



THE SIMCAS METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

“Based on the research activities and pilot tests implemented within the SIMCAS project a methodological approach has been defined with the view to illustrate the key principles and organisational elements that can enhance the efficacy of the interventions.

The methodological approach is intended to provide suggestions and tips for enhancing the efficacy of the interventions that organisations carried out to foster the integration of migrants living in critical areas by using sport as a means of social intervention.

The use of sport-based strategies is based on the assumption of the positive effect that direct and intense participation in sport and physical activities has on the health and well-being of the participants. This positive effect has been proved to also apply to socially disadvantaged groups, such as migrants and minorities who experience difficult conditions of life.

Besides the health outcomes of physical activities, engagement in sport-based initiatives is advocated as an agent for social and personal changes that inspires positive development in marginalised communities and could alleviate the impact of anti-social behaviours.

Based on SIMCAS activities (research, experiences and exchange among partners, pilot test, methodology definition), the approach was developed to illustrate key principles and organizational elements that can improve the effectiveness of interventions

KNOW THE CONTEXT

Knowledge of the context in which we operate and in which the activity will take place. In addition, we need to consider: the resources that the context offers at an educational and support level, the available sport facilities, the network of stakeholders and organizations that we can mobilize, the possible risks and how to manage them, etc.

The methodologies and tools to be used can be quantitative and qualitative such as focus groups, questionnaires, interviews with stakeholders, etc. The method must be established on the basis of the type of group.

WHICH MOTOR AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES

The choice of sports discipline or motor activity significantly affects the results of the intervention both in terms of participation in the activities, personal growth, inclusion and social cohesion results. It is therefore crucial to carry out a preliminary analysis of the context, the need and requirements of the target participants and the resources available defining the objectives to be achieved.

CHANGE THE RULES

The key to success is to reformulate the rules of sport itself, with a view to making it more accessible to a broader range of participants and more aligned with the specific needs of the migrants. The staff of the organisations can develop and modify standard elements of the game such as the equipment used, the size of the field and teams, requirements for players, etc.

INNOVATIVE SPORTS PRACTICES

As already mentioned in the previous point, it could also be very useful, where possible, to develop new sport practices that emphasize the social integration dimension of sport. We mention among these: **Social football, Football 3, Kinball.**

It is also interesting to consider sports that come from other cultures, such as Cricket, traditional sports and games of each culture. Sharing and practicing these sports can be an opportunity for intercultural learning.

MIX SPORT, CULTURE AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

To ensure a significant impact on migrants, sport should be adopted as part of a package in which other measures, such as training programs, social and cultural activities, information campaigns, etc., are combined. This will offer participants a multidimensional intervention that is more relevant and better tailored to their specific needs.

USE A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH

Adopting a community-based approach means that organisations offering services to migrants are required not only to provide activities focusing on individuals, but they must have the potential to have an impact on the community, to facilitate the process of settlement and integration in a common strategy of intervention.

HIRE A MULTIDISCIPLINARY STAFF

To ensure that initiatives implemented for migrants are successful and have long-lasting effects, it is important to hire multidisciplinary staff in which specialists with different competences and skills work together to achieve common goals by coping with the changing needs of the target groups.

DEVELOP COACH MENTORING SKILLS

In order to make sport activities an opportunity for true personal growth of the participants, it is necessary that the coaches perfect their competences in terms of skills such as:

- empathic listening; effective communication;
- the ability to identify the latent potential of the participants, and to favour their emergence;
- the ability to manage the group, to contain negativity and encourage cooperation in the group;
- the ability to understand other cultures, and to foster intercultural encounter.

CHECK AND IMPROVE YOUR GOVERNANCE

Good Governance must be regarded as a concept to lead an organisation in a democratic and responsible way; it is based on 4 main principles: democracy, transparency, accountability, inclusion of stakeholders

FLEXIBILITY

Organisations working with migrants operate in a complex and fast-changing environment. This requires a certain degree of flexibility from organisations to meet individual needs and adapt to changes that might affect the social context, especially if they are located in critical areas. An organisation that wants to achieve an adequate level of flexibility must take into account the following key elements: the organisational structure should be ready to respond to potential changes, both internal and external; all the processes should be designed to respond to uncertainty in order to ensure good performance. Flexibility and effectiveness can be increased by adopting a participatory approach that involves the target group and all the relevant stakeholders in the processes;

SUPPORT EMPOWERMENT

The term empowerment includes a large array of meanings and concepts related to the process of migrants' integration. In this specific context and its practical purposes, empowerment is about equipping migrants with the skills, knowledge and confidence to take charge and make positive changes to their lives, taking the responsibility to guide themselves the process of integration. Empowerment approaches have the potential to strengthen participation by involving target groups and all the main stakeholders in decision-making during all processes of an initiative. Empowerment can help organisations to turn social responsibilities into concrete opportunities of integration and mutual understanding.

TEAM UP WITH STAKEHOLDERS

When working in critical areas with migrants, it is essential to take a cross-sector approach based on an effective collaboration among relevant stakeholders to create significant and sustainable improvements. As social disadvantage and isolation are often multi-dimensional effective initiatives should consider the collaboration with stakeholders from different sectors such as health, education, employment, housing and urban planning. Cross-sector interventions will allow a combination of measures that focus both on the individual as well as on the context of the individual.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation activities are important project management functions that allow the organisations to ascertain whether projects are achieving their objectives. While monitoring is an ongoing function that provides indications of progress, or lack of progress, evaluation is a time-bound exercise that aims to assess in a systematic and objective way the relevance, performance and success of ongoing or completed projects. Broadly speaking, monitoring and evaluation provide information that can lead to improvement of activities and organisations and useful for assessing the impact of initiatives targeting migrants. Taken together they offer data that can assist organisations in terms of decision-making, effectiveness, and accountability, which crucial for upholding legitimacy.



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