



EMPOWERMENT

# PUTTING OURSELVES INTO 'THEIR' WORLD

A RESEARCH ON TRAINING NEEDS OF YOUTH WORKERS  
WHO WORK WITH SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH SPORTS

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The research is prepared within the framework of Erasmus Sport project “Empowerment Through Sports” (ETS). No ETS - 603485-EPP-1-2018-1-LT-SPO-SCP. The main objective of the project is to encourage social inclusion and equal opportunities in sport.

The project is coordinated by “Active Youth” Association (Lithuania) and is implemented together with: Sokolska Zveza Slovenije (Slovenia), Centrul pentru Strategii de Dezvoltare a Tineretului (Romania), “Project Net” (Latvia), PRAXIS (Greece) and Lithuanian Basketball Federation (Lithuania).

The opinions, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.



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# // INTRODUCTION

“

*Once a youth worker formulated this feeling as follows: The ability to put yourself in the world of these youth, and how they experience it, is very important. We want to do so much good, change so many things for them and give them so many chances... But we have to be honest that we don't understand their world.*

*-Kelly, 2011*

In society, certain groups of people often face social exclusion. Such groups are LGBTQ, people with disabilities or injuries/concussions, migrants, girls and women. It is crucial to take into account each of the vulnerable groups, understand their needs and help them avoid any kind of social exclusion. This research provides the overview of academic literature on findings regarding both:

// 01

how sport can help eliminating social exclusion of vulnerable groups

// 02

what social inclusion/exclusion issues might be faced by socially vulnerable people in sports

as well as it provides the information and findings of a survey, conducted in partner countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Greece, Slovenia, Romania) in order to learn how the processes of social inclusion through sports can be improved by educating those who work in this field.

If a person would be asked the following questions....

“Have you ever felt like you did not fit in? Like you are somehow different from other people? Like your appearance, approach, personal qualities or status differ from the ones that are “ok”?”

.... one would probably answer “yes” to (all of) them. But if a person is asked these questions, one could probably not claim to be fully understanding it:

“Or have you ever thought what a person with a disability, passing by a group of young people cheering and playing football, might feel when one knows that this group will not accept him or her to play together? Or a girl will not be allowed to be a part of the team, just because she is a girl? Or a Chinese boy is not invited to a class meeting in the park just because he is different from other students?”

And why does that happen? Why do people get excluded because of who they are and how they look? The reasons of this problem are twofold:

// 01

people often do not understand that such groups want and need to be involved into the activities and interact with the others

// 02

it is common for people not to know how to behave around disabled people or other vulnerable groups of the society

## // DEFINITIONS OF EXCLUSION

- The process of social exclusion refers to the multiple and changing factors resulting in people being excluded from the normal exchanges, practices and rights of modern society (Commission of the European Communities, 1993, p. 1);

- Social exclusion as a result is a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems (the Social Exclusion Unit, 2001).



# INCLUSION

Social inclusion is 'about the participation of all children and young people and the removal of all forms of exclusionary practice' (Len Barton, as quoted in Armstrong 2003).

## HOW CAN WE PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION?

// 01 By addressing the needs of socially vulnerable people in the policy making processes

// 02 by providing everyone with equal rights and equal treatment

// 03 by empowering socially vulnerable people – encouraging them to express themselves and provide with the tools and access to participate in social life and employment

// 04 by involving socially vulnerable groups into social life/activities with the community

// 05 by encouraging interaction with the rest of society

Thus, following the aforementioned ideas, the barriers that separate socially excluded people from being a part of the society can be eventually broken.

## WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON FACTORS LEADING TO SOCIAL EXCLUSION?

- low self-esteem
- bad health
- migration
- lack of social skills
- having disabilities
- unemployment
- representing an ethnic minority
- having a low financial status/low incomes
- being of certain sex/gender
- being a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, intersexual, queer or questioning (LGBTQI)



*Exclusion takes different forms, such as lack of access to power, knowledge, services, facilities, choice and opportunity.*

- Social Exclusion Unit, 2001

## SO, WHAT EXACTLY CAN WE DO TO START BREAKING THEM?

Of course, there are many ways to do so:

- Adopting and implementing the right legislation, restricting discrimination more strictly or setting quotas (for instance, quota regulations regarding the participation of citizens of other EU Member States and third-country nationals in the professional sports teams);
- Organising better educational activities and awareness raising regarding this topic (for both children and adults – to prevent negative approach from appearing in the first place, as well as reduce the existing one);
- involving those with fewer opportunities into activities with other people where they are treated just as all the rest;
- Creating opportunities for socially vulnerable groups to express themselves and show that they have their own strengths.



# // SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH SPORTS

Focusing on the last point, there is international enthusiasm for the idea that sport can contribute to 'social inclusion' strategies. Sport now features in various targeted youth initiatives, targeting deprived areas or 'at risk' individuals (Kelly, 2011).

It was noted that projects which provide free sporting opportunities allow to involve young people who might otherwise be excluded from participation (Kelly, 2011).

Sports have long been viewed as an opportunity to actively engage young people in a leisure context and not just in terms of participation in sports activities, but across the range of issues including education, employment and training, community leadership and healthy lifestyles (Haudenhuysea, Theeboom, & Coalter, 2012). As demonstrated by Feinstein et al. (2005), a more structured leisure time spending (including sports), correlates with less social exclusionary outcomes at a later age (Kelly, 2011).

# // PUBLIC-SPIRITEDNESS

Hence in order to avoid discrimination of representatives of socially vulnerable groups and make them feel welcomed and as a part of something big – the community and the whole society, it is important to create and let them feel the collective spirit. Their involvement into activities together with other people is crucial to reach this objective.

The suggestion that leisure can help 'build the sense of community' has historically been integral to the legitimization of public leisure provision (Glyptis, 1989: 42), and it is often claimed that sport can bring people together across

cultural, ethnic and class divides (European Commission, 2007). Some of the United Kingdom government policy statements have argued that sports-based interventions can contribute to 'social inclusion', 'neighbourhood renewal' and 'urban regeneration' by 'tackling' crime and anti-social behaviour (DCMS, 1999; ODPM, 2004; Kelly, 2011). This can be influenced by contributing to the development of youngsters - to ensure that they gain necessary social, emotional and cognitive life skills, so that they could feel more comfortable with other people and know how to interact with others.



*Sport has enormous potential to bring people from all walks of life together. Sports events therefore provide the ideal platform for fostering inclusion, diversity and mutual respect, while combating racism, discrimination and exclusion.*

*- Morten Kjaerum*





## // SOCIAL SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT

As provided in the literature, the development of social skills is important for socially vulnerable youth because those skills may help them to decrease social disconnectedness, which is one of the major indicators for social vulnerability. If having such skills, youngsters would be more likely to be involved in collective activities and social life of the community. In order to smoothen and ensure this process together with successful, unharmed, beneficial experience of communication, it is crucial to develop social life skills.



*Research has shown that sports participation is positively related to youth developmental outcomes.*

*- Haudenhuysea, Theebooma, & Coalter, 2012*



Thus, sports programs have the potential to make a difference in the life skill development of socially vulnerable youth. The development of emotional skills is particularly important for socially vulnerable youth because they face mental health problems more often than do non-vulnerable youth (Reiss, 2013; Wille, Bettge, & Ravens-Sieberer, 2008). Sports programs (i.e., formally structured activities that take place for a specific time period and in the presence or under the instruction of adults (E. Bean, Whitley, & Gould, 2014; Fuller, Percy, Bruening, & Cotrufo, 2013; Ullrich-French, McDonough, & Smith, 2012) are believed to provide youth with settings for life skill development (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005). It has been argued that positive experiences in sports programs lead to improved emotional life skills, such as increased self-worth or reduced depressive symptoms (Eime, Young, Harvey, Charity, & Payne, 2013).

Moreover, the sports setting is an environment which is rich in feedback and considered to be a prerequisite for the development of cognitive life skills such as self-regulation skills (Jonker et al., 2011). Besides that, physiological mechanisms are suggested for the relationship between sports participation and emotional, cognitive outcomes. For instance, it has been shown that physical activity leads to changes in neurotransmitters associated with improved well-being (Lubans, Plotnikoff, & Lubans, 2012), self-esteem (Cerin, 2010), and executive functioning (Diamonds & Lee, 2011; Suzuki, 2017). Thus, sport activities can enable socially vulnerable youth to develop diverse life skills (Hermens, Super, Verkooijen, & Koelen, 2017) which they are lacking.

# // EXCLUSION IN SPORTS

Yet some of the vulnerable groups which face social exclusion in society, also experience this phenomena when participating in sports. In this case, sport does not become a tool for inclusion, but even deepens the existing exclusion.

“

*As Collins (2004: 728) argues, if access to sport is seen as 'part of the citizen's package of expectations', then the inability to participate is a form of social exclusion.*

*-Kelly, 2011*

## GROUPS OF EXCLUSION



### // RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITY BACKGROUND

As findings show, a common problem regarding social exclusion is discrimination in sport activities. As FRA Director Morten Kjaerum claims, “incidences of racism and ethnic discrimination continue to affect sports at both professional and amateur levels across the EU. We have to get the ball rolling and tackle this; everybody needs to take up their responsibility in this regard.” (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2010)

Racist incidents in men's amateur and professional sport were reported in all EU Member States, with the exception of Latvia. It appears that most incidents affect people with dark skin in football and basketball. (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2010)

It was also observed that Roma people are frequently discriminated against in all spheres of life in many countries across Europe.



### // SEX/GENDER

In many sports across the European Union, minorities and migrants, and especially women and girls with an ethnic minority background are particularly underrepresented. (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2010) Absence from sport participation among girls from ethno-cultural minorities is often highlighted as an inclusion policy challenge.

However, not only girls with an ethnic minority background are underrepresented. It also applies to other girls, basically because of their sex. Hence the scope of this kind of discrimination is huge.

The social exclusion of females is explained by patriarchal norms, as well as by the introvert conduct of the girls themselves. (Ekholm, Dahlstedt, & Rönnbäck, 2019) Since they are often used to be seen as someone less capable and important, it is significant to change this approach and show girls that they matter and that they can be strong, successful and powerful. Therefore, one of the most prominent means of reaching out to the girls, thus making empowerment and inclusion of girls possible, is described in terms of female coaches. The importance of such coaches is repeatedly emphasized in their capacity as role models. (Ekholm, Dahlstedt, & Rönnbäck, 2019)

What is more, girls-only sports activities performed by female coaches as role models are described as a way for girls to gain social inclusion and to become emancipated from subjugating norms. Participation in community sport is highlighted in discourse as crucial for adopting powers of emancipation. (Ekholm, Dahlstedt, & Rönnbäck, 2019)

## // FINANCIAL SITUATION

It is known that people, especially youngsters often cannot take part in any extracurricular activities, including sports, despite the desire to do so. The main reason behind that is a not sufficient economic status which prevents poor families from allowing children to engage into sport activities as they tend to be paid or require additional supplies.

However, initiatives such as 'Positive Futures' promoted social inclusion by offering young people free access to leisure provision from which they would otherwise be excluded on financial grounds. The indirect costs of sports participation, such as clothing and equipment, were also mentioned, and several young people suggested that free activities allowed more young people to attend.

Some research participants also suggested that such projects are important because they help young people who had been excluded from schools, sports clubs or leisure centres access alternative provision or re-engage with mainstream services (Kelly, 2011).

## // SEXUALITY

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and intersex (LGBTQI) collegiate athletes have historically faced discrimination and homophobia. Despite the exclusion, harsh bullying and even persecution and physical abuse, gay and lesbian athletes have also experienced numerous challenges over the years when competing in sport (Anderson, 2011a; Anderson, Magrath, & Bullingham, 2016; Griffin, 2012).

It is believed that sport activities can be of a lot of use when tackling social exclusion of LGBTQI. Since the contact between two groups encourages tolerance and acceptance (Allport, 1954; DeAngelis, 2001), making teams combined of straight and gay people can lead to the improvement of heterosexual teammates' perceptions of homosexuality (Adam & Anderson, 2012).

This is explained in a way that bias is reduced when in-group and out-group members experience increased contact with one another. As in-group members spend time with out-group members, they begin to identify similarities and focus more heavily on them. Differentiation is when individuals from the out-group are considered as individuals and not only members of the out-group.

Again, as in-group members have increased exposure to out-group members, they can see the individual as a person and see past the out-group status. For either of these processes to occur, contact between in-group and out-group members must occur. Recategorization is the next step in this process. Recategorization occurs when in-group and out-group members begin to see themselves as part of a collective whole (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Cunningham & Melton, 2011). Diverse members of a group form a new group identity based on shared characteristics.

*"Inclusion allows for everyone to be a full participant, true to the genuine version of him or herself (Tienda, 2013)."*

## // DISABILITY

Sport is an area of life in which people with disabilities have less favourable experiences than their non-disabled peers and competitors (Stevenson 2009).

Typical barriers for people with disabilities to participate in sport include (DePauw and Gavron, 2005):

- |              |  |              |   |
|--------------|--|--------------|---|
| <b>// 01</b> | lack of awareness on the part of people without disabilities as to how to involve them in teams adequately | <b>// 02</b> | lack of opportunities and programmes for training and competition |
| <b>// 03</b> | too few accessible facilities due to physical barriers   | <b>// 04</b> | limited information on and access to resources                    |

Since the lack of disability awareness exists, information and knowledge accounts for many of the barriers, it is important to say:

*"Disability community needs visibility."*

Visibility is required to change existing attitudes and stereotypes in the society. This can be ensured through such means as coverage in mainstream media, implementation of disability awareness campaigns. (Kamberidou, Bonias, & Patsantaras, 2019)

*"Awareness raising: promoting equal rights, positive perception and capabilities of persons with disabilities."*

(Council of Europe, 2017)

Additionally, representatives of this vulnerable group claim that the change in attitudes is needed from other people in the community. Researches show that positive attitudes follow on from increased social contact. (Abbott & McConkey, 2006) Bonding with other groups of the society is crucial for athletes with disabilities, whose poorer sporting competence and social skills, coupled with the negative stereotypes associated with the disability label or their attendance at special schooling often lead to their exclusion from sports. (Harada & Siperstein 2009). (McConkey, Dowling, Hassan, & Menke)

And the principle of guaranteeing participation of people with disabilities in sport is simple: it should be done in accordance with their individual preferences, wishes and choices. (Kiuppis, 2018)



# // THE MAIN FORMS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN PARTNER COUNTRIES



## GREECE



- // 01 UNDERREPRESENTATION OF GIRLS/WOMEN
- // 02 DISCRIMINATION AGAINST IMMIGRANTS
- // 03 DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LGBTQI
- // 04 DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

## ROMANIA



- // 01 RACISM
- // 02 DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ROMA PEOPLE
- // 03 DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LGBTQI

# LATVIA



// 01 DISCRIMINATION  
AGAINST ROMA PEOPLE

// 02 DISCRIMINATION  
AGAINST REFUGEES

// 03 DISCRIMINATION  
AGAINST LGBTIQI

# LITHUANIA



// 01 DISCRIMINATION  
AGAINST PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES

// 02 DISCRIMINATION  
AGAINST ROMA PEOPLE

// 03 DISCRIMINATION  
AGAINST REFUGEES

# SLOVENIA



// 01 RACISM

// 02 DISCRIMINATION  
AGAINST ROMA PEOPLE

// 03 DISCRIMINATION  
AGAINST LGBTIQI

“

*Sports are often recognised as an opportunity to actively engage young people in a leisure context and not just in terms of participation in sport activities, but across a range of issues including education, employment and training, community leadership and healthy lifestyles. More recently, this became known as ‘sport-plus’, specifically referring to a range of targeted activities within or added upon a sports programme that seeks to intervene in the broader life of youth*

- Coalter, 2010

# // COACH EDUCATION



Coaching is a powerful tool to support learning and development for students, teachers, school leaders and their educational establishments. (Devine, Meyers, & Houssemand, 2013) It is known that the coaches are critical to each organisation's success (Rynne, Mallett, & Tinning, 2006) including the ones who work with socially vulnerable groups.

Sport-plus practices could be viewed not only as potential arenas for individual development but also as contexts that working with youth as it can provide understanding on how the structures and arrangements of society make young people socially vulnerable in the first place. (Haudenhuysea, Theeboomaa, & Coalter, 2012) Since those practices involve facilitators, it becomes clear that in order to ensure successful social inclusion through sports, coaches or other related people should get proper education and acquire the required knowledge.

Moreover, as stated by Côté and Gilbert (2009), coaching effectiveness is a result of managing athlete outcomes, coaching context and coaching knowledge. (Côté & Gilbert, 2009) Acquiring coaching knowledge occurs through experience and process of learning the elements of sport-specific knowledge related to sports coaching. For coaches, learning from experience is vital in a role that is a complex, dynamic and multifaceted process of balancing fun and winning where one cannot be sure if results will go according to plan, which is very much possible when working with different people and especially the socially vulnerable ones. (Haudenhuysea, Theeboomaa, & Coalter, 2012)

What is more, in order to develop more understanding (which will lead to better effectiveness) of how sport can contribute to the reversal of social vulnerability, a clear understanding about the wider processes of social vulnerability is required. (Kelly, 2011)

Yet it is common that coach educational programmes continue to rely on traditional and class-room-based teaching approaches, prescribing 'one right way' of learning. (Mesquita, Santos, Ribeiro, & Morgan, 2014) Therefore, coach education courses need to adjust

their programmes and offer the learners a variety of learning experiences in order to encourage more critical and creative practitioners.

These varied learning opportunities should be linked in a constant and mutual interaction and influence. Thus, theoretical knowledge must be framed in practice contexts, where learners have the opportunity to learn through the active adaptation of their existing knowledge in response to real and situated coaching demands. (Mesquita, Santos, Ribeiro, & Morgan, 2014) This is especially important when coaching socially vulnerable people, because coaches need to know what practices are the most appropriate and beneficial, as well as be prepared to adjust to coaching different people with different possible acts of behavior, thus reaching the best effectiveness and the least harm.

To conclude, coaching is crucial in ensuring effective involvement of youngsters into sport activities. This is why their knowledge improvement can lead to better understanding of needs and interests of the participants', so allowing creation of better conditions for the athletes to exercise and express themselves, thus allowing better social inclusion.



# // RESEARCH AND SURVEY

## THE CONTENT OF THE SURVEY

To learn about the characteristics of the respondents, the survey included five demographic and general questions:

### 01 // YOUR AGE GROUP

- // Under 21 years
- // 21 – 29 years
- // 30 – 39 years
- // 40 – 49 years
- // 50 – 59 years
- // 60 years and older

### 02 // COUNTRY

- // LV
- // LT
- // RO
- // SL
- // GR
- // Other

### 03 // GENDER

- // Male
- // Female
- // Any other

### 04 // RESPONDENT TYPE

- // Sport worker
- // Youth worker
- // Volunteer
- // NGO representative
- // Youth
- // Lecturer/trainer
- // Asylum seeker
- // Third country national

### 05 // EDUCATION

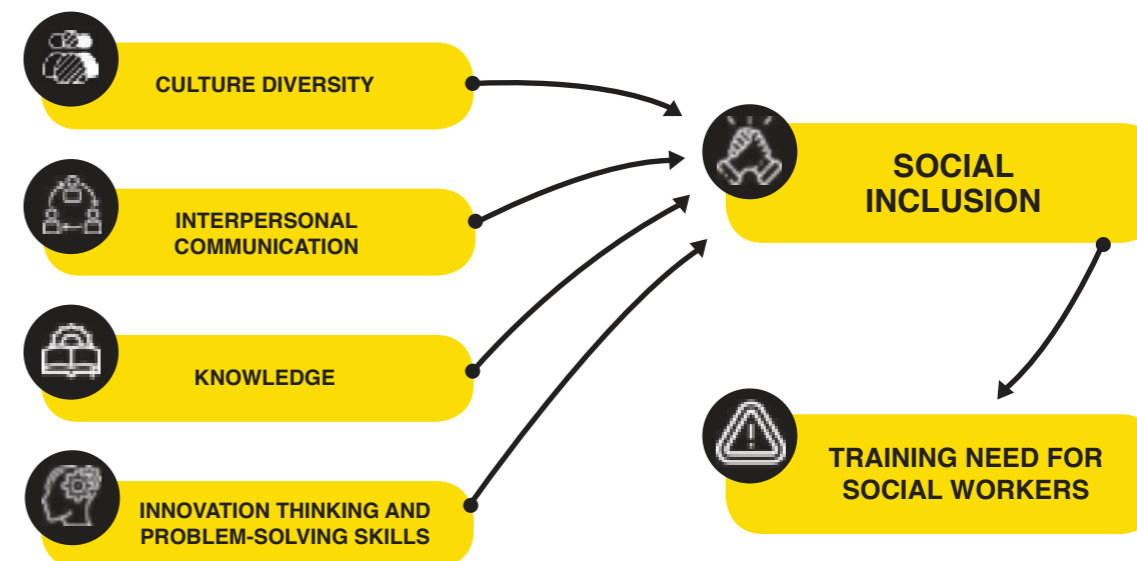
- // Primary school
- // Secondary school/ College
- // University Bachelor's Degree
- // University Master's Degree
- // Other option

After the international literature review, it was noted that there is the existence of social exclusion in the field of sports in all partner countries, namely Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Greece and Slovenia.

It was also observed that an additional education on social inclusion of people representing vulnerable groups through sports is necessary for people who work in this field. After receiving the right knowledge, such people will be able not only to foresee what difficulties might arise, but also will know how to tackle them and deal with vulnerable groups, properly involving them into sports activities, thus - not only avoiding social exclusion in sports but also promoting social inclusion in general.

To learn what knowledge and skill require people working with social inclusion through sports, the survey following international research was made. The whole content of the questionnaire is based on the completed literature review. The aim of the survey - to determine the training needs about social inclusion through sports.

The survey was divided into 5 segments. It is believed that the first 4 segments make influence for the succession of the fifth one – Social inclusion.



# RESEARCH METHOD

Each of the segments included a number of different statements, representing the topic:

**INNOVATION THINKING  
AND PROBLEM-SOLVING  
SKILLS**

5 statements

**INTERPERSONAL  
COMMUNICATION**

2 statements

**CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

8 statements

**SOCIAL INCLUSION**

14 statements

**KNOWLEDGE**

4 statements

To learn about the approach of the respondents on the importance of certain factors when ensuring social inclusion through their work, they were asked to evaluate the statements (factors) for social inclusion through sports, choosing:

// 01 - NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL

// 02 – PARTLY NOT IMPORTANT

// 03 – PARTLY IMPORTANT

// 04 - IMPORTANT

# // LIST OF STATEMENT USED IN THE SURVEY



## CULTURE DIVERSITY

// I can adapt my trainings to the cultural diversity.

// I can create a sports environment in which socially vulnerable groups could develop and learn life skills.

// I am interested in what people from various cultures think about sports.

// I want to learn more about other religions of the world.

// I want to know more about issues relating to training in a multicultural environment.

// Communication.

// Efficient communication with people with special needs (they don't speak the national state language; low level of literacy; a certain level of disability, such as retard, dyslexia, autism, hypo auditory hearing etc.; prone to conflict).

// Understanding non-verbal language of those with whom I interact.



## KNOWLEDGE

// Causes of Social Exclusion.

// Social Inclusion awareness.

// Encouraging volunteering and getting people involved.

// Community Listening Training (finding out about community needs).

// Bullying knowledge for Community Groups.

// Identifying our priorities and making submissions.



## INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

// Negotiating with communication partners.

// Communicating information in a clear and concise manner, making logical arguments, with the right word selection, in order to be understood.



## INNOVATION THINKING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

// Personal well-being.

// I've been feeling optimistic about the future.

// I've been feeling useful.

// I've been feeling relaxed.

// I've been dealing with problems well.

// I've been thinking clearly.

// I've been feeling close to other people.

// I've been able to make up my mind about things.

// Having social contact with other people.

// Participating in other activities.

// Being accepted by others for who you are.

// Feeling valued by society.

// Getting help from family and friends when you need it.

// Joining in with social activities.



## SOCIAL INCLUSION

// Openness towards learning something new (a foreign language; a new activity; a new practice; a new project).

// Tackling a problem, at work and in general (problem solving strategies).

// Encouraging and supporting others in making changes (encouraging social groups to take personal responsibility for their development for social reintegration; coaching them for their improvement, etc.).

// Creative approach in solving problems (looking at issues from different perspectives; brainstorming for solutions; generating new ideas and methods of work, etc.).

// To solve problems within new situations.

# SURVEY FINDINGS



The findings of the survey show that the training requires to be adjusted to teach people who work with social inclusion through sports about:

// 01 encouraging and supporting others to make changes

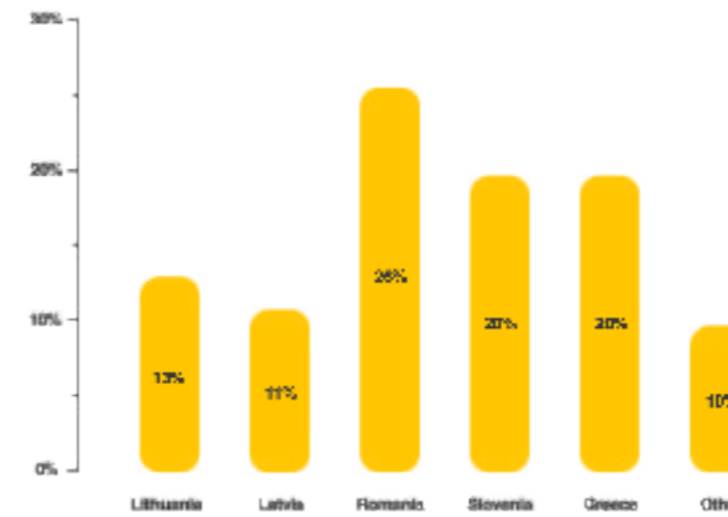
// 02 creativity and problem-solving

In total, the survey reached **108 respondents** from seven countries.

## // COUNTRY

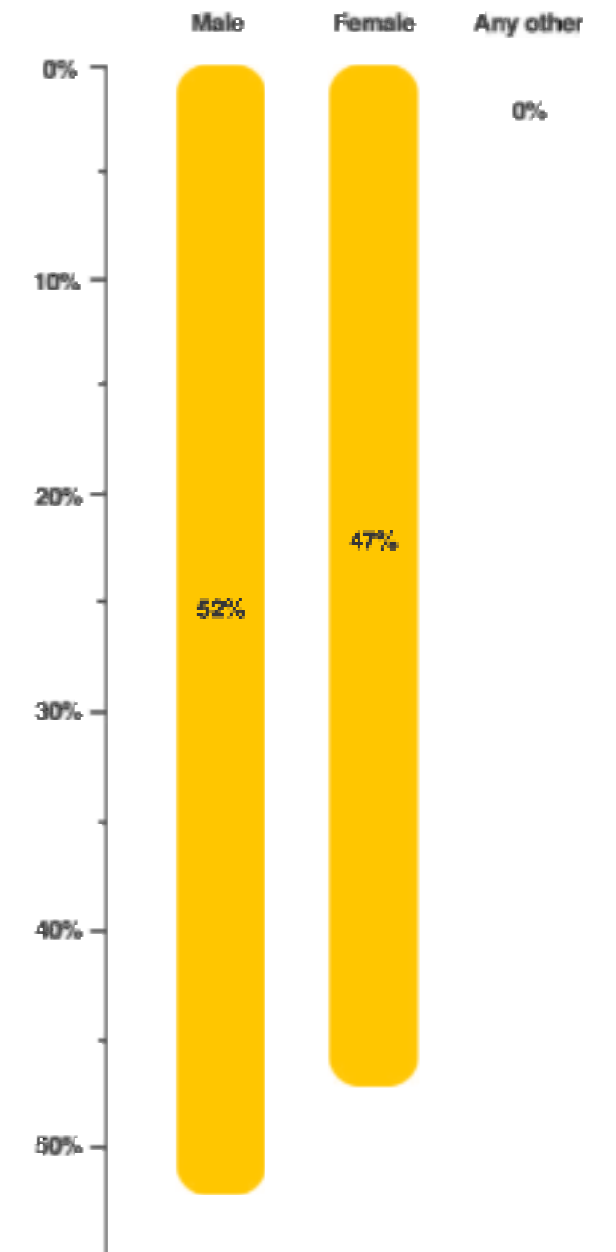
The majority of respondents were from the five partner countries, as well as 10 % of people whose countries of residence are others, namely – Spain and Germany.

The biggest part of the respondents come from Romania – 26 %. Percentage of respondents, coming from other partner countries is as following: Slovenia 20%; Greece 20%; Lithuania 13%; Latvia 11%.



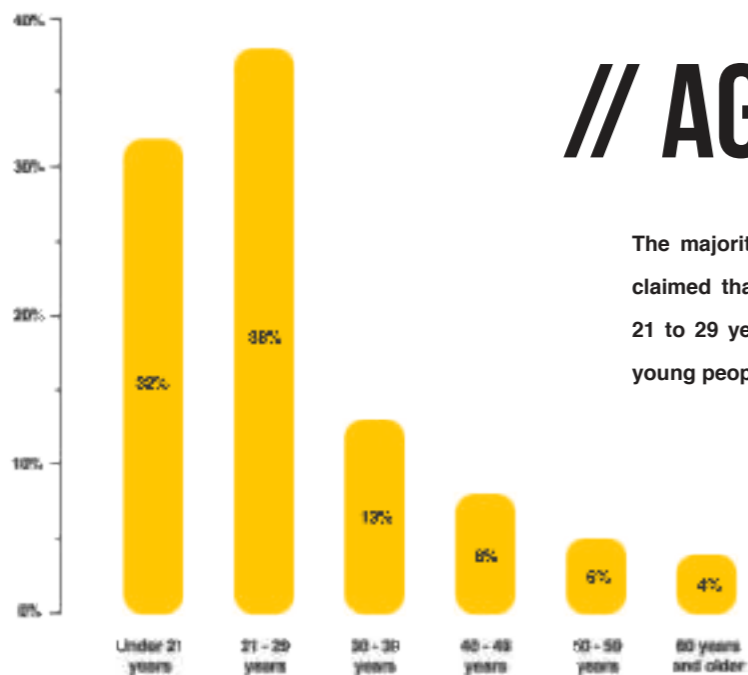
## // GENDER

There was almost a perfect gender balance reached: 53 % of the respondents were male and 47 % were women, none of the respondents were of any other gender. Yet as it was later revealed, differences between the genders are not statistically important for such research.



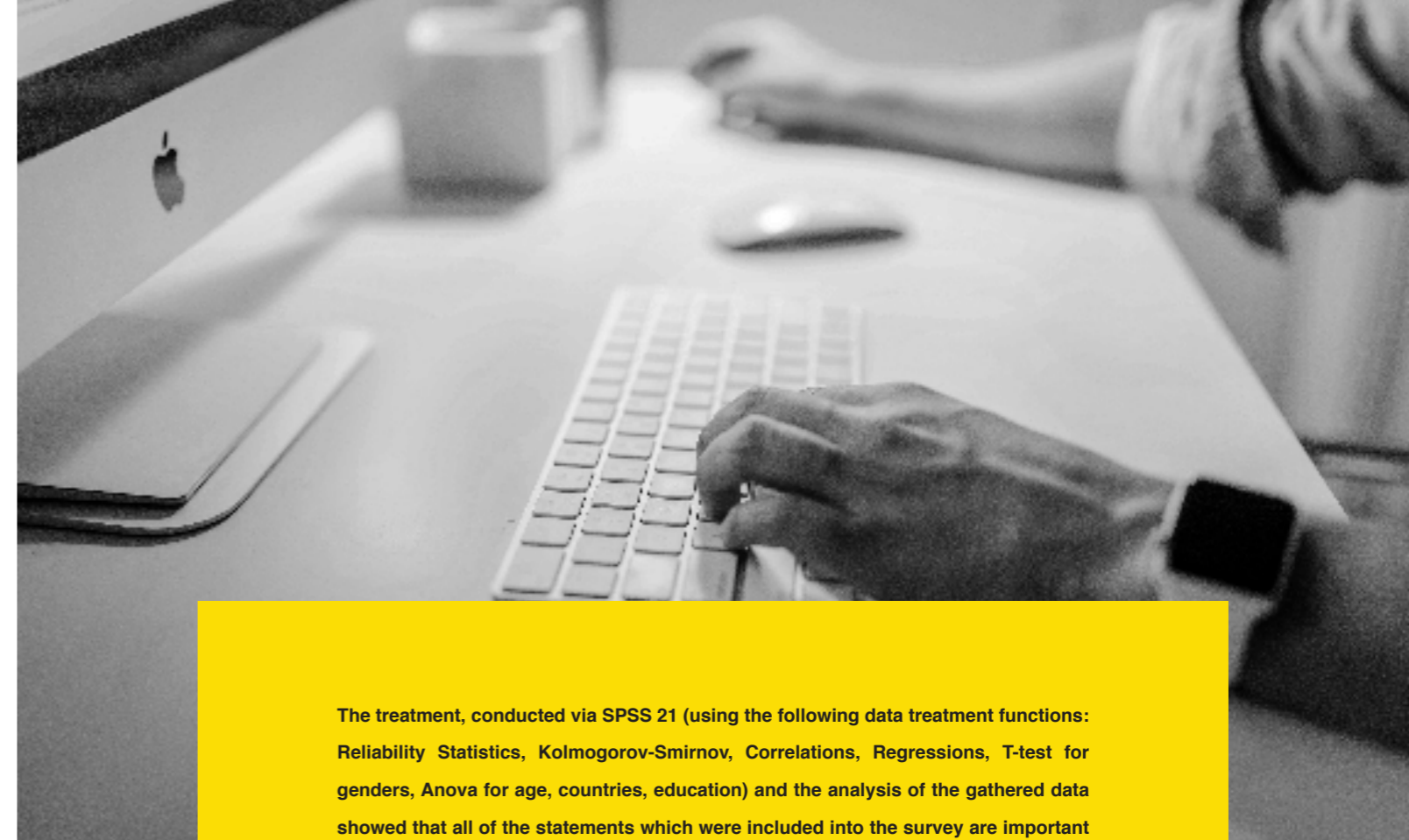
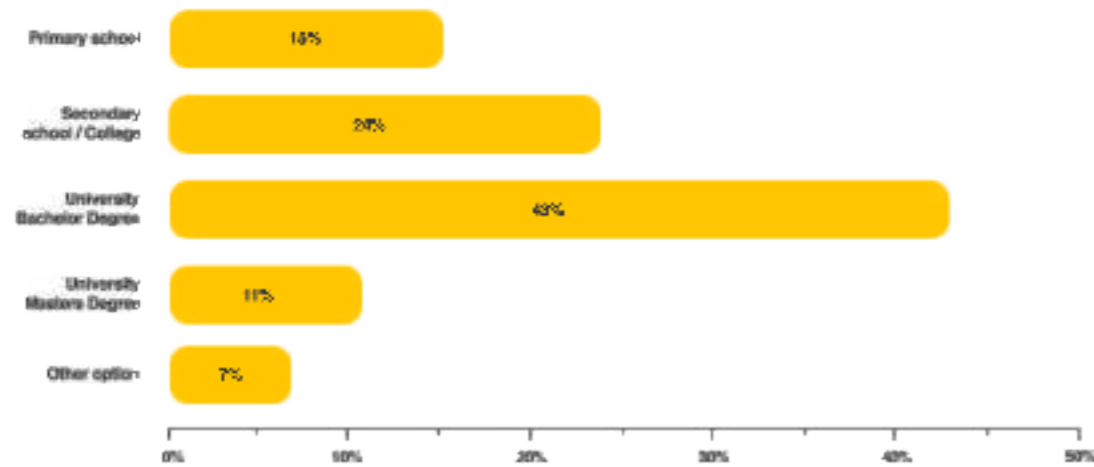
## // AGE GROUP

The majority of the respondents claimed that they are aged from 21 to 29 years old. Thus, mainly young people were surveyed.



# // EDUCATION

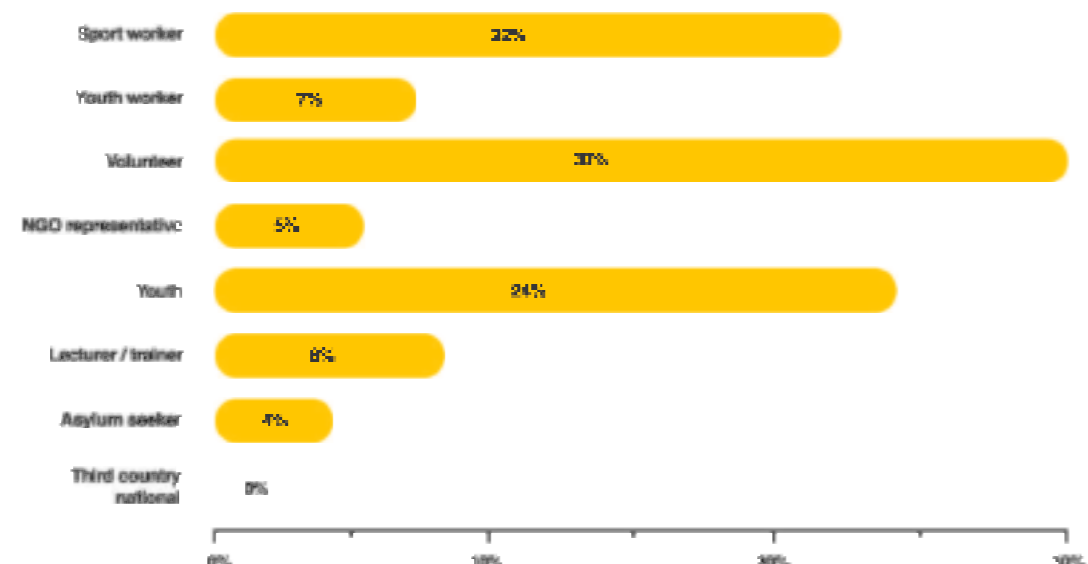
The results show that the participants of the survey are well educated: the majority (43%) of the respondents have a University Bachelor's Degree acquired, 24 % of the respondents are still in the Secondary school or College, 15 % - at Primary school, 11 % hold University Master's Degree and 7 % of the respondents have other (not mentioned) level of education acquired.



The treatment, conducted via SPSS 21 (using the following data treatment functions: Reliability Statistics, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Correlations, Regressions, T-test for genders, Anova for age, countries, education) and the analysis of the gathered data showed that all of the statements which were included into the survey are important (reliability >0.6) when working in the field of social inclusion through sports, so this survey can be applied in further data collection. The most frequent response to the statements was number 4, meaning "important" or 3, meaning "partly important".

# // RESPONDENT TYPE

Most of the respondents were sport workers, youth, volunteers, youth workers, lecturers/trainers. The number of NGO representatives and asylum seekers is low, hence they are not highly represented in this research.



# // CULTURAL DIVERSITY

	1- not important at all	2 - partly not important	3 - partly important	4- important	Average	Median
I can adapt my trainings to the cultural diversity.	4.63%	8.33%	37.04%	50%	3.32	3.5
I can create a sports environment in which socially vulnerable groups could develop and learn life skills.	4.63%	12.96%	29.63%	52.78%	3.31	4
I am interested in what people from various cultures think about sports.	3.7%	7.41%	38.89%	50%	3.35	3.5
I want to learn more about other religions of the world.	11.11%	14.81%	40.74%	33.33%	2.96	3
I want to know more about issues relating to the training in a multicultural environment.	1.85%	4.63%	37.96%	55.56%	3.47	4

# // INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

	1- not important at all	2 – partly not important	3 – partly important	4- important	Average	Median
Efficient communication with people with special needs (they don't speak the national state language; low level of literacy; a certain level of disability, such as retard, dyslexia, autism, hypo auditory hearing etc.; prone to conflict).	0.93%	9.26%	50.93%	38.89%	3.28	3
Understanding non-verbal language of those with whom I interact.	5.56%	9.26%	38.89%	46.3%	3.26	3
Negotiating with communication partners	0.93%	9.26%	50.93%	38.89%	3.28	3
Communicating information in a clear and concise manner, making logical arguments, with the right word selection, in order to be understood	0%	8.33%	36.11%	55.56%	3.47	4

# // INNOVATION THINKING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

	1- not important at all	2 – partly not important	3 – partly important	4- important	Average	Median
Openness towards learning something new (a foreign language; a new activity; a new practice; a new project)	0%	6.48%	29.83%	63.69%	3.57	4
Tackling a problem, at work and in general (problem solving strategies)	0%	3.7%	35.19%	61.11%	3.57%	4
Encouraging and supporting others in making changes (encouraging social groups to take personal responsibility for their development for social reintegration; coaching them for their improvement, etc.)	0%	7.41%	41.67%	50.93%	3.44	4
Creative approach in solving problems (looking at issues from different perspectives; brainstorming for solutions; generating new ideas and methods of work etc.);	0%	2.78%	51.85%	45.37%	3.43	3
To solve problems within new situations.	0%	6.48%	35.19%	58.33%	3.52%	4

# // KNOWLEDGE

	1- not important at all	2 – partly not important	3 – partly important	4- important	Average	Median
Causes of social exclusion	10.19%	12.04%	46.3%	31.48%	2.99	3
Social inclusion awareness	0.93%	17.59%	46.37%	35.11%	3.17	3
Encouraging volunteering and getting people involved	0%	3.7%	38.89%	57.41%	3.54	4
Community listening training (finding out about community needs)	0%	6.48%	41.67%	51.85%	3.45%	4
Bullying knowledge for community groups	0.93%	15.74%	44.44%	38.89%	3.21	3
Identifying our priorities and making submissions	0%	5.56%	46.3%	48.15%	3.43	3

# // SOCIAL INCLUSION

	1- not important at all	2 – partly not important	3 – partly important	4- important	Average	Median
Personal well-being	3.7%	5.56%	38.89%	51.85%	3.39	4
I've been feeling optimistic about the future.	0%	12.04%	41.67%	46.3%	3.34	3
I've been feeling useful.	0%	5.56%	51.85%	42.59%	3.37	3
I've been feeling relaxed.	0.93%	12.04%	41.67%	45.37%	3.31	3
I've been dealing with problems well.	0%	11.11%	48.15%	40.74%	3.3	3
I've been thinking clearly.	0%	9.26%	50%	40.74%	3.31	3
I've been feeling close to other people.	1.85%	7.41%	47.22%	43.52%	3.32%	3
I've been able to make up my mind about things.	2.78%	4.63%	40.74%	51.85%	3.42	4
Having social contact with other people.	0.93%	5.56%	35.19%	58.33%	3.51	4
Participating in other activities.	0.93%	13.89%	40.74%	44.44%	3.29	3
Being accepted by others for who you are.	0%	12.04%	34.26%	53.7%	3.42	4
Feeling valued by society.	2.78%	5.56%	49.07%	42.59%	3.31	4
Getting help from family and friends when you need it.	0.93%	4.63%	30.56%	63.89%	3.57	4



# // CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMEN DATIONS

## // 01

Evaluations of the statements revealed that all of the provided fields and factors are significant and should be taken into account when planning a training for people who work with social inclusion through sports.

## // 02

Data treatment showed that all statements are important, so the survey is valid. It means that the same survey can be sent to other countries/ organizations to measure social inclusion through sports. It can be said that this is a good tool for data collection, developed by Empowerment Through Sports project.

## // 03

A strong correlation between the knowledge and interpersonal communication was noticed, meaning these aspects are very important for social inclusion through sports.

Thus, according to the findings of the research, the following training topic suggestions were generated:



Openness towards learning something new (a foreign language; a new activity; a new practice; a new project)



Tackling a problem, at work and in general (problem solving strategies)



Encouraging and supporting others in making changes (encouraging social groups to take personal responsibility for their development for social reintegration; coaching them for their improvement etc.)



Creative approach in solving problems (looking at issues from different perspectives; brainstorming for solutions; generating new ideas and methods of work etc.)

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## // 01

This survey could be applied for similar research needs – all scales are valid and reliable. The survey was validated and those who work with social inclusion through sports can use it in future research. Although it is needed to translate into national languages, so that the broader audience could be surveyed.

## // 03

Interpersonal communication – since people of different age groups were surveyed, statistical data shows that there is significant difference between age groups. This means that in order to teach somebody about social inclusion, it is important to make the training programs age tailored, so that they would be comprehensive for the participants of different generations (to speak to generations in their language).

## // 06

The teaching should not be very specific, concentrating and going deep inside some specific topics. It is important to provide people with the horizontal competences: to be open, to be able to cooperate, and to solve the problems (having creative and proactive approaches). Thus, significant topics to include into the training modules: openness towards learning, encouraging and supporting others in making changes, creative approach, problem-solving.

## // 02

Correlation between country and cultural diversity – each country had their statistically significant differences. Thus, to teach cultural diversity for social inclusion, it is needed to adjust the training program based on the country's needs.

## // 04

Scale innovation and problem solving should be addressed as a main training subject.

## // 05

When working with target groups at national level, to:

- take into account the age of trainees;
- pay attention to the required training topics;
- translate the survey into national language and distribute it to those who work with social inclusion through sport.

# IN SHORT

This research provides with overview of the academic literature about the most vulnerable groups in today's society which face social exclusion. As it was found, the main grounds of social exclusion include sexuality, disability, racial and ethnic minority, sex and gender, low financial status. In the partner countries of the Empowerment Through Sports project - Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia and Greece - the most common forms of social exclusion are racism and discrimination against women and girls, Roma and LGBTQI people, as well as people with disabilities.

Based on the literature review, a survey was designed and conducted. Its main aim was to learn about the training needs of people who work with socially vulnerable groups and their inclusion through sports. As a result, several topics to include into training courses were generated and very much recommended:

- Openness towards learning something new (a foreign language; a new activity; a new practice; a new project).
- Tackling a problem, at work and in general (problem solving strategies).
- Encouraging and supporting others in making changes (encouraging social groups to take personal responsibility for their development for social reintegration; coaching them for their improvement etc.).
- Creative approach in solving problems (looking at issues from different perspectives; brainstorming for solutions; generating new ideas and methods of work etc.).
- Solving problems within new situations.

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