

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

Download this and other SALTO Inclusion & Diversity booklets for free at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/. This document does not necessarily reflect the official views of the European Commission, the SALTO Inclusion & Diversity Resource Centre or the organisation co-operating with them.



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 & 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

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?



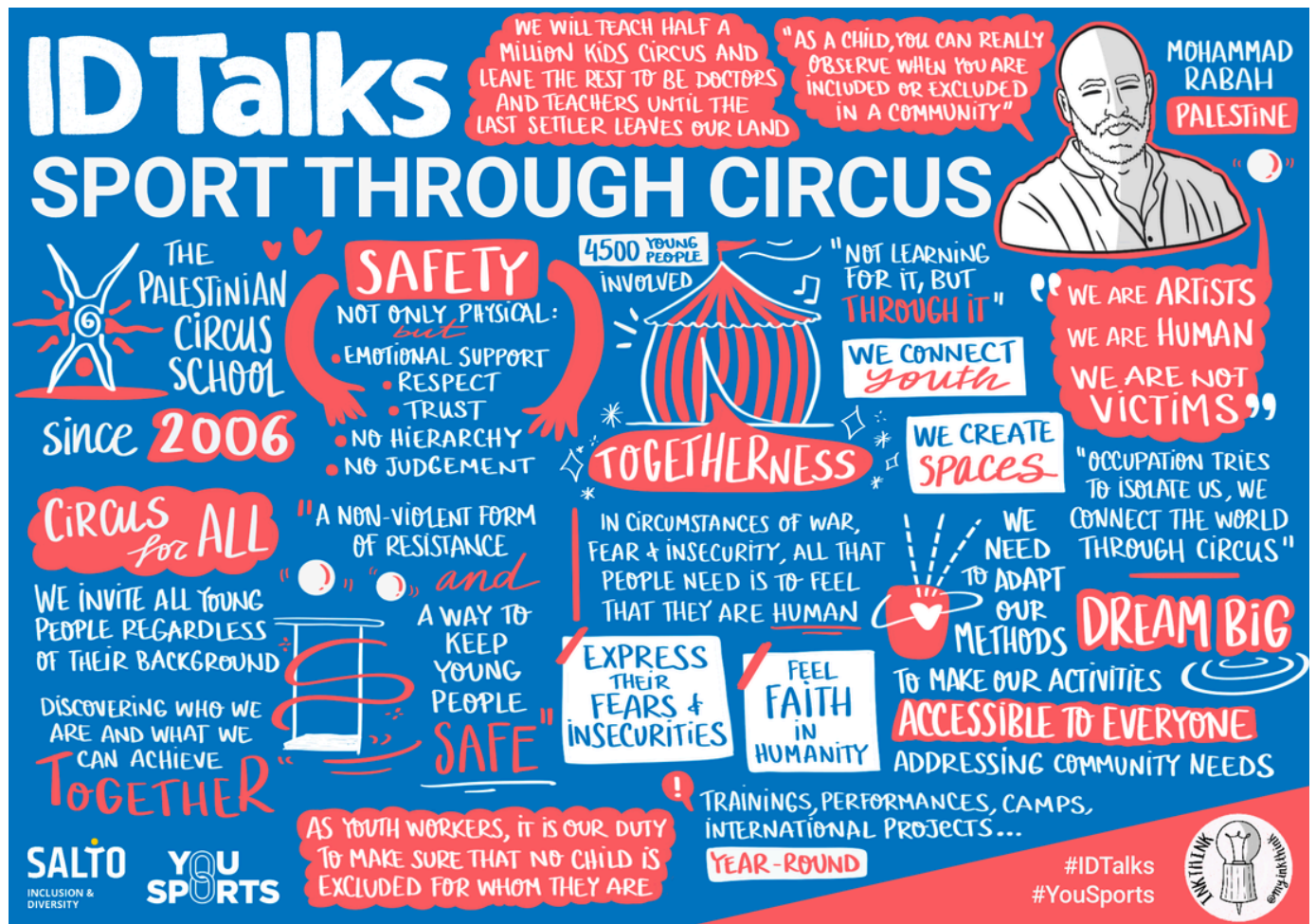
GUEST SPEAKER: MOHAMMAD RABAH

Mohammad Rabah is the Executive Director for the Palestinian Circus School and Co-Founder of the Palestinian role-playing organization Bait Byout. He is a Youth Work Specialist with a master's degree in Community and Youth Work from Durham University in the United Kingdom. Mohammad's professional expertise cover community and youth policy and practice, professional and personal development of young people, management in community settings, research in professional practice, and using non-formal learning tools, such as circus and role-playing games, to support the development of communities and young people.



Article

Mohammad Rabah



Nobody Loses: Social Circus as a Safe Space in Palestine

A group of children stands in a circle. One of them throws a ball, drops it, laughs, and picks it up again. Her trainer nods: try again. Ten minutes later she is juggling three. Nobody in the circle has lost anything. Everybody has gained something. That, in one small moment, is why we do circus.

Who we are

The Palestinian Circus was founded in 2006 and registered in 2007. Based in Birzeit, near Ramallah, we work across the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. Our work rests on three pillars: social circus with communities, development of the Palestinian circus artists, and professional productions that tour at home and abroad. In 2025 we worked with 4,506 participants, certified 96 trainers, and gave 103 performances to more than 28,000 audience members.



Why circus, and not only sport?

Sport has enormous power to bring young people together. But competitive formats also have a cost: someone wins, someone loses, and the young people who most need to belong are often the first to be left on the bench. Circus keeps what is valuable in sport (strength, coordination, discipline, teamwork) and removes the scoreboard.

WE WILL TEACH HALF A MILLION KIDS CIRCUS AND LEAVE THE REST TO BE DOCTORS AND TEACHERS UNTIL THE LAST SETTLER LEAVES OUR LAND

"AS A CHILD, YOU CAN REALLY OBSERVE WHEN YOU ARE INCLUDED OR EXCLUDED IN A COMMUNITY"



Four qualities make circus especially strong as a tool for inclusion:

- Trust is built in the body. In partner acrobatics you literally hold someone up. Trust is experienced physically before it is put into words, which matters for young people who have learned that the world is not safe.
- Failure is normal and safe. Every juggler drops the ball hundreds of times. Falling and trying again becomes ordinary, and with it comes a sense of control and progress.
- There are many ways to shine. Juggling, balance, aerial, clowning, acrobatics: a participant who struggles with one discipline can excel in another. This is what makes mixed-ability groups work.
- Performance gives voice. When a group performs for its community, participants are no longer seen as “the girls who shouldn’t be doing this” or “the boy with a disability”. They are artists being applauded.



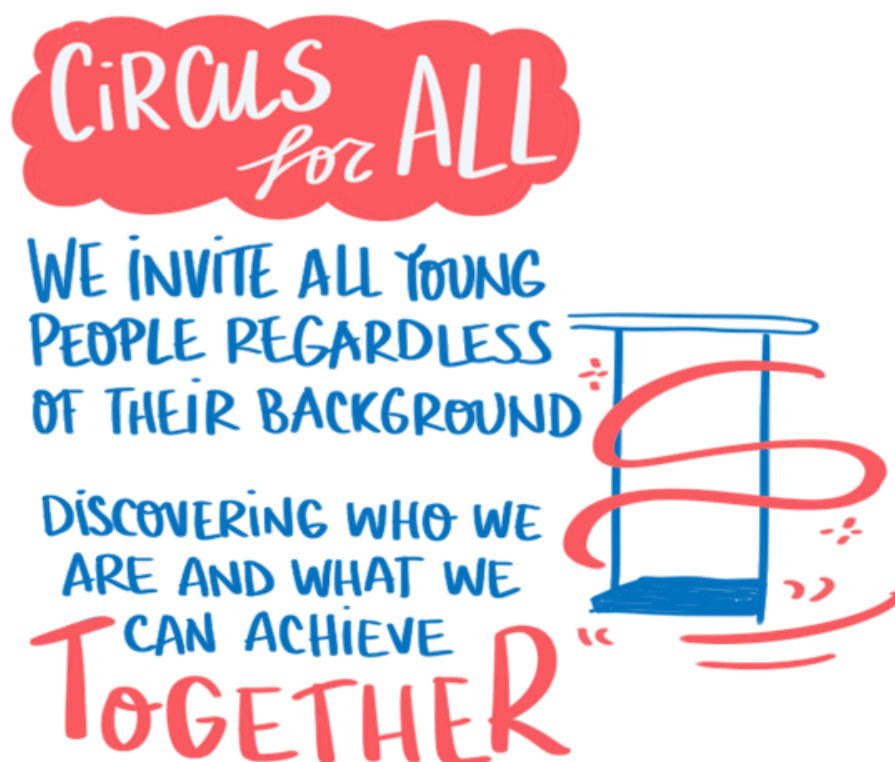
Three groups, three approaches

Women and girls. In many communities, families are cautious about girls taking part in physical, public activities. We work gradually: female trainers, locations families trust, closed groups where needed, and parents invited from the start. Training women as circus trainers is central, because a young woman leading a session changes what girls in the room believe is possible. The first performance is often the turning point; hesitation becomes pride.

People with disabilities and mental health needs. Circus can be adapted to almost any body and pace. We set individual goals, keep groups small, and plan sessions together with specialists from partner centres, schools and associations who know the participants well. Our approach links circus with wellbeing and psychosocial support, so that the focus is not on what someone cannot do, but on what they discover they can.

Children living with crisis. Through psychosocial safe spaces, our mobile circus tent and sessions in communities across the West Bank, we bring structured, joyful activity to children whose daily lives are shaped by uncertainty. In Gaza, our work continues through local circus groups and trainers who are themselves living through the war, and who keep showing up for children every day.

None of this works alone. Schools and educational institutions host sessions and help us reach children; rehabilitation and specialist centres co-design adapted activities; youth clubs and community centres open their doors and their trust. Our Ghiras training of trainers programme is what makes this sustainable: when a project ends, a trained local trainer stays.



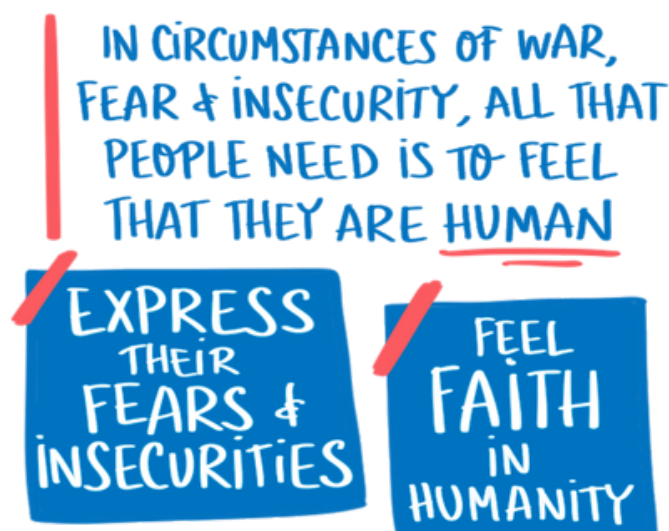
Beyond the clichés

Circus carries stereotypes: that it is only for children, that it is entertainment rather than serious work, that it is not appropriate for girls. From abroad, there is another cliché: Palestinian young people seen only as victims. We answer both with quality and with stories of agency. Our trainers are certified, our productions meet professional standards, and our participants are presented as what they are: capable, creative young people.



Working in a conflict context

Working in Palestine means planning under constant uncertainty. Trainers and participants cannot always reach a session, so we go to them. Equipment and shipments are delayed. In Gaza we have no direct access and rely entirely on the judgement of local partners. Our teams carry the same stress as the communities they serve, so caring for the carers is part of the work, not an extra. And yet the need for safe, creative space is greatest exactly when it is hardest to provide.



What we have learned

For youth workers in Europe and beyond, three lessons travel well:

1. When inclusion is the goal, choose cooperation over competition. You don't need a big tent; juggling, balance and partner work need very little equipment.
2. Invest in local trainers, not only in participants. People who stay in the community are the real infrastructure of inclusion.
3. Let people be seen for what they can do. A single performance can change how a community sees its young people faster than any campaign.

Back in the circle, the girl who dropped the ball is now teaching the boy next to her. Nobody lost. That is the point.

AS YOUTH WORKERS, IT IS OUR DUTY
TO MAKE SURE THAT NO CHILD IS
EXCLUDED FOR WHOM THEY ARE



EDITORIAL INFORMATION

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Official Website: www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/inclusion/

SALTO-Jint, Grétrystraat26, 1000 Brussel, Belgium

Tel: +32 (0)2 209 07 20 Fax: +32 (0)2 209 07 49

inclusion@salto-youth.net

Legal info: JINT vzw, 0441.254.285, RPR Nederlandstalige Ondernemingsrechtbank Brussel

Coordination: Marija Kljajic (inclusion@salto-youth.net)

Facilitator: Anna Yeghoyan (ayeghoyan@yahoo.com)

Digital Co-Facilitator: Maria Kousoula (marakikousoula@gmail.com)

Graphic Facilitator: Olalla González (olalla@shokkin.org)

General Editor of the Publication: Maria Kousoula (marakikousoula@gmail.com)

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On behalf of the SALTO Inclusion & Diversity!

