

"When I noticed that one was picking on the other... for example, they started mocking somebody, even if it wasn't out of bad intentions...but through that, we could talk about who could be mocked and what can be used to mock somebody who wasn't one of us. And through that, we could talk about stigma. I asked them if they had been mocked and if they had mocked others. And then they could admit, without judging or being judged, that yes, I mocked someone, or I mocked someone for being fat, I mocked someone because they didn't have cool clothes because they wore glasses or something like that. And then we would talk about it, a little bit of a change of perspective thing, how that might affect the other person, or do you think, if we really wanted to, could we find something in you to mock, and how would that make you feel?".

Several conditions of success were identified during the interview. First, the right choice of exercise was crucial. The trainers designed playful exercises and instructions that are easy to understand. In order to build a community and develop cooperation, these exercises could only be completed together as part of teamwork. As one instructor put it in relation to a specific exercise: "if each child tries to lift me once, none of them will succeed, but if they realise that if they all lift me with their own strength at the same time, they will be able to lift me". The exercises were also designed to ensure that the participants were able to complete each of them, even if they had difficulties and challenges along the way. After all, "if you give them an exercise that they can do very easily with your eyes closed, it will not boost their confidence."

Second, a supportive and encouraging environment also contributed to the success. The instructors constantly encouraged the participating youngsters, who were also allowed to make mistakes during the exercises without any negative consequences. And finally, the trainers sought to develop a partnership-like relationship with young people. As one of them explained:

"We treated them as friends, but we also made them aware that we were teachers. Not that we are above them. It's that we tried to stand beside them as friends and teach them things and show them things. In the meantime, they could feel that it was okay to talk to us like a good friend so that we don't bite."

In an effort to establish a partnership, the trainers did not seek to control or hold participants accountable for the tasks. Instead

> *"it was left to their own discretion to decide if they would do it. And by doing it that way, you are effectively instilling in the other a belief that it is not that you are good-for-nothing and that I have to be there to stand over you to make sure you do it. It's that we've put our trust in them. And it was up to them to decide what they would do with that trust."*

The fact that the instructors honestly spoke to the young participants about the mistakes and difficulties they had initially encountered when practising martial arts also helped to nurture the relationship among them as equals. Overall, these features explain why the trainers perceived a strengthening of the trust between them and the participants during the sessions.

On the other hand, there was also some tension present among the participants resulting from their previous knowledge and conflicts. This also impacted the capoeira sessions.

It is also worth mentioning the difficulty that our interviewees encountered during their training sessions. During the first session, the trainers were confronted with the fact that the exercises were too complicated, and the instructions were not understandable for the participating young people. According to one of them, "following even very simple rules, very precise and very clear ones, often did not work. And not because they did not want to follow them." The difficulty was that young people found it difficult to focus their attention when the tasks were being explained and when carrying out the exercises. It was "just very difficult to keep the participants together. They kept running apart. They kept losing the thread. They were unable to stay focused. They had very simple rules, but they couldn't follow them because they couldn't, they got so excited." For the reasons above, trainers needed to spend more time on facilitating the understanding of tasks and group work; this required thinking about techniques and approaches that would help address these specific difficulties.

C. Poland and individual sports

Target audience

The group of participants consisted of around ten young people that were between 13 and 18 years old – most of them were girls. The youngsters came from different social backgrounds. Two boys were based in emergency care and were not living with their families. The organization of the workshops and recruitment was facilitated by a partner organisation Zacisze Community Centre.

Activities

The programme was based on a mix of three types of activities: 1) weekly workshops, 2) sporting events and 3) voluntary activities. In the weekly workshops, the participants were encouraged to express their feelings followed by different psychological, drama and movement exercises focused on several topics such as stress and relaxation, anger, and grief, listening and awareness, minorities, safety, and activism. These sessions aimed to teach them how to communicate non-violently and how to properly understand and channel their emotions. The sporting sessions engaged the youngsters through individual sports such as climbing, cycling, canoeing, swimming, and walking and thus aiming for their greater integration and alleviation of the feeling of stress. Finally, the participants were invited to participate either individually or in small groups in activities such as gardening or helping refugees.

Outcomes

Creating a safe space where the participants could open up and talk about their emotions, appeared as the most important achievement of the workshops. While in the beginning, it seemed difficult for them to share their inner experiences, in time it became a usual activity in which they were ready to participate. While the youngsters also shared some experiences with discrimination, problems in schools and with their families turned out to be the greatest issue to be shared. These activities also enhanced integration among the participants and helped to build mutual trust. Finally, the work with emotions helped to increase the emotional intelligence of the youngsters as they learned to accept even the negative emotions they were feeling and take care of themselves in a way that would alleviate those negative emotions. During the course of the sessions, there were no conflicts or tension recorded. However, in the evaluation, one of the trainers expressed mixed feelings about this fact since conflicts can play a positive role and help youngsters learn how to address them in a safe environment.

As for the specific role of sport in achieving these outcomes, mostly its integrational role has been emphasized. The collective participation in different sports activities by the youngsters helped to build their self-esteem especially when supported by others in challenging moments. Importantly, the organisation of sporting events proved their role in helping the participants alleviate feelings of stress and feel more relaxed.

D. Italy and collective sports

Target audience

Members of the Italian GEA Coop Sociale organized 20 coaching sessions between May and July 2022.

The target group of the meetings were 1) young adults (between the age of 16 and 20) from the local neighbourhood and 2) students (between the age of 10 and 16) of the after-school program that is run by GEA Coop Sociale during the school period. Members of these two groups live in the Palestro district of Padua and could be described as second-generation immigrants. Their parents arrived in Italy from North Africa (especially Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia) and Central Africa (especially Cameroon and Congo) years ago. Some of the young people still do not have Italian citizenship. According to our interviewees, the participants of the sessions live in a marginalised neighbourhood of the city, were committing petty crimes (e.g., shoplifting, minor theft) and usage of illegal drugs can be observed.

Activities

During the sessions, members of GEA Coop Sociale organised sports – primarily football and sometimes basketball – activities as "young people love sport, they share this passion, so thus we can catch and involve them. Sport is the entry point. They are hooked by sport". Due to this common interest, youngsters with different cultural, religious and demographical backgrounds (e.g. participants from North Africa and Central Africa, Christians and Muslims, boys and girls, teenagers and younger kids) can take part in the very same activities. The facilitators of the sports activities identified some very specific aims that they took into consideration during the preparation and implementation of the sessions. They wanted to achieve the following aim. First, through the planned activities, they aimed to boost cooperation and collaboration between group members. To this end, facilitators established special rules to as well encourage the participation of those teammates who are usually left out of the game (e.g., girls, younger kids, weaker players). For example: if a goal can be scored only if a player passes the ball to another teammate, there is more chance for enhancing the cooperation between the participants. As one of the NGO members put it:

> „We did some activities in which they had to help each other and respectfully work with each other. For example…. you know, how teenage boys relate to girls. They do not let them participate in the game and they do not want to handle them in an equal manner. So, we did some team-building activities. They needed each other to get the result."

Second, they sought to support the young people to widen their scope by introducing them to perspectives and ideas that were not typical in the local neighbourhood. To do so, several spontaneous discussions were facilitated during the sessions about topics that were interesting and even topical for the participants. In addition, some specific topics were raised by the NGO members themselves; e.g. about racist incidents or famous footballers who could be role models for the young people (as these football stars also grew up in disadvantaged neighbourhoods but became successful and famous later on).

Finally, the facilitators were committed to working together with the young people as equal partners. As one facilitator underlined, the activities were organized "not for them but with them. We could organize the session together. If they wanted to change something, they could. It was OK. It was important to provide them with a choice and the possibility to actively contribute to our sessions".

Outcomes

The interviewees reported on some of the observed outcomes of the sporting events. Trust evolved between the young people and GEA Coop Sociale, although, "our organisation was perceived as an authority and they were a bit uninterested at the beginning of our program but they started to open up and share their own stories after a while." The facilitators managed to create a safe environment, where different ideas, dilemmas and questions could be raised without any negative consequences. Therefore, the supportive image of GEA Coop Sociale was reinforced – this is a crucial benefit for the organisation that tries to build stronger relationships with the local residents. Overall, the sessions were held in a good atmosphere while participants could get to know each other and were able to work well together – even though they occasionally left their peers out of the game and did not show support to each other all the time.

In addition, participants demonstrated behaviour change as a result of the project. During the first sessions they "were rude with each other and dominant things were going on" but towards the last sessions „they slowly started to accept the other youngsters as equal persons". Showing more respect proved that group cohesion became stronger among the participants. Due to these positive changes, facilitators could spend less and less time handling conflicts and disagreements. At the same time, they had more opportunities to engage young people in discussions where they could not only understand other perspectives but talk about the sources, the mechanism and impacts of inequality, racism, and homophobia.

Findings

Each of the NGOs developed a unique way in which they used sports to engage the kids and youngsters in their sessions. Sports can either be used as a hook to attract participants and keep them engaged while the sports

sessions are complemented by coaching sessions focused on further social development work with the participants. Or it can be used for its own value in terms of the social development of the participants. In some cases, the sport fulfils both roles at the same time. In the project, two NGOs used sport as the dominant form of working with the participants. The Czech NGO "Fotbal pro rozvoj" employed the Football3 method with specific rules codeveloped by the participants. The Hungarian "Subjective Values Foundation" used capoeira training, in which the specific characteristics of this martial art were supposed to support the development of different social skills among the kids. The Polish "Fundacja dla Wolności" and the Italian "GEA Coop Sociale" complimented the sports sessions with other coaching sessions that further worked with the participants in terms of building their resilience and educating them.

There is a basic distinction between sports activities used as part of a diversion-based intervention or as part of social development ("sport-plus"). While in the first case, the sport helps to prevent deviance on part of the children in the short-term by engaging them in a controlled and safe environment where the bad influences on them can be kept in check, the other strives for a longer-term sustained impact in terms of social development. Only the Czech NGO mentioned explicitly the potential diversion-based role of their sessions, even though this link is rarely possible to back by evidence since you cannot prove something that "did not happen" – as is also the case in preventing violent extremism. Therefore, we could observe the greatest impact in the realm of social development in terms of changes in attitudes, behaviour, or skills of the youngsters.

As described above, the sport can have a positive impact on preventing violent extremism in five zones: (1) Safe spaces and social safety, (2) Social inclusion, (3) Education, (4) Resilience and (5) Empowerment (UNODC 2020). Positive outcomes were observed across all those areas with the greatest impact at the level of creating safe spaces, fostering social inclusion, and potentially building the resilience of the children and youngsters.

The trainers most strongly expressed the idea that the sessions they organised helped to create a **safe space.** In this space, the participants gradually built trust toward each other, they were free to express their ideas and share their emotions and fears or even work out any tension or conflict while knowing that this will not result in any negative consequences. In this area, it was also easiest to measure the change since the trainers could clearly see the progress from the initial shyness or even mistrust toward feeling safe and welcomed. The sessions also helped to increase the participants' **inclusion**. This showed in the new friendships made, cooperation, empathy, respect paid

to each other and lack of discrimination. The trainers believed that the participants were able to gradually develop a sense of community and belonging. However, it needs to be emphasized that the progress in those areas of extremism prevention, has been closely related to the time and space dimension of the conducted activities and it is not possible to evaluate their longer-lasting impact especially if the common get-togethers discontinue in the future. In this sense, one of the trainers emphasised the need for continuous long-term engagement of the youngsters to achieve any lasting change. In any case, even this short-term engagement should support the goal of crime prevention by diverting the attention of youngsters towards prosocial activities and positive experiences.

Important work has been done in terms of building the participants' **resilience**. Even though it is not possible to provide evidence proving an actual increase in their resilience, the activities were designed to teach them a set of social skills that in theory, should help to increase their resilience towards different pull factors of violent extremism to which they could be exposed in the future. Among those, the youngsters learned social skills in terms of communication, teamwork, solving conflicts and increasing their emotional intelligence. Ideally, the long-term impact of the project would result from this area of violent extremism prevention.

Finally, and importantly, the evaluation pointed to the **empowerment** of participants and a sense of ownership that they too often lacked in their interactions with schools and families. The trainers were able to achieve this effect by treating them as equal partners that always had a say in planning and conducting the sessions. For instance, the kids participated in planning the capoeira sessions in Hungary or they codeveloped rules for the football competition in the Czech Republic. On the other hand, the evaluation by the Subjective Values Foundation trainers showed that more sessions are needed to bring about an observable, positive change in the self-image of the children. Finally, the potential positive outcome in the field of **education** has been evaluated as part of A2.3 (see the previous chapter), since two of the NGOs worked with the same target group during the A2.2 and A2.3 phases.

Above the effects just described, the sport has brought along numerous benefits. First, it served as an important "hook" that attracted and kept the attention he young people. Second, the sport helped to alleviate the stress and make the participants feel more relaxed. Capoeira as the only example of martial art use showed other benefits in terms of cultivating in the children a sense of responsibility, respect and self-control, stamina, and a healthy lifestyle. In this sense, capoeira especially proved its positive role in engaging young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Different experiences also resulted from using collective

sports or sports based on individual participation and the level of competitiveness in those activities' design. Understandably, the football competition brought about some conflicts among the participants. However, the specific design of the Fooball3 method helped the participants work out those conflicts in a constructive way. In another case, throughout the capoeira sessions, the kids learned in time how to address the conflicts that arose among them by themselves. It is important to emphasize that the occurrence of conflict had a positive function in giving the children an opportunity to address the conflicts in a safe space and adopt skills in conflict resolution to be used in potential future conflict situations.

Recommendations

In practical terms, the NGOs offered several recommendations for any future conduct of similar activities. The most important advice was to organise as many sessions as possible ideally spanning over a period of even 6-12 months to build trust and achieve a more lasting positive effect of the activities. Next, the trainers called for inviting participants of diverse socioeconomic, cultural, or religious backgrounds as exemplified by the following citation of one of the trainers:

"middle-class people can meet young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to strengthen links between different social groups. Because if you always put Gypsy kids together with Gypsy kids in capoeira and middle-class kids with middle-class kids, you're not helping to end segregation, you're effectively maintaining two bubbles."

Moreover, one case revealed that gathering people who have no previous knowledge of each other could be beneficial as the previous friendships brought along pre-existing conflicts and tensions that had to be addressed during the sessions.

The specificity of the capoeira sessions led to other recommendations such as the need to develop simple and easy-to-understand exercises that would be also gradually complemented by new exercises to make the sessions interesting or only start the exercise when everybody understands the rules. The choice of the trainers has been also crucial for they had to relate to the children they were working with:

"Have this underlying respect for other people. Even if they are thirty years younger and socially disadvantaged. He/she should be able to see the value and dare to say, I am learning something from these children."

Some of the trainers also offered some general recommendations that are in line with the overall project design such as using the sport as a hook to attract the attention of the youngsters and keep them engaged or combining them with workshops focused on developing different life skills such as communication or emotional intelligence.

Finally, as some of the NGOs also educated the participants on radicalisation, they recommended that due to the sensitivity of the topic, it might be preferable to approach it in terms such as exclusion, discrimination, or stereotypes, while completely avoiding the term radicalisation.

A3. Increase the resilience of youth from communities at risk

Introduction

The last phase of the YARSPE program consisted of 16 workshops and 16 coaching sessions that aimed at supporting young people to develop critical thinking and counter-narratives to extremism and discrimination that can lead to violent radicalisation. The trainers gave the participants references and contacts of support workers in case they are targeted by far-right groups or feel that a person close to them is vulnerable to radicalisation.

NGOs of the YARSPE involved young people who were socially vulnerable and faced difficulties in their everyday life because of various reasons, e.g. poor living environment, lack of parental care, ethnic background, refugee status and lack of access to services. Sports activities mainly consisted of football (in some cases volleyball) training and tournaments. Organisers often put emphasis on creating mixed teams so participants with different nationalities, ages, genders, and places of residence could play together. Following the activities, informal sessions and other leisure activities were also organised.

Methodology

Within the framework of the evaluation, a form (see: Annex) that combined closed and open-ended questions was given out to the partners, in order to make the assessment brief, and simple and give the opportunity for the NGOs to share their feedback with the evaluators in a short time. Trainers of the workshops and coaching sessions responded to the questions.

In the first part of the guideline, the trainers were asked to describe the changes that they managed to achieve through the activities. They were also asked for their subjective evaluation of what worked and what did not work during the coaching sessions and leisure activities while paying particular attention to the role played by sports activities in those achievements. In the second part, the interviewed trainers responded to several statements, that corresponded to the different elements of the social cohesion conceptualisation we have adopted.

Results

In a summary, we can conclude that the participating NGOs managed to achieve these positive changes:

- Relationships: young people with different nationalities, ages, genders, and places of residents created friendships. In some of the cases, strong bonds were formed between female participants and thus the dominant group dynamic of the boy football players was balanced during the sessions.

Participants in the activities could meet other young people and practitioners from non-disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g., sport club volunteers, rival football players) as well. Due to these meetings, rivalries and hostility that sometimes emerged at the beginning of the events changed to more friendly and tolerant attitudes.

- Openness towards participants with different backgrounds: according to one of the NGOs, young people became interested in the life situations and difficulties of other participants due to the regular meetings and open communication between each other.

- Awareness-raising on radicalisation and different forms of violence was achieved as well due to the various sport-related educational activities.

- Reflection skills: at the end of the sessions, some of the participants were able to provide a detailed description of their own behaviours, thoughts, attitudes, motivations, and desires. All in all, self-reflection skills were improved.

- Capacity-building: as one of the NGOs underlined, the workshops helped them to establish relationships with the local young people. As mutual trust evolved, the NGO will be able to organise some further activities in the future (even after the termination of the YARSPE program). In addition, some of the young people became more interested in actively contributing to the work of the specific NGO.

To summarise, we were able to observe a positive change in terms of creating a safe space for the participants, increasing social inclusion, and empowering them with new skills that could make them more resilient to violent extremism in the future. Again, it needs to be underlined, that for any lasting impact to be achieved and measured, the work with the young people should last for a longer time period.

As the trainers underlined, the sport had a crucial role in achieving the above-listed positive changes. First of all, football is one of the most played and popular sports activities among young people so it can be a perfect hook for them. In addition, young people with different experiences, knowledge and backgrounds can actively contribute and take part in joyful sports activities. Engagement in sports sessions can create opportunities for discussions and improve communication between participants; they can easily start conversations (for example about favourite teams, championships, etc.) and then delve into other (more personally related) topics. Thus, sports activities can help build relationships and encourage collaboration. As a consequence, sports can prevent conflicts (and support conflict resolutions), contribute to stronger social cohesion among the participants and eliminate stereotypes. Last but not least, taking part in the activities improves technical sports and further (e.g., working in a team, endurance) skills.

Recommendations

As the participating NGOs underlined, it is important to combine different activities: warm-up and team building should be organised as well before participants take part in any competitive programs. This way, tensions and fears can be eliminated and trust is developed among participants who might meet for the first time.

The work of mentors/educators is important as they are responsible for facilitating the events, working constructively with the emotions of the participants and handling conflicts. In addition, they can contribute to the creation of a safe space where the participants can honestly communicate with each other.

An NGO recommended working continuously with the target group as the one-off short events have only a smaller impact on the participants.

It is important to know well the neighbourhood where the events are organised to be able to bring in activities that are attractive and needed for the local residents. It is also recommended not to use difficult and complex definitions and expressions when presenting the program and discussing radicalisation. While talking about violence, different forms (e.g. hate speech, online violence etc.) of it should be also introduced.

Conclusion and discussion

The YARSPE project aimed at creating tools for coaches, teachers, and sports associations to prevent radicalisation among youth by collaborating with local organisations, institutions, and public authorities, and preventing discrimination and extremism of all forms by organising sports activities for young people at risk of different forms of radicalisation. As part of the project, educational workshops on radicalisation and the role of sport in preventing violent extremism for key actors working with youth (phase A2.1) and young people themselves (A2.2) were held. This theoretical knowledge was translated into practice by conducting coaching and leisure sessions for young people considered at risk of radicalisation (A2.3, A3), which relied heavily on sports activities and their integrational and broader social development functions. Throughout the project, when conducting the activities as well as evaluating them, we made every effort to ensure that participants were not harmed by labelling them as at risk and by them being perceived as singled out for intervention due to their socioeconomic background or minority status.

We used sports activities as the main element of the interventions conducted with the aim of increasing the resilience of the participants and thus preventing radicalisation into violent extremism. In theory, using sports in support of these goals works five ways. First, regular participation in sports activities provides young people with a safe space in which they are not only distanced from potentially troublesome situations and people but can also develop trust and confidence. Second, sport helps build the social inclusion of the participants by encouraging interaction between people with different backgrounds. Third, sports can be used as a hook to educate young people on different risks connected to radicalisation. Fourth, sports activities can be tailored to help the participants to develop certain skills that can increase their resilience to violent extremism by addressing the push as well as the pull factors of radicalisation. Finally, in the long term, young people can be empowered by either participation in sports activities itself or by gaining various life skills in less direct relation to those sports activities.

From the outset, we set a theory of change to guide our activities and their evaluation. The different work packages aimed to achieve the following outcomes: (1) increased knowledge and awareness of the phenomenon of radicalisation and the ways sport can be used to prevent radicalisation among actors working with youth (A2.1), increased knowledge and awareness of the phenomenon of radicalisation among young people (A2.2), increased social cohesion and inclusion of young people at risk of radicalisation (A2.3) and increased awareness of radicalisation, enhanced personal skills and empowerment of young people at risk including refugees/asylum seekers (A3.1, A3.2). Together and in the longer term, these outcomes should lead to increased community resilience as the final impact of the project.

We evaluated the first two parts of the project (A2.1, A2.2) through a questionnaire that probed into the participants' subjective evaluation of how the workshops increased their knowledge of the topic of radicalisation as well as a set of statements including several common myths related to radicalisation. While for A2.2 due to the sensitivity of the topic we only measured the level of awareness/knowledge after the workshop, for A2.1 we were able to measure this level before and after the intervention which provided us with more valid data. It showed that the participants (key actors working with youth) already had some knowledge on the topic of radicalisation beforehand, but after the workshop, they perceived they had increased awareness of the factors and spaces that contribute to radicalisation as well as of the warnings signs of radicalisation and they also expressed greater knowledge of how sport can contribute to preventing radicalisation. In the other part of the survey, we were able to confirm the actual change in knowledge using several statements on radicalisation. In comparison with the survey distributed before the workshop, the measurement conducted after the workshop showed that the participants had greater knowledge of the push and pull factors of radicalisation and were more able to refute the myths related to radicalisation that generally hamper the effort to probably understand and address this complex phenomenon.

The most important work has been done as part of the coaching and leisure activities working directly with young people considered at risk of radicalisation (A2.3 and A3). The composition of the target groups as well as the activities through which they were engaged were quite diverse across the four countries. They are described in more detail in the respective chapters summarising findings of the A2.3 and A3 phases. Evaluation of this phase helped us to assess the actual contribution of sport in achieving

outcomes conducive to addressing the push and pull factors of radicalisation. While in the theory of change we put the most emphasis on increased resilience as the desired impact of the intervention, the evaluation showed that in the challenging field of radicalisation prevention, it might only be feasible to measure change at the level of outcomes. Although not mentioned specifically in our theory of change, the evaluation showed that the single most important outcome was the ability of the trainers to create a safe space in which the young people could express themselves freely without fear and judgment as they developed trust towards each other. There was a positive change observed in terms of increased social inclusion that showed in the friendships developed, cooperation, empathy and lack – or gradual decrease – of discrimination and exclusion among the participants. We emphasised that these recorded changes are closely related to the time and space dimensions of the activities and we cannot automatically assume their duration in a longer time horizon. Importantly, although the activities were also designed to instil certain life skills in the participants and make them feel heard and empowered, we were not able to measure the outcomes at the level of increased empowerment and resilience of the youngsters during the course of the project, since longer engagement is required to achieve and observe these changes.

The use of sports activities was essential to achieve the above-listed outcomes. Our project was consistent with the social development approach – known also as "sport-plus" – in which it is recognized that participating in sports activities can directly help to increase the social development of the person. At the same time, sports can be used as a hook to attract and engage the participants with which the trainers then work on the development of various skills and knowledge outside of the sports activities themselves. The four NGOs used different sports with each bringing its own benefits for the participants as well as its own challenges for the trainers.

Several fundamental recommendations emerge from the project, which should be taken into account in order to increase the effectiveness of future programs aimed at preventing radicalization through sport. The most important one is to strive for long-term engagement with the participants instead of time-bound projects for which it can be challenging to achieve and measure the desired longer-lasting effect. Another recommendation relates to participants' recruitment. It is advisable to recruit a diverse group of people to avoid further isolation of young people from communities considered disadvantaged or at risk of radicalisation. It might also be beneficial if they have no previous knowledge of each other since they can bring with them pre-existing conflicts and tensions to the program. The work with the youngsters should be well embedded in the local context where knowledge is essential. This embedding in the local context also increases the chances of a long-term engagement with the young people and thus greater effectiveness in terms of achieving lasting impact. Finally, when educating the participants on radicalisation, the trainers advised them not to use complex and difficult definitions and opted for more accessible concepts and language. It may be appropriate to avoid the term radicalization altogether and work with discrimination or exclusion instead as the breeding ground of violent extremism.

To sum up, the project findings are consistent with the existing knowledge on the relationship between sport and radicalization prevention. Sports activities bring along numerous benefits that can be mobilised to further the social development goals of young people that can be at risk of radicalisation and thus address the different push and pull factors of radicalisation. Even in a shorter period of time, skilful trainers might be able to create safe spaces for the youngsters they are working with and increase their social inclusion with the help of different sports. On the other hand, any lasting impact in terms of increased social inclusion, empowerment and resilience requires long-term engagement and dedication by the trainers knowledgeable of the local context and ideally enjoying support or their local communities and authorities.

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Annexes

Survey before the workshop

Assessment for the "Youth Anti Radicalisation through Sport in Europe" program

This questionnaire was set up within the framework of the "Youth Anti Radicalisation through Sport in Europe" program, to assess the impact of the workshops that are organised by the participating organisations and that you will participate in. Please answer each question/statement as honestly as possible. All answers are confidential and your anonymity is guaranteed. We very much appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey!

1. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

(Scale, **1=Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree**)

☐ I understand what the term radicalisation means.

☐ I know what factors make a person vulnerable to radicalisation.

☐ I know in what spaces a person is vulnerable towards ideas of violent extremism.

☐ I am aware of the warning signs to watch for that could indicate that a person is on the path towards radicalisation.

☐ I understand the ways sports can contribute to radicalisation prevention.

2. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements!

(Scale, **1=Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree**)

☐ In most cases, radicalization in the Western world results from the brainwashing of vulnerable youth by religious preachers or charismatic leaders.

☐ A single factor (cause) can explain a person's radicalization into violent extremism.

☐ Radicalization into violent extremism may be caused by a person's need of belonging somewhere.

☐ In most cases, terrorist attacks in the Western world are perpetrated by foreigners.

☐ Religious beliefs and practices are the direct cause of a person's propensity for violence.

☐ Discrimination and marginalization of a minority group in a society increase the risk of its members' vulnerability towards radicalization.

☐ Radicalization is largely associated with severe mental illness.

☐ Young people may radicalize if they believe their societal group (white race, Muslim community or other) is under threat.

☐ People are also drawn to violent extremism in search of positive factors, such as fame and adventure.

☐ Women are almost never radicalized into violent extremism.

Finally, we have some questions about yourself

3. What is your age?

☐ 18-24 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 44-64

☐ 25-34 ☐ 45-54 ☐ Above 65

4. How would you describe your gender?

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other

5. In the past, have you attended any educational activity (online or offline lectures, seminars, workshops etc.) on radicalisation?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. In the past, have you searched for and gained information on the phenomenon of radicalisation out of your personal educational or professional interest?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Please use this space for additional comments for program staff.

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Thank you for your support!

Annexe | Questionnaire of A2.1

Survey after the workshop

Feedback form

Thank you for attending the workshop held on XX day YY month 2021 under the "Youth Anti Radicalisation through Sport in Europe" program.

Please take a moment to complete this brief survey to help us improve our future training. The anonymity of your responses is guaranteed.

Workshop outcomes

1. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

(Scale, **1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree**)

☐ After this workshop, I have a better understanding of the phenomenon of radicalisation.

☐ The workshop increased my awareness of the factors that make a person more susceptible towards radicalisation (push and pull factors).

☐ The workshop increased my awareness of the signs that may indicate a person is already on the path towards radicalisation.

☐ The workshop helped me to understand the role of sport as a tool to prevent radicalisation.

☐ After this workshop, I have a better understanding of the ways through which to support and empower young people so that they are less vulnerable to radicalisation.

Overall meeting feedback

2. What is your overall assessment of the event?

(Scale, **1=insufficient, 5=excellentv**) ☐

3. What did you like about the workshop?

4. What did you dislike about the workshop?

5. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

(Scale, **1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree**)

- ☐ The workshop met my expectations.
- ☐ The workshop was well organised.
- ☐ The instructions received before the workshop were sufficient.
- ☐ The objective of the workshop was clear.
- ☐ The content was easy to understand.
- ☐ The workshop had a clear structure.
- ☐ The workshop format encouraged interaction and discussion.
- ☐ The learning methods (a mix of presentation and group activities) were suitable.
- ☐ The length of the workshop was adequate for the topic and objectives.
- ☐ The presenter was well prepared.

6. Do you have any further comments or suggestions for improvement?

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Thank you for your feedback!

Annexe | Questionnaire of A2.1

The survey filled out one month after the workshop

Assessment for the "Youth Anti Radicalisation through Sport in Europe" program

This questionnaire was set up within the framework of the "Youth Anti Radicalisation through Sport in Europe" program, to assess the impact of the workshops that are organised by the participating organisations and that you will participate in. The questionnaire will help us to evaluate, how the workshop you attended on DD. MM. 2021 contributed to the achievement of our goals.

Please answer each question/statement as honestly as possible. All answers are confidential and your anonymity is guaranteed. We very much appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey!

1. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

(Scale, **1=Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree**)

- ☐ I understand what the term radicalisation means.

- ☐ I know what factors make a person vulnerable to radicalisation.

- ☐ I know in what spaces a person is vulnerable towards ideas of violent extremism.

- ☐ I am aware of the warning signs to watch for that could indicate that a person is on the path towards radicalisation.

- ☐ I understand the ways sports can contribute to radicalisation prevention.

2. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

(Scale, **1=Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree**)

- ☐ In most cases, radicalization in the Western world results from the brainwashing of vulnerable youth by religious preachers or charismatic leaders.

- ☐ A single factor (cause) can explain a person's radicalization into violent extremism.

- ☐ Radicalization into violent extremism may be caused by a person's need of belonging somewhere.

- ☐ In most cases, terrorist attacks in the Western world are perpetrated by foreigners.

- ☐ Religious beliefs and practices are the direct cause of a person's propensity for violence.

- ☐ Discrimination and marginalization of a minority group in a society increase the risk of its members' vulnerability towards radicalization.

- ☐ Radicalization is largely associated with severe mental illness.

- ☐ Young people may radicalize if they believe their societal group (white race, Muslim community or other) is under threat.

- ☐ People are also drawn to violent extremism in search of positive factors, such as fame and adventure.

- ☐ Women are rarely radicalized into violent extremism.

Finally, we have some questions about yourself

3. What is your age?

☐ 18-24   ☐ 35-44   ☐ 44-64

☐ 25-34   ☐ 45-54   ☐ Above 65

4. How would you describe your gender?

☐ Male   ☐ Female   ☐ Other

5. In the past, have you attended any educational activity (online or offline lectures, seminars, workshops etc.) on radicalisation?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

6. In the past, have you searched for and gained information on the phenomenon of radicalisation out of your personal educational or professional interest?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

7. Please use this space for additional comments for program staff.

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Thank you for your support!

Annexe | Questionnaire of A2.2

Assessment for the "Youth Anti Radicalisation through Sport in Europe" program

This questionnaire was set up as part of the workshop on radicalisation organised by NAME OF THE NGO that you have participated in. In the survey, you will answer a set of questions that will help us to evaluate the impact of the workshop. The anonymity of your responses is fully guaranteed which means that we do not ask for your name in the questionnaire. We very much appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey!

1. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

(Scale, **1=Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree**)

☐ The workshop helped me to understand what radicalisation means.

☐ The workshop helped me to understand what factors make a person vulnerable to radicalisation.

☐ The workshop made me aware of spaces in which people are most exposed towards ideas of violent extremism.

☐ The workshop made me aware of the warning signs to watch for that could indicate that a person is on the path towards radicalisation.

☐ The workshop helped me to understand the ways sports can contribute to radicalisation prevention.

2. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

(Scale, **1=Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree**)

☐ In most cases, terrorist attacks in Western countries are perpetrated by foreigners (people with different citizenship than that of the country, in which the attack took place).

☐ Religious beliefs and practices are the direct cause of a person's willingness to use violence.

☐ Discrimination and feelings of exclusion of a minority group in a society increase the risk of its members' radicalization.

☐ Radicalization into violent extremism may be caused by a person's need of belonging somewhere (to have a group of friends/peers with shared interests).

☐ People are never drawn to violent extremism in search of positive emotions and experiences, such as fame or adventure.

☐ Women are rarely radicalized into violent extremism.

☐ Stereotypes and prejudices about a social group (e.g. migrants, ethnic groups) can be a breeding ground for violent extremism.

☐ Certain places, such as cyberspace, religious sites, or football stadiums, pose a greater risk of radicalisation by exposing a person to ideas or actions of violent extremism.

☐ Engaging in sports activities can help mitigate some of the risk factors that make a person more susceptible to radicalisation (such as feelings of exclusion or belonging nowhere).

Finally, we have some questions about yourself

3. What is your age?

[   ]

4. How would you describe your gender?

☐ Male   ☐ Female   ☐ Other

5. You can use this space if you have any additional comments for the program staff.

[   ]

Thank you for your support!

A. Please, give me a description of the way the participants were involved. What do we know about young people? How would you describe them (age, socioeconomic background etc.)? Why did you involve these (and not other) young people? Did the participants know each other before the activities started?

B. Please, describe the activities that were organized within the framework of A2.3. What were the aims of these activities?

C. What did you manage to achieve? How do you think you have achieved the observed changes (positive outcomes at the behavioural level)? (What worked? What did not work?)

D. What role do you think sports activities played in achieving the positive changes you observed?

E. To what extent do you agree with the following statements based on your observation of the group participants in the course of the activities?

(1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree.

The participants:

- [ ] got to know each other well
- [ ] showed support to each other / treated everyone equally
- [ ] worked well together (cooperated to achieve common goals)
- [ ] had fun with each other + were in good mood (Facial expressions: if they are laughing and smiling a lot)
- [ ] did not leave anyone out
- [ ] were able to work out the conflicts and disagreements among participants
- [ ] interacted beyond the planned events (as part of the YARSPE project)
- [ ] became (good) friends
- [ ] attended the events regularly

Have you observed any of the following behaviour? (If yes, can you elaborate on this observation?)

- [ ] lack of cooperation
- [ ] tension or conflict among the participants
- [ ] bullying or any form of discrimination (leaving someone out)
- [ ] selfishness
- [ ] participant/s stopped attending or did not attend all events
- [ ] display of negative emotions (anger, anxiety...) (based on body language, facial expressions, behaviour)

F. What would you recommend to other NGOs? How should they prepare and implement similar activities?

YOUTH ANTI RADICALISATION THROUGH SPORT IN EUROPE (YARSPE)

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