

ID TALKS!

This ID Talks series will look into the concept of social sport - what it means, why it is important and how it promotes inclusion, social cohesion and skills development.



ID Talks:

SOCIAL SPORT
SPORT IN THE CITY
SPORT THROUGH CIRCUS
SPORT FOR INTEGRATION
SPORT FOR LGBTIQ+ INCLUSION

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EUROPEAN
SOLIDARITY
CORPS



Erasmus+

ABOUT SALTO

...‘Support and **A**dvanced **L**earning and **T**raining **O**pportunities within the Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes’. The European Commission has created a network of seven SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres to enhance the implementation of the EU Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes, which provide young people with valuable non-formal learning experiences.

SALTO’s aim is to support the implementation of the European Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps Programmes with regard to priorities such as Social Inclusion, Diversity, Participation, and Solidarity. SALTO also supports co-operation with regions such as EuroMed, South-East Europe, or Eastern Europe and The Caucasus and coordinates all training and co-operation activities, as well as information tools for National Agencies.

In these European priority areas, SALTO-YOUTH provides resources, information, and training for National Agencies and European youth workers. Most of these resources are offered and disseminated at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net. Find online the [European Training Calendar](#), the [Toolbox for Training and Youth Work](#), the database of youth field trainers active at the European level ([Trainers Online for Youth or TOY](#)), links to online resources, and much more.

SALTO-YOUTH actively co-operates with other actors in the European youth field, among them the National Agencies of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum, European youth workers and trainers, and training organisers.

THE SALTO-YOUTH INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY RESOURCE CENTRE WWW.SALTO-YOUTH.NET/INCLUSION/

The SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion and Diversity Resource Centre (based in Belgium Flanders) works together with the European Commission to support the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in the Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes. Through that, it works to contribute to social cohesion in society at large. SALTO Inclusion and Diversity also supports the National Agencies and youth workers in their inclusion work by providing training, developing youth work methods, disseminating information via the newsletter, etc. By offering opportunities for training, exchange, and reflection on inclusion practice and diversity management, SALTO Inclusion & Diversity works towards the visibility, accessibility, and transparency of its inclusion & diversity work and resources, and towards making ‘inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities’ and ‘positive diversity management’ a widely supported priority.

For more information and resources, have a look at the Inclusion & Diversity pages at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/



DISCLAIMER

This magazine contains pictures as a result of the Graphic Recording which is an integral part of all the ID Talks events. There are four types of styles throughout the whole magazine.

- **General Cover Picture.** It is used for promotional reasons throughout the social media channels and the dissemination materials and it depicts the logo of SALTO Inclusion & Diversity, the title, and the graphic elements of each version of the ID Talks events. It is displayed as a cover picture of each ID Talks version.
- **Portrait of Speaker.** It depicts each speaker and a few graphic recording elements such as written parts of their "speech" and/or any other graphics according to the style of each ID Talks version. It is displayed on top of the speaker's description page.
- **Main Graphic Recording Card.** It is used for promotional reasons throughout the social media channels and the dissemination materials and it depicts the logo of SALTO Inclusion & Diversity, the title, and the graphic elements of each version of the ID Talks events, including the specific name of the event, the portrait of the speaker, written quotes of their "speech" and/or any other graphics. It is displayed on top of the first page of each article.
- **Graphic Recording Elements.** Throughout each article, the graphic recording elements complement the text with essential parts of each speaker's "talk".



I & D Talks

“Social Sport”

What is it all about?

“ID Talks” is a series of 5 online workshops on 5 major topics to promote inclusion & diversity (ID) and quality youth work. It features youth workers, professionals and volunteers, from all over the world to share insights, research findings, food for thought, good practices or inspirational stories. They will guide participants through the pressing matters and challenges affecting Inclusion & Diversity and inspire them to make their programmes and organisations more inclusive, embrace human differences, look ahead and picture how the future of youth work and Inclusion & Diversity might be.

Each workshop begins with an input from a guest speaker. Afterwards, participants have the opportunity to engage in the discussion, ask questions and share about their own realities and experiences.

For whom?

- Youth workers, youth leaders, professionals and volunteers involved in ID in the EU youth programmes, as well as all those interested in youth work and inclusion & diversity topics.

Why should you join?

- Get food for thought and learn from inspirational ID stories.
- Learn about ID topics from the youth work sector and beyond.
- Get information, inspiration, methods to help the youth sector address ID.
- Put some more quality in your (international) youth work.
- Identify and learn how to tackle existing and future challenges within ID.



Event Dates:

- 9 September (13h CET) > **ID Talks Social Sport** - What is social sport? What are its most important elements and what can it achieve? How can social sport boost inclusion? How does it link to youth work, to developing identities and communities and to active participation? What are the youth and sport strands of the Erasmus+ programme and what is the YouSports National Agency cooperation in brief? In this opening talk, we will be setting the scene for the "social sport" season of ID Talks, creating a common understanding of important notions and frameworks. Guest speaker: **Oscar Coppieters**, City Pirates, Belgium.
- 23 September (13h CET) > **ID Talks Sport in the City** - How to reach out to young people and bring them on board? What methods could be used to engage youth in skills and project development? How does sport help young people unlock their potential? Why is it important to have meaningful collaboration with the business sector? And what opportunities can national policies on social sport provide? Join us to discover the stories of Sport dans la Ville about social sport in disadvantaged urban areas. Guest speakers: **Pauline Le Dizes, Magali Malherbe & Mohamed-Aziz Arafa**, Sportdanslaville, France.
- 7 October (13h CET) > **ID Talks Sport through Circus** - What is social circus and how can it become a safe space for people with fewer opportunities, especially in conflict areas and devastated communities? What is the public perception of social circus and how can you go beyond circus clichés or negative stereotypes? What impact does it have on young people and the wider community? In this talk, the Palestinian Circus School will share about their social programme that uses social circus to engage marginalised groups, such as women and people with disabilities. Guest speaker: **Mohammad Rabah**, The Palestinian circus school, Palestine.
- 21 October (13h CET) > **ID Talks Sport for Integration** - Why is sport a good tool for integration across cultures, countries and continents? How can sport serve as a universal language for communication? What is the added value of using Erasmus+ and working on this topic internationally? What are the main challenges and key outcomes? In this talk, we will learn about the projects of V4Sport Foundation and how they use sport to engage the most vulnerable groups, such as young Ukrainian refugees, in the local community in Poland. Guest speaker: **Jakub Kalinowski**, V4Sport Foundation, Poland.
- 4 November (13h CET) > **ID Talks Sport for LGBTIQ+ Inclusion** - How can social sport help in creating safer spaces? How can sport be used to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity (SOGI)? What are the benefits for LGBTIQ+ people, as well as the wider community? What are the possible challenges? This talk will highlight tools and activities by LEAP Sports Scotland where social sport is used for greater inclusion of queer people. Guest speaker: **Hugh Torrance**, LEAP Sports, Scotland

Social Sport

What is social sport? What are its most important elements and what can it achieve? How can social sport boost inclusion?



GUEST SPEAKER: OSCAR COPPIETERS

Oscar Coppieters is an expert in social sports, which uses sports as a tool at the grassroots level for community development, competence development, and the creation of social capital. He has a vast European and Mediterranean network of social organisations working with young people, whereby he runs international projects in Erasmus+ Youth and Sport.



Article

Oscar Coppieters



Growing up in Europe means navigating a complex web of identities, cultures, and socio-economic realities. While our societies are rich in dynamism, they are equally defined by deep structural fractures. For many young people—particularly those from racialized backgrounds, lower socio-economic brackets, or marginalized neighborhoods—traditional institutions do not always offer a safe and effective support system. Formal systems like education, bureaucratic social services, and rigid youth structures are not always able to create a sense of belonging and psychological safety, which is an important condition for young people to develop themselves into strong individuals within a society.

How do we break through these systemic gridlocks when the traditional playbook fails? When ability, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and class become barriers rather than celebrated facets of identity?. If the system cannot reach youth where they are supposed to be, we must radically rethink how we build spaces that do.



This is where sport enters the arena. A ball doesn't ask for identity papers, language proficiency, or a clean behavioral record. It taps straight into intrinsic motivation of young people who want to play. Sport functions as a genuine "cool tool", plus young people are intrinsically motivated to play; the impulse comes from within, transforming demotivated young people into active, enthusiastic participants.



Yet sport alone is not a silver bullet. Within a deliberate non-formal learning framework, the urban pitch becomes an intentional pedagogical laboratory. Rooted in Harvard EASEL Lab's Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) domains—cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, character, and mindset—this approach aligns with European frameworks like Youthpass and YoCoMO. Coaches act as pedagogues through structured learning workshops and live micro-interventions, pausing gameplay to, say, unpack conflict and build socio-emotional skills in real time. By taking this conscious position as a pedagogue, the sports field becomes a learning environment for all types of transferable competences.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT — through — ROLE-MODELING

A skill mastered in a sports environment does not automatically transfer into the classroom, the family home, or the workplace; without deliberate pedagogical facilitation, what happens on the pitch stays on the pitch. The bridge between physical play and real-world transformation is a conscious shift in the conceptualization of sport from competitive to the social realm. Sport pedagogues do not rely on accidental personal development of young people; they build structured mechanisms of transfer directly into the rhythm of the session. Through intentional debriefs, guided questioning, and/or structured reflection circles right after a high-stakes drill or match, coaches challenge participants to decode their own behavior and draw transferable insights to real life. By naming and reframing these athletic moments, abstract competencies become tangible.

SPORT AS A GATEWAY

- 1 TO BUILD INCLUSIVE SPACES FOR ALL
- 2 TO BUILD COMPETENCES TO TRANSFER TO OTHER LIFE DOMAINS



INTENTIONALLY
USING SPORT
FOR LEARNING
& DEVELOPMENT

Beyond sports on the field, the grassroots sports organization can operate as an emotional anchor—an authentic "Third Place" distinct from the domestic pressures of home and the potentially negative connotation of school or work. For youth facing structural exclusion, this type of safe space provides an unconditional place where young people are able to land and feel belonging. Within these shared spaces, young people develop community and bonding social capital. Peers who might otherwise navigate the urban jungle in defensive isolation discover a shared collective identity bound by sweat, mutual trust, and collective purpose. The locker room and the edges of the pitch transform into communal living rooms. By cultivating deep horizontal ties among peers and mentors who share similar lived realities, the community builds a collective shield against social alienation, establishing a sense of belonging that serves as the essential bedrock for all subsequent personal growth.



While bonding social capital provides a vital emotional anchor, self-contained communities risk becoming isolated if they lack outward pathways. To generate lasting social capital and foster social mobility, the sports community must act as a network organization, connecting to larger society. The trusting relationships built between youth, mentors, and coaches become direct linkages to external institutions: local schools, vocational training programs, municipal youth services, health professionals, future employers, et cetera. These vertical bridges demystify the unfamiliar codes of the professional world, dismantle mutual distrust between institutional actors and grassroots youth, and ensure that the confidence gained on the concrete pitch translates into actionable opportunities within the wider social fabric.



A sustainable sports ecosystem cannot depend indefinitely on external interventions; its ultimate strength lies in organic leadership development. Borrowing from the pedagogical genius of the traditional Scouts model, the trajectory of a young person evolves along a continuous progression from participant to volunteer, and ultimately to community leader. A good practice is Tøyen Academy in Oslo, Norway. In the initial phase, the young person arrives simply to play, benefiting from the structure and psychological safety provided by others. Over time, deliberate pedagogical encouragement invites them to take up micro-responsibilities—refereeing a youth match, setting up equipment, or mentoring a newcomer. This gradual shift unlocks agency and ownership. The youth cease to be passive consumers of services and become co-creators of the community space. The next step is to become a sportive coach. Because these emerging leaders share the exact cultural codes, neighborhood nuances, and lived experiences of the newer generation, they become authentic role models. Their leadership proves to the next generation that growth, responsibility, and civic power are not abstract ideals imported from the outside, but real pathways accessible right where they stand. Eventually, the graduated sport choaches can become genuine community leaders.



PARTICIPANT > VOLUNTEER > ROLE MODEL > LEADER →

Grassroots, pedagogical social sport is a high potential social infrastructure that demands serious, long-term (public and private) capital. Framed through the lens of Social Return on Investment (SROI), every euro channeled into intentional community sport yields exponential returns across multiple policy domains: reduced mental healthcare expenditure, decreased reliance on juvenile justice interventions, enhanced school retention, and accelerated pathways into sustainable employment, to a name a few. Add the invaluable factor of strong social fabric in challenging neighborhoods, and you get a strong case for public funding. Remediating systemic failure after it manifests—through policing, incarceration, crisis healthcare, and chronic unemployment benefits—is astronomical in cost compared to early, community-anchored intervention. Intentional sport is not an act of pity; it is preventive, structural, and an economically wise decision. Investing in social sport professionals that run these concrete courts is not about funding games, but about financing resilience, civic cohesion, and sustainable futures.

SPORT is ...

- > FUN
- > INTRINSICALLY MOTIVATING
- > ACCESSIBLE
- > VOLUNTARY

IF THERE IS A TIME
TO DO YOUTH WORK
THROUGH SPORTS,
THE TIME IS NOW!



EDITORIAL INFORMATION

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On behalf of the SALTO Inclusion & Diversity!

