

*Scaling
innovations*

SPORTS SPECIAL

Inspiration





Foreword

Sport and being active is good for everyone, but not everyone puts this into practice. From the Eurobarometer on sport and physical activity from 2022 we know that more than half of Europeans never practice sport or engage in physical activity. Particularly, men are more active than women, younger people are more active than older people, and people from disadvantaged groups are often less active. When it comes to barriers, right after reasons such as lack of time or interest come challenges in terms of disability, illness, and costs.

The challenge is clear, action is needed to encourage, enable and support everyone to enjoy sport. Activating people to engage in sport is a common challenge, inviting action from policy-makers, sport federations, health professionals and so forth, and by people themselves. We can all play our part, starting on the pitch, but support is desirable at all levels, including at the European level.

The European Commission supports sport cooperation and partnerships through Erasmus+, enabling professionals and practitioners to work together on priorities such as equality, sustainability, education or integrity and values. The European Commission also foster common learning and sharing good practices, for instance through its initiative “SHARE 2.0”. This platform allows sport stakeholders to discover EU funding opportunities and encourages an exchange of good practice and peer learning in three dedicated communities of practice, green, health and innovation. The Commission also supports promotional activities across Europe, through the European Week of Sport and different initiatives for policymakers to learn from each other.

These actions are designed to identify good ideas and successful practices, to share this information and to mobilise sport professionals to take action and to join forces to make sport for all easier, accessible and affordable.

This magazine is an excellent example of learning from good practice, with articles, case studies and interviews offering expertise and examples from all corners of Europe. I invite you to read this magazine with great interest, and to make good use of the wealth of knowledge you find in it.



Floor van Houdt
Head of Unit for Sport,
European Commission

Foreword

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Roadmap Sports4All

European innovations for a more active life

By joining forces internationally, Sportinnovator wants to make a stand against rising levels of physical inactivity that many countries worldwide face. The Sports4All Innovation Summit in Paris marked the starting signal for a mission that Sportinnovator has formulated together with other European pioneers and boosters. A roadmap for the next four years in which European collaboration in the field of sports and exercise innovations is central. The goal: More sports and physical activity, for everyone at every level!

In recent years, Sportinnovator in the Netherlands has focused on stimulating innovations that encourage people to lead a more active lifestyle. Innovations that contribute to making sports and physical activity self-evident for everyone. "It's quite a challenge, vital but by no means easy", says Harry van Dorenmalen, chairman of the Topteam Sportinnovator. "There is no golden formula that instantly motivates people to take exercise. What is needed is a society-wide strategy, targeting all segments of the population and all aspects of our day-to-day lives, including education, employment and leisure activities."

There are already many initiatives in the Netherlands that encourage people to participate in sports and exercise more frequently. They are just not yet known everywhere.

Van Dorenmalen: “Apart from that, you will only alter your habits if you see the benefits of doing so, and if you actually enjoy it. You have to use smart, compelling messaging to help people understand that a little more exercise is good for them, that they will feel better and that, if they lead a more active life, their reward will be several more years of healthy life. In short, we need to offer them solutions that they cannot resist.”

Merit Clocquet, Sport Innovation Officer of Sportinnovator has a lot of confidence in all programs and innovations that are being developed to get people to be more active. “At Sportinnovator, we are explicitly looking for transformative novelties; innovations that will soon make a difference.”

European collaboration

High levels of physical inactivity is not a specifically Dutch phenomenon, it also occurs in other European countries. There too, much effort is put into creating innovations and initiatives that aim to get people to be more active. Therefore, Sportinnovator has made contacts and joined forces with sports innovation organisations in various other European countries.

“There is no golden formula that instantly motivates people to take exercise.”

**Harry van Dorenmalen,
chairman of the Topteam Sportinnovator**

inspiration

“It is important that we inspire each other within Europe and work together to improve collaboration because we need each other to make a difference”, Van Dorenmalen emphasises. “We already share a lot of knowledge and there is regional collaboration between the different countries, but these are mostly isolated projects. As a result, they remain small and relatively unknown so that successful initiatives cannot scale up. There is a lot of untapped potential and that is a pity.”

European collaboration is important, also for the financing of projects. Many innovations in the sports and exercise sector arise from social entrepreneurship and often do not have a profit motive. But a healthy revenue model is of course necessary to survive. Clocquet: “In addition to support coming from our own government, European support can be helpful. Collaboration is usually a prerequisite for this. At the same time, we want to prevent these initiatives from becoming too dependent on subsidies.”

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**Harry van Dorenmalen,
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“At Sportinnovator, we are explicitly looking for transformative novelties; innovations that will soon make a difference.”

**Merit Clocquet,
Sport Innovation Officer of Sportinnovator**

Sports4All Innovation Summit

The Olympic Games is the largest sporting event in the world. This makes it an excellent platform to bring countries together, inspire each other in the field of sports and exercise innovations and put European collaboration into practice. The [Sports4All Innovation Summit](#), which was held during the Paralympic Games in Paris, was the kick-off for the Sports4All mission that Sportinnovator formulated together with six other European frontrunners.

Overview of innovations

This Sports4All Innovation book provides an overview of social and technological innovations developed in the European countries involved in the Sports4All-mission. Inspiring examples that should ultimately lead to the implementation of innovations on a larger scale. It was created with input from England, Ireland, Denmark, France, Belgium, Catalonia and the Netherlands.

inspiration

Clocquet: “What is striking about this selection is the wide variation and the differences in approach. It ranges from actually bringing sport to your front door, to an app that encourages behavioural change where sport only seems to be a side issue. It is very interesting to connect with other European initiatives and learn from each other.”

Van Dorenmalen concludes optimistically: “How great would it be if successful innovations from each country were followed up in another European country in the coming years? Awesome! That’s what we are going for!”



Harry van Dorenmalen
Chairman Topteam
Sportinnovator



Merit Clocquet
Sport Innovation Officer
Sportinnovator

SPORTINNOVATOR

Sportinnovator is the Netherlands' leading sports innovation network. Its mission is to drive and implement innovative solutions for a lifetime of enjoyment playing sport and taking exercise. A national network of Sportinnovator centers, research institutes, companies, sports institutions and municipalities collaborate on groundbreaking innovations that encourage an active lifestyle among the population. Sportinnovator also supports innovations that boost performance improvement in elite sport and innovations that increase sustainability in sport and sports facilities.

Inspiration

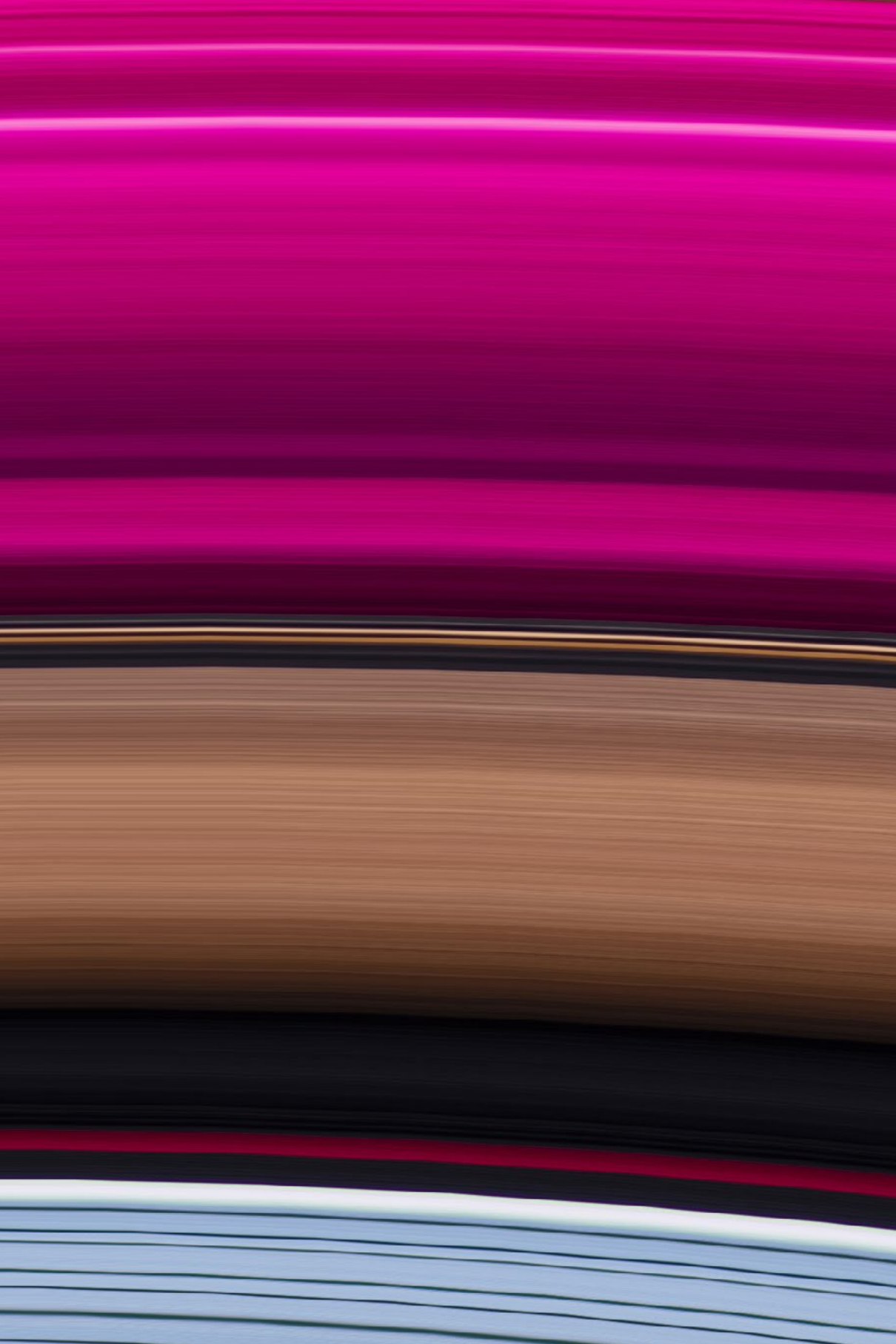
Get inspired by this overview of social and technological innovations all aimed at encouraging people to lead a more active lifestyle. 20 successful innovations, developed in the European countries involved in the Sports4All-mission: England, Ireland, Denmark, France, Belgium, The Netherlands and the Spanish autonomous region Catalonia.

The selected innovations focus on diversity and inclusion and are thematically grouped around three specific target groups with lower levels of physical activity:

- Disadvantaged and lower socio-economic communities
- People with a disability or long-term health condition
- Youth aged 16-20



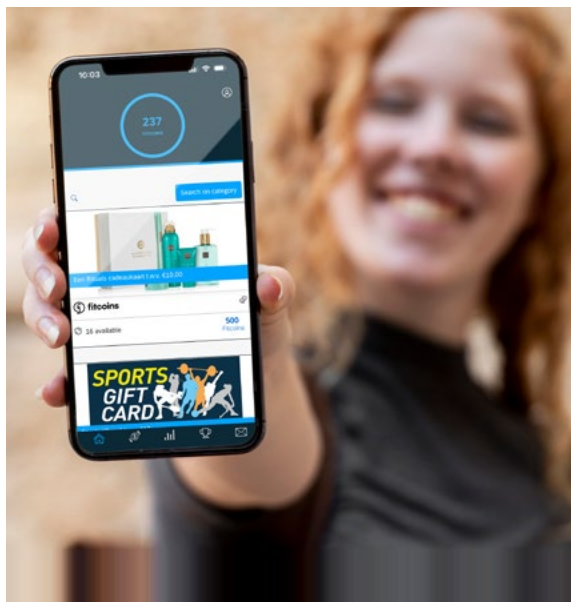
Best practices



**Disadvantaged
and lower
socio-economic
communities**

Fitcoins

BY: IT'S MY LIFE



The digital currency that sets the whole of the Netherlands in motion

This app encourages healthy behavior. More than 24,000 users earn Fitcoins every day by exercising. They spend the Fitcoins they earn on healthy products or services.

Binding factor

Fitcoins goes beyond rewarding individuals for physical activity. Fitcoins are also used as a binding factor in social domain projects, with the focus on encouraging exercise among people with a lower socio-economic status.



 **fitcoins**

Equal opportunities

People from lower income classes live on average 6 years shorter and suffer from chronic health problems 15 years earlier than people with a higher income. Fitcoins wants everyone to have equal opportunities for a healthier life.

Organisations in motion

Fitcoins are also offered by organisations in combination with a lifestyle program. Employers, municipalities or associations can reward their target group with a uniquely composed offer.

Participant Sandra is very enthusiastic:

"In addition to the discounts you can earn, Fitcoins also attributes so much to your physical and mental well-being. My personal goal is to walk 10 kilometers a day. I also really move my arms, so my whole body tightens up. I have lost 10 kilos in six months. I just feel great in my own skin."

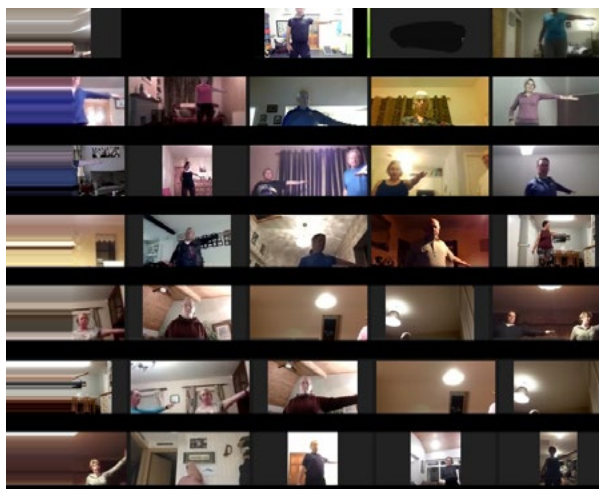
Wellness unLAOISed

BY: LAOIS SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

Wellness unLAOISed is a 12-week online evidence-based multimodal exercise, nutrition and health education programme designed specifically for adults who are socially, educationally or economically disadvantaged. The programme content and purpose-built app was co-created with our target group and piloted with 72 participants in county Laois, Ireland in 2022. The purpose of Wellness unLAOISed is to increase physical activity participation, health literacy, physical health, mental health and wellbeing.

This project is a collaboration between government organisations, industry, numerous stakeholders and our target group. Together we developed an app and bespoke exercise and lifestyle medicine programme that is specific to the needs of adults living in disadvantaged communities and is inclusive of adults of all ages, functional ability and clinical conditions who tend to have fewer opportunities and less access to these types of programmes.

The analysis of the participants pre and post programme tests confirmed increased upper body muscle strength, lower body muscle strength, cardiovascular fitness, balance, flexibility, physical activity participation, health, fitness and nutrition and self-efficacy to maintain these behaviours in the long term. This has significant implications for health, particularly in this target group.



SPORT: Supporting Positive Outcomes in Recovery Together

BY: LIMERICK SPORTS PARTNERSHIP



The SPORT initiative aims to support individuals aged 18 and above recovering from drug or alcohol addiction. Our goal is to introduce positive lifestyle alternatives through sports and physical activities, complementing existing aftercare plans and helping individuals transition away from substance misuse to become active, contributing members of their communities and local sports clubs.

Initially, the program focused on introducing sports and physical activities to those in treatment for substance use, whether in residential or community-based settings. This foundation laid the groundwork for the broader SPORT initiative, emphasising the role of physical activity in supporting recovery and overall well-being.

Our project has seen remarkable success in both the short and medium term, showcasing its profound impact on individuals in recovery. In the short term, our engagement initiatives have fostered strong relationships between participants and program facilitators, creating an environment conducive to positive change. Increased physical activity has improved participants' fitness levels and heightened their awareness of the link between sports and physical and mental health. This newfound confidence has led to a decrease in negative behaviours and motivated participants to pursue positive activities.



Tús Nua-SPORT
Supporting Positive Outcomes in Recovery Together

Inspiration



Beat the Street

BY: INTELLIGENT HEALTH

Beat the Street uses behaviour change and gamification to tackle health inequalities across a population, with participants seeing how far they can walk, run, cycle or roll around their community.

Intelligent Health have created a transformational tool for partners to improve public health and place at scale, which uses behavioural science and is evidence-based. At its heart is a game called Beat the Street that enables adults and children to connect to where they live, work and play and empowers them to make small changes to their daily behaviour. We are able to deliver at scale (usually 10-13% of the population) thanks to our digital platform that leverages innovative technology and gamification. Additionally, this platform provides partners with a huge amount of data and insight into the health and resilience of the communities they serve.

Beat the Street has been delivered in over 180 places and reached over 1.8 million people, with the greatest impact for people from a lower socio-economic background.

“Outside of elections I can’t think of a single engagement programme that we reach such levels and those that are engaged are actively engaged”

Owen Swift – Physical Activity & Sport Strategic Manager – Derby City Council





Social SportUp: the Scalers Circle

BY: SOCIAL INNOVATION FACTORY



Social SportUp is a unique boost program for so-called 'social sports practices' who want to realise a social innovation in the sports and exercise sector. These practices organise sports, but also do social work, youth work and welfare work.

The participants in the boost program receive professional guidance in

the development, growth, communication, financing and networking of their organisation. In trainings and workshops, they are challenged and helped by experts and other innovators who are in the same phase of the innovation cycle.

Throughout the program there are various promotional opportunities to present the projects online and offline to a wide audience. The final goal is to ensure that participants are empowered so that they can further develop their sport or exercise concept as innovative, impactful and solid. A scaling program for sports practices is currently underway.

Quotes participants:

"I now have an understanding that I and my project are part of a broader movement of innovators and improvers."

"I found the much-needed support and tools to do a better job."

"It pinpointed the foundations we had not yet built and provided knowledge and network to strengthen ourselves in them."



Inspiration

The purpose of Get2Sport is to ensure a well-functioning local sports infrastructure by supporting the volunteer forces in sports clubs in vulnerable residential areas. In this way, Get2Sport provides opportunities for marginalized groups to engage in sports activities.

In socially disadvantaged communities with a large representation of residents from other cultures, getting sufficient volunteers is often a problem for sports clubs. Get2Sport aims to support these sports clubs in order to address the social bias in sports participation in these communities.

In 2024, Get2Sport supports 74 sports clubs in 53 vulnerable residential areas, located in 25 different municipalities.

Recently, Get2Sport was honored to receive the 'Be Equal' award at the #BeInclusive EU Sport Awards 2023 for its outstanding contribution to promoting equality and inclusion through sports.

An employee in a municipal culture and leisure department states:

"One might think – "Well, it's just football." But it is much more than just football for the children who otherwise have nothing to engage in. For these children, this is where they encounter resourceful adults who have the energy to be there for them. This is where they meet other children and young people and make friends across social barriers. It means a lot to them have something to do instead of hanging out on the streets."





**People with
a disability or
long-term health
condition**

Gyromotics

BY: GYROMOTICS



A custom-made foot prosthesis with a personalised appearance and ideal suspension.

Every human body is different and constantly changing. However, existing foot prostheses do not change with these physical developments of the body. Gyromotics therefore develops personalised foot prostheses that do just that. Each foot prosthesis is custom made and suits specific goals, needs and wishes. A foot with a personalised appearance and ideal suspension, made of very strong materials that guarantee a long lifespan.

Gyromotics has developed the ArcX NextGen especially for children. This

prosthesis has the perfect suspension for every user and is suitable for all activities: from playing tag in the schoolyard to romping in the woods and swimming in the sea.

Gyromotics is also developing an advanced version of the prosthetic foot for adults with a moving ankle. This can be placed in multiple positions and adjusted for shoes with different heel heights. This makes an even wider range of activities possible.

What users say about Gyromotics:

"I'm no longer the last one picked during gym at school"

"For the first time I can look at the nature around me, instead of focusing on the path and my foot"



Gyromotics
tailor-made prosthetic foot

Inspiration

Liquid Therapy

BY: LIQUID THERAPY/DONEGAL SPORTS PARTNERSHIP/SPORT

Liquid Therapy is an award winning charity located in Rossnowlagh, Co. Donegal. It offers a supportive environment where young individuals can access the physical and therapeutic benefits of surfing and the ocean through child-centered programmes. The mission of Liquid Therapy is to ensure that the mental health and well-being benefits of the outdoors, particularly the ocean, are accessible to all individuals, irrespective of any existing barriers they may face, such as intellectual, physical, behavioural, or emotional challenges.

The organisation provides inclusive and adaptive surf therapy programmes that specifically cater to the needs of young people who struggle to participate in mainstream programmes. These programmes have been developed over a period of 12 years and are evidence-based, addressing barriers to inclusion in both sport and society, while also promoting positive mental health and overall well-being.

Liquid Therapy was a recipient of Innovation for Sports Inclusion Funding 2023. The vision of the Innovation for Sports Inclusion fund is to solve critical problems and challenges to increase the number of people from economic, social or educational disadvantage, or who have a disability, participating in sport and physical activity in Ireland.





Inclusive Volunteering

BY: COMMUNITY INTEGRATED CARE



Community Integrated Care's Inclusive Volunteering model offers people who draw on care and support life-changing personal development opportunities, to be inspired by sporting events. Working with the Rugby League World Cup 2021, UEFA Women's EURO 2022, World Gymnastics Championships 2022, and World Para Swimming Championships 2023, it has empowered more than 500 lives so far.

It is targeted at disabled people who

face profound barriers to social and sporting inclusion – addressing employment, skills, relationship and health inequalities. 96% of participants report enhanced skills and confidence, and 100% have had fun.

The programme sees the charity's specialists creatively explore the goals, dreams and needs of participants. Through cultivating deep insights, they co-produce transformative projects inspired by the sporting event that empower long-term confidence, skills, and relationships in each individual. Participants enjoy the life-changing experience of sharing their talents at the tournament, enhancing athlete and spectator experience, and accessing tailored mentoring.

From enabling people with communication barriers to find their voice through developing media skills, to offering people who need sensory comfort the joy of making gifts of soap for visiting athletes, Inclusive Volunteering is creative, uplifting and impactful.

Could your sporting event be next?





Individual support in and through sport: a way of social inclusion

BY: ASSOCIATION DAHLIR

DAHLIR believes in a society where difference is considered wealth, where everyone has their role to play and can flourish freely, particularly through leisure.

DAHLIR supports disabled people who are underrepresented in “ordinary” sports, due to various social issues. Through a different approach to sports and physical activities, DAHLIR allows disabled people to express their individual wishes for sport and cultural activities.

It helps them find the activity and the club to practice in an autonomous and enduring manner. The aim is to make people proud of themselves and their achievements. DAHLIR has the policy that disabled persons must be able to have regular practice in “ordinary” sports clubs within their communities. DAHLIR assists these clubs in adapting their practices to be more inclusive.

DAHLIR is available in 5 departments in France with proven social impact on health, independence and self-confidence. The program strengthens social bonds and pursues a more open-minded, inclusive society. DAHLIR actively promotes the recognition of sport as a tool for social inclusion and employability.

“By taking part in DAHLIR sessions, I gained self-confidence and found friends”

Dania, a participant of DAHLIR activities.

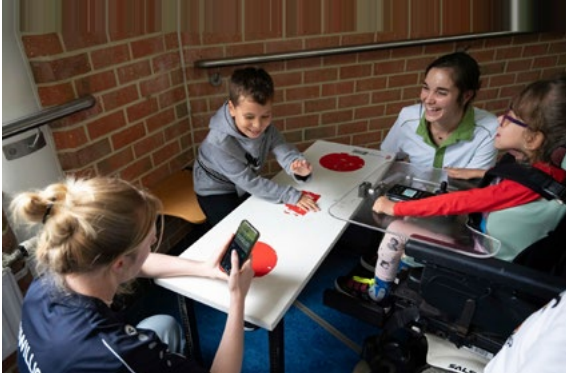
DAHLIR





Camionette Cup

BY: G-SPORT FLANDERS



The Camionette Cup is a challenging activity for people with an impairment, mental health issues or chronic diseases in Flanders. In the Camionette Cup - which is inspired by the Belgian TV show Container Cup - participants are given a variety of tasks that test their balance, coordination, endurance, reaction speed, strength, precision and much more.



Exercise tests range from cycling the furthest distance possible in three minutes, to maintaining balance for as long as possible. For wheelchair users, there is also a wheelchair skills test, and the tests are adapted for people with visual impairments. The Camionette Cup travels through the entire country to crown the most versatile sports club in Flanders. There are no prizes for the winners as it is difficult to compare disabilities, ages and genders, but the fun factor and the challenge are essential.

The Camionette Cup was founded by G-sport Vlaanderen during the Corona pandemic, as many fun activities could not take place as planned at that time. Due to its great success, the project was continued after the Corona years.



Play and Train

BY: PLAY AND TRAIN

Play and Train organises sports and educational activities nationally and internationally through conferences, education seminars, sports camps, and family camps. These activities are aimed at people with disabilities at all sporting levels and cover different social segments and age groups.

In addition, it has offered specialised training to sports and health professionals, with the aim of improving the care and accompaniment of people with disabilities in their sports practice. Training programmes in social skills and teamwork have also been carried out to promote integration and coexistence between people with and without disabilities through sport.

Almost 70.000 people have participated in our sports and educational activities throughout the last eleven years, generating a direct impact on the lives of people with disabilities, improving their physical and psychological condition.

In short, Play and Train has contributed significantly to the social inclusion of people with disabilities through sport, promoting equal opportunities and respect for diversity.

Angel, father of Didac who has a lower limb amputation:

*“Seeing that he is not the only one.
To see that he can have as many, more
or less difficulties than others and that,
in the end, they make a team.”*



Soldaterprojekt

BY: DANISH SPORTS FEDERATION (DIF) IN

COLLABORATION WITH THE DANISH ARMED FORCES



Soldaterprojekt aims to inspire and support psychologically and physically injured veterans to find their way back to an independent and meaningful life. The project focuses on supporting veterans with PTSD through sports and recreational activities.

The project uses sport and the community that surrounds it to support the veterans' reintegration with a focus

on creating social networks. It improves the well-being of veterans and helps them lead an independent and purposeful life.

This is done by first establishing platforms where veterans can be motivated to take up sports in smaller and safer settings (safe zones). From there, a natural transition must be established so that the sports activities for the veterans can continue in the local sports structure.

A participant states:

"A social space with room to be a 'shut-in cardboard box' and other times a jumping jack. Just to be normal in the abnormal with people who understand and accept. The DIF Soldiers Project has saved my life by getting me out of my shell and actively participating again in sports and in an association."



**SOLDATER
PROJEKT**

Inspiration



The background consists of several parallel diagonal stripes. The stripes are primarily in shades of purple, ranging from a deep magenta to a lighter lavender. There are also some stripes in a dark blue and a golden-brown color, interspersed among the purple ones. The stripes are oriented from the top-left towards the bottom-right.

Youth aged 16-20



*Platform for active esports with the latest VR/AR technologies
Games - Sports - Health - Social
- Metaverse*

Young people are increasingly exchanging sports and exercise for gaming on a game console or smartphone. The PWXR platform brings these two worlds together. By using your own body as a controller, you kill two birds with one stone. A new form of exercise that intrinsically motivates existing and new athletes to get moving.

PWXR uses wireless full-body VR for a multiplayer experience where players

can jump, crawl, run on a 'field' of three-by-three meters and really use their whole body as a 'controller'. Everything is connected to a central server and therefore no heavy equipment is required. The audience can watch the match on TV screens and mobile devices using AR/VR and enjoy the MC shaking up both the players and the crowd.

PWXR provides a full body training, full body freedom and high-pace exercises. Ideal for those who want to improve their strength, overall fitness or response time in a different, playful way. Or for those who enjoy gaming and do not currently exercise.





CityLegends

BY: CITYLEGENDS

App and urban knowledge institute for street culture.

CityLegends aims to promote sports activities among urban youth. It is an innovative app that functions as a 'Strava for urban culture'. Users can discover sports locations, take on challenges and share their achievements through videos.

With more than 150,000 users worldwide, CityLegends provides valuable insights for brands, governments and municipalities. Insights into the interests and needs of young people in urban areas. As a result, all parties are better involved in the local urban sports community. To take this to a higher level and strengthen the communities.

In addition, CityLegends emphasizes the social aspect of sport. Users can build communities and inspire each other. Young people are encouraged to go outside and be active through technology and social interaction. CityLegends thus creates a significant social impact and makes a positive contribution to society.

CityLegends is funded through investments, grants, sponsorships and revenue streams such as in-app purchases, branded campaigns and advertising partnerships.

"Love this app, it's the instagram of street culture!" – Pablo7194

"Battles are great! Great app to battle against others, find spots and win some extra cash on the side" – GregOry1

"Really great app, easy to use and a lot of handy features!" – Vincent Veth



CITYLEGENDS



Her Moves

BY: SPORT IRELAND



In Ireland, girls are 40% more likely to drop out of community sport in secondary school than boys, and 63% more likely to drop out of a sports club in secondary school than boys. Her Moves is on a mission to try and change girls' attitude towards sport and physical activity.

Through the creation of a brand, effective relatable messaging, an online hub and diversifying the physical activity opportunities. Her Moves aims to empower and inspire teenage girls to be active in their own way by reframing sport using the "8 Principles for Success" as discovered in the Girls Get Active Report.



Widening the offering through multi-sport multi-activity opportunities, the campaign tries to open girls' eyes to more forms of sport and puts the girls front and centre by giving them a voice and a choice. By invoking excitement and delivering physical activity in fun creative formats, and linking to other areas of interest, i.e., music/fashion/art, the campaign builds sport into their existing habits and enables teenage girls to re-engage in a format that fits their needs and wants.

The online hub (hermoves.ie) welcomes over 25,000 unique visitors as of April 2024. The campaign has been shortlisted for two major marketing awards – The All Ireland Marketing Awards and The Spider Awards.



Planet Earth Games College Challenge

BY: PLANET EARTH GAMES TRUST AND AOC SPORT

Planet Earth Games hosts an annual competition with the UK's college network, engaging thousands of 16-19 year olds with sustainable physical activity.

Surveys reveal that 60% of young people are “very worried” or “extremely worried” about climate change. By focusing on an issue that motivates them, Planet Earth Games helps young people get physically active to take climate action.

Planet Earth Games includes multiple physical challenges linked to climate action and empowers students to create their own local challenges, such as plogging (picking up litter and jogging), cycling to college and physical conservation projects. The competitive element is critical to its success. Everyone who participates submits evidence via planetearthgames.org and is awarded points for their college's total.

This collaboration has led to more accessible local delivery, wider engagement though involving young people and developed green leadership skills for the future. The program runs from January through to Earth Day on April 22nd.

The college with the most points on Earth Day is that year's champions!

“The competition created a fun and engaging way to learn about sustainability and take action. It fostered a sense of friendly competition between colleagues, further motivating participation.”
Michelle Dowse, CEO,
Heart of Worcestershire College





Léo Sport Job

BY: UNION NATIONALE SPORTIVE LÉO LAGRANGE



Léo Sport Job (LSJ) 16-25 is an innovative and flexible program of reinforced support for personal and professional development through sports. The target group for this programme are vulnerable young people aged 16 to 25. Léo Sport Job supports vulnerable youngsters towards employment by increasing their skills and boosting their self-confidence.



Support for young people is carried out according to a method developed by the federation. It is based on three pillars: triggering change, achieving change, achieving success. The method alternates between both collective and individual activities to allow tailor-made monitoring. The program has proven positive effects with major developments in skills development like kindness, solidarity, perseverance and taking responsibility. These soft skills are essential for integration into working life.

LSJ is supported by the Léo Lagrange National Sports Union (UNSL), a multi-sport federation which designs programs in which sports practice addresses specific socio-economic problems e.g. integration/reintegration, socialization, citizenship, fight against inequalities, and health promotion.





SWEEP

BY: THE FLANDERS INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHY
LIVING, MOEV, SPORTS FLANDERS

Adolescents, now more than ever, live life online. This explosion of screen time also means that young people go outside less, are less physically active, and more sedentary. SWEEP is an online platform that aims to inspire, activate, and bring together young people between 12 and 18 years old to be active during school hours and in their free time and have fun doing so.

Teenagers can discover their SWEEP-profile: Buzzer, Zoomer, Blitzzer, Bouncer, Smasher, or Swoosher and are offered activities in line with their profile and therefore with their interests. The activities offered cover a wide range of possibilities, from volunteer work to exercise and sports activities, but also include art walks and festivals. Everything that gets young people into action.

SWEEP focuses on all youths but pays extra attention to those target groups who show more inactivity according to scientific research, like girls, young people with a migration background, and teens in a socially vulnerable situation.

The platform also supports teachers to work on an active and healthier lifestyle for their students. On [SWEEP.be/for-teachers](https://www.sweep.be/for-teachers), they can find out how they can get pupils into action, upgrade lessons with more exercise, and meet curriculum goals in the process.

SWEEP





School Olympics

BY: DANISH SPORTS FEDERATION (DIF)



The purpose of School Olympics is to boost the joy of physical activity and motivate youngsters to lead an active life. It also aims to engage children with the Olympic brand.

The School Olympics aims to develop the professional approach to children's sports and PE. It is also a showcase for Danish sports, which can be used to attract new members to the clubs.



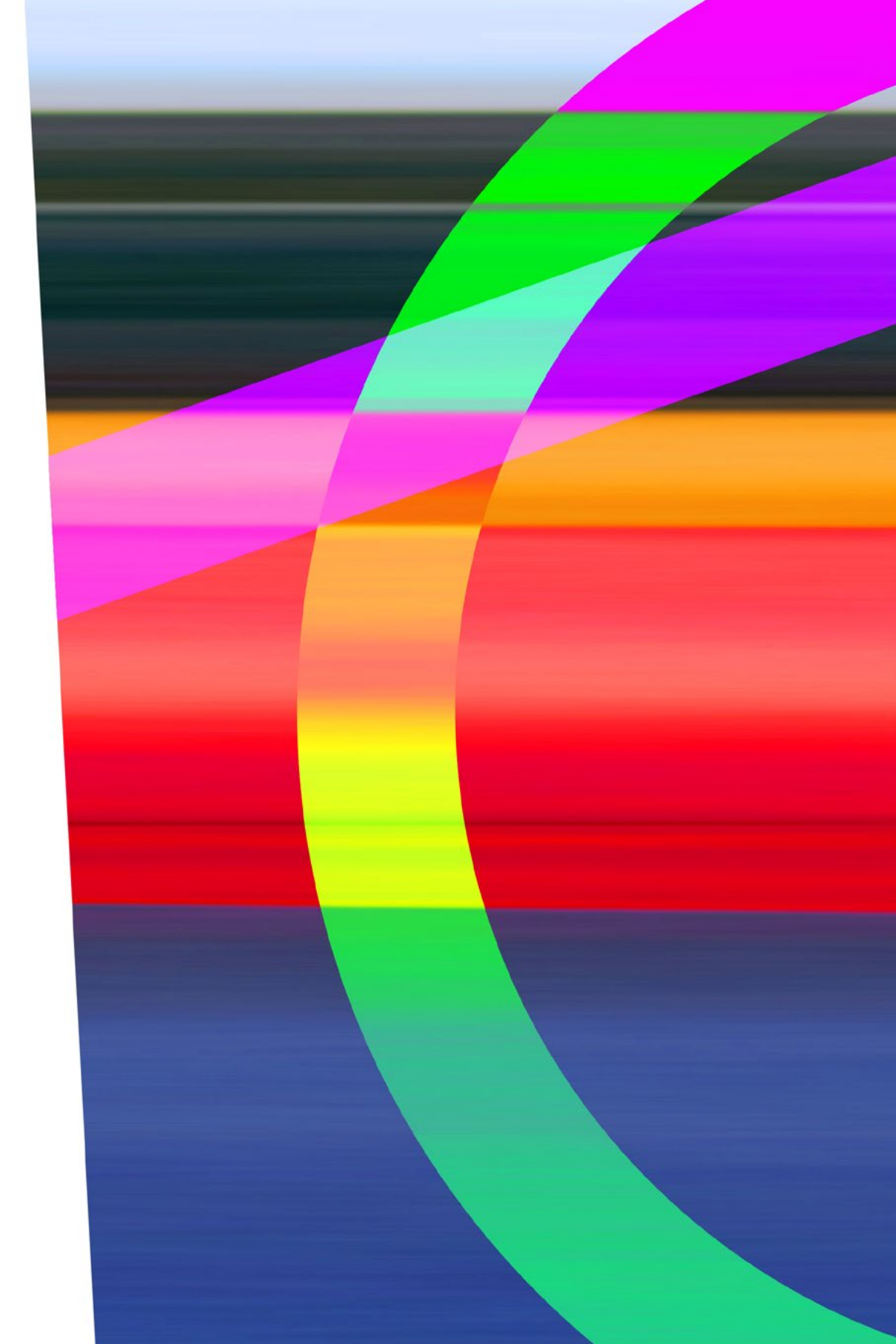
School Olympics offers activities that can be integrated into physical education at all grade levels. The children get to know a wide range of different sports which all are taught based on our three Children's Olympic values: Community, Skill and Fairplay.



The classes compete together as a team, where the class community is the most important thing and everyone's performance counts. Not only one's physical competencies are rewarded, but also a positive mindset and the ability to tackle disadvantages and overcome setbacks.

"The DIF School Olympics are incredibly important to us, because children's well-being is a core task for us. The School Olympics make children happy and at the same time they are introduced to new sports that they have not tried before."

Hans Natorp, Chairman, Danish Sports Confederation







Ambition

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Bending the curve of inactivity

New data released in 2024 by the World Health Organisation (WHO) show that nearly one third (31%) of adults worldwide, approximately 1.8 billion people, did not meet the recommended levels of physical activity in 2022. If the trend continues, levels of inactivity are projected to further rise to 35% by 2030. What needs to be done to bend the curve?

Dr Fiona Bull is Head of the unit on Physical activity, in the Department of Health Promotion at WHO HQ. She leads the WHO's global work on physical inactivity, supporting countries to get the world moving.

The benefits are proven and uncontroversial: regular physical activity helps prevent and treat noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and breast and colon cancer. It also helps to prevent hypertension, overweight and obesity and can improve mental health, quality of life and well-being.

Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018 – 2030

The World Health Organisation recommends that adults have 150 minutes of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week. These guidelines for physical activity are defined in the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018 – 2030. Fiona Bull: “This Action Plan was necessary because globally we weren't making much progress in increasing the levels of physical activity up to that point. We made it a 12 year action plan, because we realised we needed a serious and sustained effort.”

When asked whether there has been any progress since the Global Action Plan was introduced in 2018, Fiona Bull is clear: “Our first Status-report in 2022 tracking progress on implementing policy already showed disappointing results. And our recently launched data on global levels of activity in 2024 has only escalated our concern, because the data have gotten worse. Adults not meeting the global recommendation has gone up from 27% in 2018 to 31% globally in 2024. The world is currently off track from meeting the global target set for 2030 to reduce physical inactivity by 15%.”

Policy implementation

Over the last decade, there has been great progress in policy-writing. More and more countries are recognising the importance of including physical activity as an important factor in preventing noncommunicable diseases. The problem is the implementation of policy. Fiona Bull: “We are especially worried and concerned that in many countries there is still not enough policy implementation, with good coordination and collaborative interventions to address this major public health problem.”

Dr Bull emphasises that there is an enormous range of effective approaches and evidence on the health benefits of physical activity: “We know what to do. We have evidence on the solutions, but we don’t have effective, scaled implementation. Our 2024 report concluded progress has been slow and uneven. Why have we got this implementation gap? That is the central challenge that we face now.”

“The world is currently off track from meeting the global target set for 2030 to reduce physical inactivity by 15%.”

Ambition

“For most people, moderate intensity and variety of activities is much more enjoyable and a lot more accessible.”

Effective approaches

When asked for a Top 3 of effective approaches, Fiona Bull starts off with the importance of **community design and environment**. “The built environment must provide the opportunities that are accessible, affordable and safe so that people can be active in the settings in which they live, work and play. It means for instance that there must be good walking and cycling facilities and infrastructure for active recreation, sports and play. That means good access to parks, public open spaces and sports facilities.”

Secondly, Dr Bull stresses the important role **healthcare** can play. “We need to promote physical activity through our health system, especially primary health services. People need reminders, encouragement and behaviour change support provided by their primary health workers like doctors, nurses and physiotherapists. They can tell them why being active benefits their health condition and how to start and then do more.”

Innovation is the third area of importance she points out. “If we want to attract the one third of adults who are currently inactive, we need to look at why they are not responding to the current programs that gyms, sports clubs, health centers, recreation centers, etc. have on offer. There is clearly room for more innovation in providing new opportunities. Making sure it is enjoyable will be key”

Tone of voice

What is the importance of communication and the tone of voice used in encouraging people to be more active? Fiona Bull: “People don’t generally like the government telling them what they should and shouldn’t do. But people understand that some physical activity is good for their health. But knowledge

alone doesn't make for behaviour change. We have to be really creative and innovative in how we tell and share this message – we need to tailor to audience and be creative.”

Dr Bull stresses that it is important for people to realise that being physically active doesn't necessarily mean high intensity exercises or participating in competitive sports. “You don't have to do high intensity exercise; lower or moderate intensity physical activity is as effective, you just need to do it for longer. So people can choose what fits their routine and preference. For older adults and others, it's really importance to clarify you don't have to be running - brisk walking has the same benefits if you do it a bit more. It doesn't have to be hard work and sweaty. For most people, this moderate intensity and variety of activities is much more enjoyable and a lot more accessible.”

Private sector

Fiona Bull thinks it is very important that innovators and entrepreneurs support the government in addressing the challenges of physical inactivity. “We cannot rely on the government alone. We also need engagement and alignment from the private sector. This is where the hard work of evaluation and providing evidence of impact comes in. Investment in community sports, walking and cycling and supportive infrastructure will follow, but only if this effectiveness is proven, over time. If we don't have good evaluation, we'll only get short term investments and pilot studies. And to be honest, we're over pilot studies that don't get sustained.”

“We cannot rely on the government alone. We also need engagement and alignment from the private sector.”

Ambition

Bending the curve

When asked what keeps her motivated to meet the giant task she faces, she ends on a positive note: “During my studies I learned that participating in sports and physical activities had enormous health benefits and I developed a strong passion for promoting these benefits. I trained as a PE teacher and sports coach, but soon saw the greatest impact was reaching whole communities and all over the world.

It’s a great challenge and we’ve still got a lot of work to do, so I’m highly motivated. I am sure that the recent data and everyone’s experience through the COVID pandemic has made the importance of physical activity a much higher priority. And I believe by working together, we can bend this curve of inactivity in the right direction. We have to. Everyone will benefit.”



Dr Fiona Bull
Head of the unit on
Physical activity, WHO

Ambition

Scaling innovations across Europe

European collaboration is crucial in increasing participation rates in sport and physical activity and to combat the inactivity pandemic that many Western countries are facing. Joining forces is also vital for the implementation and scaling of sports and exercise innovations. How to shape this collaboration and what role does the EU play in it?

Floor van Houdt (Head of Unit for Sport, European Commission), Alberto Bichi (European Platform for Sports Innovation), Cormac MacDonnell (Sport Ireland) and Merit Clocquet (Sportinnovator) share their thoughts and ambitions.

Floor van Houdt opens the conversation by defining roles and responsibilities: “The EU has a supportive competency in the field of sports which means that we don’t have legislative powers. Our main mission and added value is to foster a European dimension in sport, bringing policymakers together, to be able to discuss common challenges and to learn from each other.”

Having said that, the EU does much more than this. It enables and facilitates by funding sport federations, partnerships and events through the Erasmus+ programme’s sport actions. And it raises awareness and facilitates joint campaigns with national and European partners, like the European Week of Sport which encourages people all across the EU to participate in sports.

Alberto Bichi, Executive Director of the European Platform for Sports Innovation, appreciates all these efforts from Brussels, but he is hoping for more: “I would like to push the EU for a broader ambition. Sports is not just relevant for the Unit for Sport. Sports is health, sports is diplomacy, sports is economic impact, education, infrastructure. Therefore sports should be an important theme on the EU’s strategic agenda.”

A healthy and active Europe

Cormac MacDonnell, Innovation & EU Projects Lead at Sport Ireland agrees: “The topic of sport and physical activity is a high priority area in Ireland. I think this goes for most European countries. When it comes to investing and supporting sport and physical activity the Irish government already invests significantly, and this is important to acknowledge, but more is needed, especially when targeting inactive and hard to reach communities.”

Van Houdt recognises the importance of financing: “The EU has funded hundreds of projects through Erasmus+ Sport Actions. This programme is designed to tackle societal and sport-related issues like gender equality, inclusion, integrity and sport participation in disadvantaged groups.”



“Our main mission and added value is to foster a European dimension in sport, to structure and strengthen collaboration and knowledge exchange.”

Floor van Houdt
Head of Unit for Sport,
European Commission

Ambition



“Sports should be an important theme on the EU’s strategic agenda.”

Alberto Bichi
EPSI

Merit Clocquet of Sportinnovator stresses the importance of innovation: “We support and encourage innovations and creative solutions that will contribute to bending the curve of inactivity. Together with other countries, we stimulate tomorrow’s solutions for the challenges of today. The larger European agenda and the funding that goes with it, are really important for us.”

SHARE 2.0

Another important EU-program which addresses these challenges, is SHARE 2.0. Through this initiative, the European Commission aims to structure and strengthen collaboration and knowledge exchange on key subjects in the field of sport: access to EU funding, health, innovation, and sustainability. SHARE 2.0 consists of four Communities of Practice, one of which focuses on innovation.

Floor van Houdt: “The idea of this Community of Practice is to bring innovators and other related parties together to share knowledge and get inspired. The community offers a space to learn, to benefit from capacity-building and enlarge networks across Europe. The purpose is to foster cooperation and explore the opportunities to get support from EU funds and actions.”

Cormac MacDonnell: “SHARE 1.0 was a catalyst for developing connections in Ireland which led to collaboration, program design and development under the ESF+ programme. The key thing for SHARE 2.0 is to be able to link EU funding opportunities with sport and physical activity interventions and innovation in each country, and collectively across Europe.”

Scaling best practices

The biggest challenge in innovation is scaling good ideas. Merit Clocquet: “The best practices which are highlighted in this magazine and during the Sports4All Innovation Summit, are all successful on a local scale in the individual countries. By presenting these innovations to a wider audience, we aim to interest and inspire early adaptors and solution seekers. From there on, we hope these innovations will be able to grow and find their way into Europe.”

Alberto Bichi of EPSI thinks scaling is first and foremost a question for the owners of the best practice. “What do you want to do with this innovation? After that, promoting good practices is very important. Not just by the innovators, but also by politicians. Finally, it will be the market that dictates whether an innovation will be successful or not.” Floor van Houdt agrees but points out that not all innovations can or should be marketed. “There is also a need for public innovation that is not specifically aimed at business development.”



“Together with other countries, we stimulate tomorrow’s solutions for the challenges of today.”

Merit Clocquet
Sportinnovator



“Good ideas and initiatives deserve to be shared and scaled across Europe.”

Cormac MacDonnell
Sport Ireland

Cormac MacDonnell of Sport Ireland rounds up the conversation: “Anything we can do to encourage and support the scaled and replication of successful sport initiatives, is highly welcomed. Good ideas and initiatives deserve to be shared and scaled across Europe. That is why we are very happy collaborating with ambitious innovation partners, as we do through the EPSI-platform and with the Sports4All Innovation initiative. We’re on a mission!”

Ambition



The Sports4All-project is initiated by Sportinnovator (The Netherlands), in close collaboration with innovation in sport-partners from Ireland, England, Belgium, Denmark, France and the Spanish autonomous region Catalonia.

Get to know the sport innovators, their organisations and their ambitions. Together they're on a joint mission to share innovation best practices across Europe and boost physical activity and participation in sport, with equal opportunities for everyone.

A joint mission



Sportinnovator



Sportinnovator is the Netherlands' leading sports innovation network. Its mission is to drive and implement innovative solutions for a lifetime of enjoyment playing sport and taking exercise. A national network of Sportinnovator centers, research institutes, companies, sports institutions and municipalities collaborate on groundbreaking innovations that encourage an active lifestyle among the population. Sportinnovator also supports innovations that boost performance improvement in elite sport and innovations that increase sustainability in sport and sports facilities.

What is the biggest challenge the Netherlands faces when it comes to participation in sports and leisure activities?

Less than half of the Dutch population complies with the physical activity guideline the government has set. This applies to both moderate physical efforts and muscle strengthening activities. In 15 years' time, we want 75% of Dutch people to achieve that guideline.

The biggest challenge is to help people understand that a little more exercise is good for them, that they will feel better and that, if they lead a more active life, their reward will be several more years of healthy life.

How does Sportinnovator address this challenge?

We must offer solutions that are irresistible. Particularly for people for whom the threshold is currently too high. Sportinnovator tries to influence people's exercise habits with smart innovations which encourage people to increase their physical activity levels, if they are not currently doing enough. That's not easy. There is no golden formula that instantly motivates people to take exercise. What is needed is a society-wide strategy, targeting all segments of the population and all aspects of our day-to-day lives, including education, employment and leisure activities. We mainly look for innovations that are already successful on a local scale. We are happy to help these innovations so that they can be applied in more places.

How important are innovation and new technologies to achieve the set goals?

Innovation and new technologies are crucial. Particularly in the field of sports and exercise, it is important to have a good sense of the spirit of the times. We have to come up with innovations that match how people spend their day-to-day lives.

Sportinnovator has both people and resources to stimulate innovations. With good guidance and a development budget for innovations, we help innovators start up, further develop or scale up more quickly. Since 2015, Sportinnovator has assessed more than 1,000 innovative ideas and has provided more than 300 promising initiatives with financial support. Of these, 100 innovations have actually found their way to the market.

What is the most important lesson you have learnt so far?

The first Sports Innovation Monitor, which was conducted in 2021 by the Amsterdam Business School, showed that Dutch sporting organisations are more innovative than average, when compared to other sectors in the Netherlands. Moreover, sporting organisations that excel in sports innovation also achieve superior performance levels.

This applies across the board, from the sporting field to the economic and social fields.

The main driver behind this is co-creation. This is a crucial element and forms the basis of the successful Sportinnovator formula.

What do you hope to learn from other countries?

It all starts with being inspired. In Europe, many countries have a policy priority on increasing the levels of physical activity amongst their population. To reach that goal, we need smart solutions. By opening up the European market, you can learn from each other and expand the reach of both supply and demand.

By getting to know the innovation partners from other countries, we can monitor relevant developments and bring good examples to the Netherlands. In this way, these European innovations contribute to Sportinnovator's objectives.



Sport Ireland



“Our ambition for sport in Ireland is “an active Ireland where everyone can enjoy the lifelong benefits of sport and physical activity” (Sport Ireland Strategy 2023 – 2027)

Sport Ireland is the statutory agency tasked with leading, advocating and providing directed investment for the development of sport in Ireland. This includes participation in sport, high performance sport, anti-doping, coaching and the development of the Sport Ireland Campus.

We advise, support and work with and through partner organisations, such as National Governing Bodies (NGBs / 65), Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs/ 29), and others who deliver sport and physical activity to:

- Increase levels of participation in sport, with a particular focus on diversity and inclusion – with innovative programmes and initiatives to engage and encourage low participation groups.

- Champion high performance sport – helping Irish teams, athletes, and support staff to be the best they can be and to be successful on the world stage. Empower people to build a commitment to their sport and take part for longer.
- Increase the number and quality of the coaches, officials, administrators, and volunteers who run and support sport.
- Deliver key support services such as safeguarding and anti-doping so that sport is ethical, safe, and fair.
- Further develop and improve the Sport Ireland Campus and the sporting infrastructure in Ireland.

What is the biggest challenge you face in Ireland concerning participation in sports and leisure activities?

1. How do we increase participation rates in sport and physical activity from lower socio-economic communities across Ireland
2. How do we reduce the disability gradient in sport
3. How to reduce teenage drop-out rates in sport, especially among teenage girls
4. How to support, retain and grow volunteering in sport

How does Sport Ireland address this challenge?

Through the implementation of Ireland National Sports Policy and development of policy and funding opportunity for sport bodies to develop programs and initiatives in these areas.

We have created a Local Sports Partnership network in Ireland and their primary role is to develop programmes and initiatives that support inclusion and participation in sport within disadvantaged and lower socio- economic communities. We have also developed funding opportunities through our innovation for sport inclusion programme and a new Sport4Empowerment programme which is EU funding through the ESF+ Fund.

How important are innovation and new technologies to reach the set goals?

Innovation is extremely important in sport, but it can be difficult for many sport organisations to find space and time to think creatively and develop new ideas. Innovation can also run against traditional norms within sport, and this is a challenge.

We see that technology is emerging as a tool to support sport in achieving its goals but is being used primarily in the high performance and competition environment rather than mainstream usage. We see technology being used well at grass roots, club and facility management level, and being used well by volunteers to help administer and manage teams, competitions and events.

What is the most important lesson you have learnt so far?

People working in sport have the ability and passion to produce new ideas to help develop and progress sport but they need to be asked, encouraged and supported to do so.

What do you hope to learn from other countries?

What is being done to support innovation in sport and what is working well.



Sport England



Established by Royal Charter in 1996, we're determined to give everyone in England the chance to benefit from sport and physical activity.

We're an arms-length body of government responsible for growing and developing the sport and physical activity sector in England, to ensure movement, sport and physical activity are central to the lives of everyone in England. We receive a combination of National Lottery funding and grant-in-aid from the UK Government, with around two-thirds of our funding coming from National Lottery players.

What is the biggest challenge you face in England concerning participation in sports and leisure activities?

The persistent inequalities that prevent some people from enjoying the benefits of sport and physical activity. The intersection of factors such as ethnicity, disability, age, gender, income, education and location mean that it's not always a level playing field. Right now, the opportunities to get involved in sport and activity in England depend too much on your background, your gender, your bank balance and your postcode. And we are here to change that.

How does Sport England address this challenge?

Uniting the Movement is our 10-year strategy for 2021-31, which has inequalities at its core. It sets out how we'll have a laser focus on them in all that we do, because providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove their barriers to activity, is vitally important to addressing many of the challenges we see in wider society. But we know we can't do it alone. By partnering with the right blend of local and national organisations, we will draw on the experiences and knowledge of people in the places and communities closest to the inequalities, while also connecting the experience & influence of national partners so that we can see change in the system to remove the barriers to getting active.

How important are innovation and new technologies to reach the set goals?

Very! To address long-standing inequalities, we need to create the right conditions for change. We'll do this by supporting people, organisations and partnerships with the potential to contribute to our strategy and help them to build the skills and capabilities needed to turn our shared plans and ideas into action. Applying innovation and digital is a critical capability that helps us be more people centred and agile in how we work. We are creating practical tools and playbooks that help to build an innovative mindset and embed innovation into everyday behaviours. Critical areas such as co-creation, digital exclusion and AI are on our radar next.

What is the most important lesson you've learnt so far?

Specificity is key to changing behaviour. We've been analysing our world-leading Active Lives surveys and have discovered that the most important indicator of lower levels of physical activity is where a person has two or more of the characteristics associated with being less active. These characteristics are:

- For adults: having a disability or long-term health condition, being older than 65 years, lower socioeconomic status (NS-SEC 6-8), Asian ethnicity, being pregnant or a parent of children under one year.
- For children: being female, from low affluence, having a disability or long-term health condition, and being of Asian and Black ethnicity.

This innovative approach recognises the intersectionality of individuals' characteristics and aims to encourage our sector to learn how to design interventions and undertake research that are more inclusive, so that we better meet the needs of the people that need our support the most.

What do you hope to learn from other countries?

It is very valuable to be inspired by and connect with other countries, to understand shared challenges, and to hear what they are doing to overcome them. There are exciting opportunities for greater collaboration, and the scale of inequalities means no one country will be able to solve these societal challenges alone. We are excited about the potential to learn together, which is just more fun than doing it alone!



Sport Flanders



Sport Flanders wants to offer everyone in Flanders as many opportunities as possible to experience sports and exercise, because we believe that it can make everyone happier and healthier. We do this by making sports and exercise in Flanders as high-quality, attractive, accessible and tailored as possible. In addition, we do everything we can to ensure that our Flemish elite athletes can excel at world level and want to use the inspiring and connecting power of elite sport to get Flanders moving.

What is the biggest challenge you face in Flanders concerning participation in sports and leisure activities?

Sport Flanders aims to encourage and keep as many of its residents engaged in sports and exercise. In a rapidly changing society, this is only possible if the sports sector is also constantly evolving. Policy makers, sports clubs, sports organisations, sports federations, entrepreneurs and start-ups in sports need to know exactly what they need to focus on today to be ready for the future. Our mission is only possible if we, as a sports agency, are prepared for the future; the future of sport and its place in society.

How does Sport Flanders address this challenge?

With our Sports Innovation Lab, Sports Innovation Congress and our work on five innovation clusters (Sports Tech, Sports Smart, Sports DNA, Sports Space and Sports Social), we believe that we can play a pioneering role for innovation in sport, and together with the sector continue to provide answers to the needs of tomorrow.

We want to be a radar and an accelerator for innovation in sport. So, we are building an innovative community in which ideas, insights and results of experiments can be shared and where we can create synergies between organisations with the same needs. Moreover, through experiments we wish to learn, create new insights, develop new products, improve our service, and inspire sports policy.

At our 2-yearly Sports Innovation Congress we focus on sports in the future. For instance, we share future societal scenarios and showcase new sports and exergames.

For permanent scanning of sports innovations at home and abroad, we work with an EWS team of about 20 colleagues, to capture, analyse and act on Early Warning Signals.

As megatrends and new (sport)products and service models can all have an impact on sports in the future.

The effective implementation of innovative ideas is also increasingly happening at Flemish sports federations thanks to financial support gained through the policy focus on innovation.

How important are innovation and new technologies to reach the set goals?

We investigate which innovative tech sports offer succeeds in getting youngsters moving.

In the [Sport Innovation Campus Brugge](#) we investigate and test how we can use technology to engage more people in sports and exercise. In the [Sportscube for Active Gaming](#) you can discover the latest technological sports trends and forms of movement with your friends, family or colleagues. You will find novelties such as Archery Tag, HADO, Smash volleyball, interactive movement games & urban racket sports.

We also developed the Sports Innovation Trailer; a travelling gym equipped with various software and hardware to play exergames. Companies, schools, municipalities, organisations or clubs can rent the Sports Innovation Trailer for an event or expo.

The above-mentioned examples are part of an extensive [portfolio](#) of Sport Vlaanderen supported innovative projects who are impactful and inspiring for the sports sector.

What is the most important lesson you've learned so far?

When developing sport innovation policy, the ultimate goal should be to broaden and deepen the sports experience through original and innovative initiatives and thereby reach more people and encourage them to play sports. This can be done by offering new sports, but also by offering innovative variants of an existing sport. The advancements in AI, AR, VR and MR provide opportunities for effectively adding an extra layer of gamification to popular sporting experiences.

What do you hope to learn from other countries?

We are eager to learn about impactful inspiring sport practices in other countries that can be transferred to our local setting.



Danish Sports Confederation (DIF)

Moving Denmark



Sport must have a significant place for all Danes throughout their lives – in communities on and off the pitch and through experiences that excite and bring Denmark together.

DIF sets Denmark in motion through sports, volunteering and joy. Through our many sports and rich culture of clubs and associations, we create great achievements and cohesion in society.

What is the biggest challenge you face in Denmark concerning participation in sports and leisure activities?

Volunteerism is under pressure. There are fewer 'regular' volunteers despite a growing membership, and association leaders point to attracting volunteers as their biggest challenge. Here, 44% of associations indicate that they have major challenges in recruiting

volunteers for boards and committees. Fortunately, there is great potential as more Danes wish to volunteer, with 11% of the population currently not volunteering but would like to.

However, while association leaders are asking for volunteers for fixed positions, Danes want to be more 'occasional' volunteers. To realize the great potential, we need to engage more occasional volunteers and make it more attractive to be a volunteer leader and coach.

Sports has the potential to mean more for more young people. From the age of 12, participation in sports steadily declines. At the same time, young people need local, physical communities to learn from and mature in more than ever. And more young coaches, volunteers, and role models in clubs help strengthen community sport. Unfortunately, sports communities are not always ready to adapt to young people's needs for flexible activities, new communities, and participation. Therefore, we will support the development of activities and communities that motivate young people to be active in sports and associations.

Better digital services and a strong data foundation. We are one of the most digitalized countries in the world, and Danes expect better digital services in sports. Today, few federations know their members and volunteers at an individual level, so many must base their efforts on limited, historical data. There is a need for better digital services and a strong and secure data foundation to develop better sports offerings and measure what creates value.

How does the Danish sports confederation address this challenge?

We support our 62 national federations by addressing these challenges through:

- Strategic sparring, education and facilitation of knowledge sharing among federations: we gather knowledge and deliver consultancy services in relation to volunteerism, digital development, children and youth, diversity, leadership etc.

- Strategic development projects across federations: we drive shared projects across sports that address our challenges. E.g. "Together in sports", "Future sport for children" and "Data-driven development".
- Financial support : we provide financial assistance for projects within our national federations and clubs to develop new initiatives.

How important are innovation and new technologies to reach the set goals?

Innovation is crucial in the sporting world to ensure our continued relevance. The key lies in striking a balance between preserving the strong sporting culture we have today while simultaneously preparing for the future. This applies to both the ongoing development of the activities themselves and the frameworks surrounding them. Examples include the use of new digital solutions that make it easier to access sports or to volunteer.

For example, we aim to ensure centralized data at the individual level, enabling sports to develop better and more tailored sports offerings and digital solutions that can attract and retain members.

What is the most important lesson you've learned so far?

The importance of testing and securing local involvement from associations, clubs and members.

What do you hope to learn from other countries?

- Successful initiatives to promote sports participation in specific demographic groups (e.g. youth, women etc.).
- Innovative use of technology to increase accessibility or engagement.
- Effective strategies to combat specific barriers to participation.



National Resources Center for Sports Innovations




**MINISTÈRE
 DES SPORTS
 ET DES JEUX OLYMPIQUES
 ET PARALYMPIQUES**
Liberté
 Égalité
 Fraternité

**Pôle Ressources
 National
 Sport
 Innovations**

The PRN SI leads a national mission in the service of developing practice for all.

The National Resources Center for Sports Innovations (PRN SI) is a resource and knowledge dissemination center on the themes of innovation in the sporting and socio-sporting field.

It constitutes a privileged place for exchanges and meetings of experts and professionals in the sector.

The PRN SI responds to the social challenges of developing practice for all and adapting to new societal contexts, whatever the territories and audiences.

It thus aims to bring physical activity and sport closer to its users (new practices and services, new equipment, public space synergies, etc.).

What is the biggest challenge you face in France concerning participation in sports and leisure activities?

A July 2023 survey in France revealed that over one third of respondents stated that they simply did not like sport and preferred other activities. We identify two types of challenges:

- An internal one in the field of sport and physical activity: there is a clear need for more autonomous sport practice now in France. The classical way of participating through club membership, is less and less common among younger generations.
- An external one: in what is now described as the “attention economy”, sport is in competition with streaming platforms, screens and other cultural offers.

How does PRN SI address this challenge?

The PRN SI focuses on several key settings where innovation can be expressed and developed:

- *Infrastructures, equipment, and physical activity settings*: physical activity settings are determining levers for the development of physical activity for all. They structure the range of possibilities and provide responses to expectations and needs of individuals.
- *Physical activity practice and associated offerings and services*: the fragmentation or the lack of diversity and adaptation of the offering in sport is a significant issue. Improving this offering is therefore an important strategic axis for increasing the number of practitioners and the quality of practices.
- *Public space and disadvantaged groups*: public policy also needs to address the design of public places, providing sporting facilities and equipment which encourage people to be active. Special attention is also required for disadvantaged groups for whom regular physical activity is less obvious, be it for financial, social or cultural reasons. These challenges are of interest to public decision-makers as well as associations and private companies who work towards lifting the obstacles to sports practice.

How important are innovation and new technologies to reach the set goals?

New technologies are central, as they offer an opportunity to diversify the current sport offering and attract new people to become active. However, solely resorting to a tech approach would fall short of expectations in the sector. We believe that innovations at large are instrumental to the future development of sport. They include new or adapted club management mechanisms, the development of social innovations, the consolidation of new or adapted disciplines and the provision of new services linked to sport and physical activity.

What is the most important lesson you've learnt so far?

What we have witnessed in the last years is both an innovation gap and a willingness to bridge it in the grassroots sport sector. For organisations often 100% based on volunteering, adapting to new technologies and digitalisation requires a lot of effort, training and change management. It is a long path to pursue, especially for clubs which are often focused on other priorities. This is where our mission makes sense: to act as a support group for those who want to align themselves to innovations in sport.

What do you hope to learn from other countries?

We're very eager to understand how innovations are viewed and nurtured in different contexts in Europe and to confront our approach as a public body to similar ones across borders.



INDESCAT



INDESCAT is the Catalan cluster of the sports industry. It is a private not-for-profit organisation that encompasses companies and entities linked to the world of sport, with the aim of developing actions that improve its competitiveness and that of its environment. Currently, INDESCAT represents more than 140 companies and entities, with a total turnover of almost 2.4 billion euros, which includes the 5 large value chains or segments: Events, Facilities, Goods and Services, Sports, Sports Tourism.

INDESCAT boosts the competitiveness of the Sports Industry of Catalonia through individual and collective value-added initiatives aimed at companies in the sector. The cluster's main objective is to help partners identify and address new business opportunities through three areas of action: knowledge, visibility and networking. The actions are encompassed in eight areas of work: innovation, entrepreneurship, internationalisation, talent, sustainability, visibility, networking and governance.

What is the biggest challenge Catalonia faces when it comes to participation in sports and leisure activities?

Catalonia faces several challenges in ensuring accessibility and inclusivity in sports and leisure activities. Socioeconomic barriers, such as the cost of participation and limited funding for public sports facilities, significantly impact engagement, particularly in economically disadvantaged areas. Additionally, urban versus rural disparities in access to facilities and transport infrastructure exacerbate these issues. Cultural and social factors, including diverse demographics and gender disparities, further complicate participation efforts. Physical and health barriers, particularly for the aging population and individuals with disabilities, also play a critical role

How does INDESCAT address this challenge?

We as INDESCAT help companies to boost competitiveness by providing tools for innovation, internationalisation and funding. We also bring companies together to generate networking opportunities amongst the members. Companies provide products and services to overcome the challenges of the industry. We also push the Catalan administration to understand the population needs and the business needs.

How important are innovation and new technologies to achieve the set goals?

We help you identify and address new business opportunities through knowledge, networking and visibility. Innovation and new technologies are crucial. For that reason, we participate in the EU project INSHAPE, which is a European cross regional innovation for Sports & Active Healthy Lifestyle. INSHAPE aims to create a European innovation hub and accelerates investments in high potential SMEs in the field of sport, fitness and technology. Also, we promote innovation through cooperative innovation projects and promote programs for startups.

Recently as part of INDESCAT we have promoted the Barcelona Sports Hub which is the reference point, both at state and European level, in which the different stakeholders of the sports sector can join forces and create synergies between them, with the aim of promoting the improvement of competitiveness and disruption in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship. All this, positioning the Barcelona brand at global level and working to contribute to the increase in the practice of sports among citizens as an objective of the UN 2030 Agenda.

What is the most important lesson you have learnt so far?

The most important lesson learned in innovation for INDESCAT is the critical role of collaboration and cross-sector partnerships in driving successful innovation. By fostering a cooperative environment, INDESCAT has been able to leverage the collective expertise and resources of its members to develop new solutions and technologies that advance the sports industry. Innovation often requires input and expertise from various sectors. INDESCAT encourages partnerships between sports companies, technology firms, research institutions, and other industries to create innovative solutions that address complex challenges.

Also very important is an open innovation model where ideas and solutions are shared openly among members. This openness helps to accelerate the development and implementation of new technologies and practices by allowing members to build on each other's work and avoid duplicating efforts.

What do you hope to learn from other countries?

There are several key areas where we hope to gain insights and knowledge such from successful international sports organisations, by learning about new innovations and cutting edge solutions and how they could be implemented in INDESCAT.



European Platform for Sport Innovation (EPSI)



The European Platform for Sport Innovation (EPSI) is a non-for-profit European association (ASBL) located in Brussels.

EPSI is a membership-based networking organisation representing more than 160 stakeholders in the field of sport and active lifestyle located in 30 European countries. EPSI members belong to a wide range of subjects brought together by the goal of creating and supporting an innovation-friendly environment for sport in Europe. At present, EPSI represents Public Authorities, Universities, Research Institutes, Clusters, Associations, Federations, Accelerators, Incubators, Industries and SMEs.

Focusing on the quadruple helix model, which includes public authorities, academia, businesses and end consumers, EPSI is able to effectively represent the main categories of actors in the sport and active lifestyle European value chain, thus creating a space where stakeholders with different but complementary needs and interests can interact, do business and launch successful project initiatives. Beyond the sport and physical activity sector, EPSI focuses on innovation in a number of related sectors, such as leisure, mobility, education, tourism, environment, constructions and health.

EPSI provides a wide range of services to its members. They can be divided into three main pillars:

Lobbying

Being located at the heart of Europe, EPSI strives to put sport and physical activity at the top of decision-makers' priority list, carving a consistently growing relevant role for sport in European, national and regional policy agendas. EPSI's goal is ultimately to increase the investment in sports throughout Europe.

Fundraising

EPSI creates, engineers, coordinates and manages European, national, or regional projects in the sport and active lifestyle domain. EPSI fundraising activities are structured around a multifaceted approach that includes both top-down and bottom-up initiatives.

EPSI requests all its members to submit their project ideas through a concept note format and help them in transforming those ideas into concrete projects. Through the help of a large number of professional strategic consultants, EPSI allows its members to secure

funds for their project ideas, thus enabling innovations capable of responding to regional, national and European industrial and societal challenges.

EPSI's fundraising activities are centralised and managed through a digital platform (Members Only Zone - MOZ) specifically designed to create diverse and effective project partnerships. The MOZ not only allow EPSI members to present their project ideas to a broad community of sport actors and secure strong partners for their implementation, but also enable them to put their experience and competence at use in projects led by other sport stakeholders in Europe, thus multiplying their chances of securing public funding.

Business Development

EPSI supports and facilitates the creation of business opportunities in and around its network. Thanks to the realisation of a trust-based environment, EPSI is the ideal place where to find the right connections and partners to establish business ties based on the common will of advancing innovation in the European sport ecosystem. EPSI facilitates those activities by organising regular virtual and physical bilateral and multilateral meetings, as well as matchmaking events in cooperation with third parties representing neighboring economic sectors. In addition to the networking and matchmaking services, EPSI has also started providing tailored business development services, such as the creation of business plans, Go-To-Market strategy, financial plans and much more.

Most recently EPSI has also launched an Observatory to monitor the major relevant and upcoming trends in the sport ecosystem and ensure its members do not miss any chance to deliver on innovative and forward-looking projects and businesses.

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Initiative by: Sportinnovator

Contact details

Sportinnovator

Laan van Nieuw Oost-Indië 334

2593 CE Den Haag

+31 (0)70 349 53 94

info@sportinnovator.nl

www.sportinnovator.nl



