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RECOMMENDATIONS PROMOTING APPRENTICESHIPS AND INTERNSHIPS IN SPORTS

TOPMIND
SPORT OPENS MINDS

RECOMMENDATIONS .

outcome of the 4th transnational project
meeting - September 2021



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TOPMIND

Project details

Project TOPMIND "sporT OPens Minds"

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Partners: TKO Slovenian Tennis Association (Slovenia), CZART (Poland), FOOTURA (Bulgaria)

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Unit 2 – Promoting apprenticeships and internships at sports clubs
T4.2-4.3 –Gathering good practices of apprenticeships and internships at sports clubs +
Recommendations
Outcome of Transnational Partner Meeting 4

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Credits

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Approved by the Project Steering Committee.

Targets

Grassroots and Professional Sports clubs, Non-governmental sports organizations, Policy makers

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The scope of the TOPMIND project

Raffaella Lioce

It is demonstrated that sport players and athletes have an outstanding potential to become successful business men/women thanks to the extraordinary skills acquired thorough sport, that are also crucial to entrepreneurial success. As well as it is proved that volunteering in sport clubs and practicing sport at amateur levels increase the employability potential of youths, that acquired in sport the capacity to work in team, the orientation to results and other important skills. Indeed, as stated in the *Council conclusions on the contribution of sport to the EU economy, and in particular to addressing youth unemployment and social inclusion (2014/C 32/03)* "through engagement in sport, young people attain specific personal and professional skills and competences which enhance employability. These include learning to learn, social and civic competences, leadership, communication, teamwork, discipline, creativity, entrepreneurship".

The project general objective is to increase the awareness that sport Opens Mind, counters educational poverty and develops relevant skills for life, job inclusion and careers thus to activate new collaboration amid sport clubs and the educational formal system, both locally and transnationally.

Specific objectives have been defined coherently with the Council Conclusion on the contribution of sport to the EU economy, (2014/C 32/03), tackling youth unemployment and social inclusion as following:

1. Sharing practices, thoughts and ideas, for a better integration of sport in school, in VET curricula, in courses for entrepreneurs and in mobility programs to improve the participation in sport and society especially of youths; (Development Objective)
2. Reinforcing the transnational network of sport clubs, while encouraging cooperation with local stakeholders for the promotion of education through and in sport and stimulating the organisation of apprenticeships, internships and mobility in sports organisations thus to facilitate national and transnational access to the



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labour market (Networking Objective)

3. Improving the awareness about the sport impacts on self-esteem, capacities of team work, problem solving and decision making, thus to motivate young people and increase their participation in sport (Awareness Objective)

We particularly focus on the following sports: soccer/football, volleyball, tennis that have different characteristics from which specific skills arise. This does not mean that if we find good practices in other sport, we do not consider, on the contrary we think that it is important to promote large networks.

By improving the understanding of skills developed through sport, the partners will activate and test the TOpMind networking program to increase collaboration amid sport clubs - schools – VET, a mechanism that can be replicated and scaled up.



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Promoting the organization of apprenticeships and internships in sports

Introduction

In this position paper the partners of the project TOPMIND “SPORT OPENS MINDS” set out their position on the importance of reinforcing the local and transnational networks of sport clubs and non-governmental organisations working in the field of youth and sport. This document reflects the efforts of the participating organizations in the consortium to review the Position paper 2, as well as the collected good practices on M4, as well as reflects the overall commitment to working together on Specific project objectives (page 2). The “Promoting the organisations of apprenticeships and internships in sports” recommendation paper is arranged in the prospect of summarization of recommendations for stimulating the organisation of apprenticeships and internships in sport and non-governmental organisations that will motivate young people and facilitate national and translational access to the labour market.

Most important findings from 2nd Join Position Paper „Reinforcing local and transnational networks of sports clubs and educational organisations“

- Grassroots sports associations play an important role in the lives of millions of people across Europe. Ranging from extracurricular sport activities at schools and local sport clubs to community centres and informal groups of people doing sport together, grassroots sports provide a diverse mix of opportunities for people of all backgrounds and abilities and provides the foundation for a career at the elite level. In 2014, the percentage of people practicing sport equalled to 44%, however in some countries, like Bulgaria and Poland, it is as low as 10% and 22% respectively. Sports helps people lead healthier lives, develop new skills for employment and engage with their local communities.
- Sports clubs and organizations are the places where people find the sense of



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belongingness and, especially young people, learn the healthy habits of staying active.

- By bringing together people from different races, religions, genders and economic backgrounds, sport clubs promote mutual respect, tolerance and understanding.
- Sport clubs provide an opportunity for young people to learn interpersonal skills that will help them in their professional life, such as leadership, problem solving, responsibility and sense of initiative and discipline.
- In the modern world where more and more attention is turned towards the skills and competences of employees, participation in any kind of structured activities apart from formal education develop life skills and promotes job inclusion.

Situation regarding apprenticeships and internships in sports clubs and organizations

For example in Italy, where the leading partner USMA is from, there are different ways to carry out work experiences and internships within associations, and this happens very frequently, also in the sport sector.

It should also be considered that for many young people the opportunity to carry out a period of voluntary work in the associative world is very welcome, while a more structured way is that of curricular internships in the framework of university courses (particularly in sport sciences, in USMA case) and of the school-work alternation tool envisaged and regulated by Italian law. This tool provides for the obligation for all secondary school students to carry out a period of 2-4 weeks during the school year in a company or in an association or in a public body, where they can become familiar with the world of work.

The choice to focus on an association to fulfill this obligation is preferable for many young people to joining a company, because associations are perceived as much more stimulating environments and more attentive to new collaborators, even if in so short term. And this, also in view of a possible future collaboration, once school is over.

On the other hand, when it comes to voluntary internship, this usually takes place on the



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proposal of the young person concerned who believes that this experience produces positive effects on his future work.

In sport youths associations like USMA, internship requests mainly concern management, administration and field activities. In some cases they also lead to international exchanges with other associations financed by the Erasmus program (KA1, or Capacity Building). The fact that an association can notoriously combine an internship period with a mobility period abroad is considered a highly incentive opportunity, and to make contact with it.

Stakeholders:

- Grassroots sport clubs

They are the most mass sports organizations in all European countries. Their involvement in the apprenticeship and internship process can provide a wide variety of opportunities in terms of sports. Grassroots sports clubs are the perfect tool at the local level for socializing, social and charity campaigns, camps and trainings, volunteering, and of course apprenticeships and internships - especially suitable forms for young people to learn the basics of organizational work through the activities of the sports club. People who teach young people apprenticeships and internships are usually presidents, coaches, and administrators who simply show their actions and explain them to young people (without the relevant targeted sports management training programs, for example, which in many cases are theorized and overly demanding).

- Professional sports clubs

Professional sport clubs are the next step in terms of organization and responsibilities mentioned in the previous Grassroots sport clubs section, combined with a clearer focus on a specific sport / specific community in the form of a fan base. Their number is not so high, nor do they cover the geographical areas in proportion. The openness of these clubs to apprenticeship and internship programs, respectively the allocation of a special



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resource by trainers to develop professional and mostly useful training programs for apprentices and trainees, is extremely important in terms of the perspective for the participants in the program, as well as and in front of the discipline sports management.

- Non-governmental sports organizations

These organizations, unlike grassroots and professional sports clubs, are not focused on a specific sport, but are committed mostly to the social aspects of different sports. Accordingly, their apprenticeship and internship programs go far beyond the norms of sport and the clear sports management and can extend to the norms of social entrepreneurship, social advocacy, single and regular campaigns to promote sport and its opportunities for inclusion, can contribute to create soft skills, to build team skills, to improve fair play understanding and support for the more vulnerable, to train adolescents, to support health programs, as well as many others.

Why it is important to promote apprenticeships and internships in sports clubs and organizations

1. Every sports club, whether professional or amateur, must have a social / community program that includes apprenticeship, internship, and volunteer opportunities. This is important in terms of involving young people or engaging people who neither study nor work in activities they enjoy (arguably sport as a social phenomenon is one of the most popular activities).
2. The openness of a sports club or organization to the local community through apprenticeship and internship programs provides many additional opportunities both for the club / organization itself (additional workforce, additional perspective on clubs' / organizations' activities, future supporters in society) and for participants in these programs (accumulation of contacts, experience and knowledge in the field of sports management, opportunity for professional or voluntary development in the field, opportunity to present own ideas in support of the club's / organization's activities).



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3. Large-scale geographical coverage of apprenticeship and internship programs, respectively of new opportunities for participants, is possible, as long as sports clubs / organizations from small settlements are included (especially where they are the only sports club or sports organization, and in rare cases - and the only suitable organization in the village).
4. Promoting apprenticeships and internships and introducing such programs in more sports clubs and organizations would also lead to more intensive information exchange, more opportunities for stakeholders themselves, and more opportunities for networks and partnerships.
5. Undoubtedly, the integration of apprenticeship and internship programs in more sports clubs and organizations would increase the quality of sports management in the medium and long term, would increase the quality of sports experts, would give more human resources in the hands of clubs and organizations - especially important for the smallest ones, would reduce the percentage of young people who do not study and work (especially in small communities and rural areas), would increase the visibility and social role of sports clubs and organizations at least at the local level.
6. In many places - especially in small settlements and rural areas, sports clubs are maintained only on a physical level and without access to information on partnerships, programs and new opportunities. With the inclusion of young and fresh people in them, it is quite possible to increase the awareness and participation of these clubs in various development and funding programs. Young people are far more productive and open to communication channels and this would enhance opportunities for collaboration and partnership with other similar sports clubs and organizations.
7. The involvement of young people in the activities of an amateur or professional club or organization can lead to a significant development of the social media channels of the respective stakeholder. This would immediately contribute to



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better visibility of the club / organization on the Internet (especially important if it is a big city where there is competition in the sport services / activities offered).

8. Official recognition of skills and competences obtained through the involvement in the sport club or organization can help young people find further employment / opportunities.
9. As it was mentioned in 2nd Join Position Paper - Reinforcing local and transnational networks of sports clubs and educational organisations and we consider it extremely important in the current context: *“Sports clubs and organizations are the places where people find the sense of belongingness and, especially young people, learn the healthy habits of staying active”*; and *“Sport clubs provide an opportunity for young people to learn interpersonal skills that will help them in their professional life, such as leadership, problem solving, responsibility and sense of initiative and discipline.”*

How to promote apprenticeships and internships programs in sports at the local level

Tool	Description
Professional sports clubs	Official website; Official blog Billboards during matches FanShops Email campaigns to supporters Specialized websites for work and internships Social media presence News websites TV & Radio Internet paid campaigns (Google, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram,



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	etc.) Demonstration sports events - open, in educational institutions, etc.
Grassroots sports clubs	Official website or blog Billboards during matches Specialized websites for work and internships Social media presence News websites Local TV & Radio Internet free campaigns (Google, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, etc.) Personally during own or other sporting events Demonstration sports events - open, in educational institutions, etc.
Sports organisations	Official website or blog Specialized websites for work and internships Social media presence; also paid or free campaigns News websites Local TV & Radio Personally during own or other sporting events Demonstration sports events - open, in educational institutions, etc.
Local sports organisations	Local newspaper Local TV & Radio Social media presence; also paid or free campaigns Personally during own or other sporting events Demonstration sports events - open, in educational institutions, etc.
Informal sports	Social media presence; also paid or free campaigns



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organisations	Local newspaper Personally during own or other sporting events Demonstration sports events - open, in educational institutions, etc.
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