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Learnings from the EQUIP Project

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Equip for Equality in Practice

www.engso-education.eu/equip

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Executive Summary

During the design process of the EQUIP project, there was a strong emphasis placed on how the deliverables produced through the project could reach a larger ecosystem of European sport organisations. This objective was considered in all tools created throughout the project including the IO4. Specifically, the IO4 was planned to have two purposes: first, to act as a quality control mechanism for the project delivery and management and secondly to capture the learnings from the different phases of the project with a particular attention to the implementation phase where Champion Clubs and Champion Federations led the way, actioning different plans crafted for their own contexts. Learning from the processes, outputs and outcomes became a priority for not only the MEL team leading the IO4 but for all the partners involved.

The key learnings have been collected through a robust methodology where project partners supported in the monitoring and evaluation process. Not only were learnings related to the outcomes and outputs but also the processes which were put in place and tested with the coach organisations and their respective Champion clubs and federations, all of whom were working to address inequalities in sport in their contexts and in their environments. These learnings form part of the legacy of the project as, similarly to the EQUIP tools, they should be shared to be implemented and to build an even deeper and more diverse network of sport practitioners and organisations in Europe committed to a more inclusive and equitable sport ecosystem. Below are the project team's key recommendations to achieving this wider objective:

- Equipping umbrella organisations with the tools, competences, and capacities to take on coaching roles is a challenge and comes with a lot of responsibility. It is important to monitor the empowerment process of the organisations to ensure that the processes and practices in place are sufficient to support umbrella organisations to become coach organisations. Capacity building for coach organizations should also consider methods, approaches and theories on organizational change which can support coaches to guide champion clubs and federations in their various challenges.
- When the co-creation process is done well it can lead to a set of high-quality and valuable tools which have the potential to be distributed and used across networks.
- Forming a panel of experts working across the inequality topics can be a strong asset to a transnational project, however, it is crucial to provide them with a consistent flow of project communications as well as clear opportunities for engagement and significant contributions.
- Considering each country has its own sport models (even at the grassroots level) and systems and structures in place to address inequalities, it is imperative for coach organisations to be well versed in the local context, challenges and opportunities facing their champion club or federations.
- Exchanging good practices around addressing inequalities in sport contexts across countries can be beneficial, however, nuances and context specific factors need to be considered when going from practice to implementation.
- Designing an action plan to address an inequality (or more) in one's sport environment takes time, consultations, resources, data, and clear communications.

Learnings from the EQUIP Project

- Moving from action plan to implementation is a complex process and even three-year projects require more time and resources to lead to changes which can reach the wider communities engaged in and around these sport entities.
- Employing an intersectional lens as a framework to understand social inequality allows sport organisations to analyse intersecting and overlapping effects of multiple social categories such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation, disability, and more. Using an intersectional lens when designing an action plan can support to designing a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of inequality which helps to craft a more inclusive and effective strategies for addressing social inequalities.
- Addressing inequalities in sport requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that encompasses various aspects of organisational structure, culture, policies, and practices. The EQUIP project gave organisations the framework to take initial steps, however, implementing these measures (and next steps) requires a sustained and collective effort, with ongoing commitment from all stakeholders within the sports organisation. It's essential to recognise that addressing inequalities is an ongoing process that involves continual reflection, adaptation, and improvement.
- Continuing to support the development of the network created through the project will entail creating a collaborative and supportive environment that fosters exchange, learning, innovation, and collective action. This network, now across the 6 European countries and beyond, has the potential to drive positive change and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable landscape in the world of sports.

Introduction

The Equip for Equality in Practice (EQUIP) Project is coordinated by ENGSO, involves 9 partners from 6 different European countries and is co-founded by the Erasmus+ Sport Programme of the European Union. The main aim of the EQUIP project is to improve equality in sport in Europe through the practical and sustainable implementation of the existing good practices and policies. On one hand, this aim is motivated by the fact that there is a prevalence of insufficient physical activity and lower membership rates in sport clubs/organisations for adults, adolescents and youth. In fact, from the latest Eurobarometer key findings, EuropeActive's President David Stalker said: *"With 45% of Europeans never exercising or participating in physical activity, the new Eurobarometer on Sport and Physical Activity's findings demonstrate once again how important it is for everyone, including governments across Europe, to step up their commitments to promoting physical activity for the wellbeing of all Europeans."* ([EuropeActive](#))

This is concerning for multiple reasons, one of which is that physical inactivity is also prevalent in adolescents, with less than one in five (17.6%) boys and one in ten (9.6%) girls across 27 EU Member States reporting to meet their WHO recommendation in 2018. Regarding sport clubs and organisations and their challenges around membership rates, it is troublesome as numerous studies have found that sports clubs can have a vital role in providing an opportunity for large numbers of people to be physically active (Jekauc, et al, 2013), and consequently, they might also act as a setting for country-wide public health initiatives (Kokko et al. 2009). Another project examining participation in sports clubs reported that adults involved in sports clubs are significantly more likely to achieve recommended levels of physical activity than those who are not (Eime, et al, 2010). Additionally, sport clubs and organisations are not just connected to health outcomes, but also are considered cornerstones of socialisation and culture. All in all, sport clubs and organisations play an integral role in European societies.

On the other side, with a closer examination of who is and who isn't participating in sport and being physically active, another set of challenges emerges. Research demonstrates that there are different types of barriers and discriminations being faced by outdated societal frameworks which can discourage participation in sport for certain groups of people because of their age, gender, sexual orientation, class or socioeconomic status, disability, or race and or ethnicity. Factors such as gender roles, traditional beliefs, or cultural expectations may discourage participation and engagement in sports activities. Marginalised groups may encounter discrimination and prejudice in sports, making them feel unwelcome or excluded ([Ashoka Changemaking Takes a Team Report](#)).

The EQUIP project aims to support sport organisations in their processes and practices to become more accessible, inclusive, and equitable to all communities. Based on research, the following five types of inequalities (amongst others) have been identified as key areas where sport clubs and federations need to act and take key actions around ([European Agency for Fundamental Rights](#)).

- **Gender inequalities:** As an example of gender inequalities in sport, research has found that in 2015 only 14 % of all top decision-making positions in individual EU sports

federations were occupied by women, ranging from 3 % in Poland to 43 % in Sweden. With the notable exception of the latter, most countries display a share of less than 20 %. ([European Parliament: Briefing](#))

- **Gender & sexual orientation inequalities:** As an example of inequalities around gender and sexual orientation, research has found that like most minority groups, the LGBTQI+ community is often subject to discrimination and exclusion, making it vulnerable. In fact, sport has often been called out for not being a welcoming environment for LGBTQI+ people. ([Breaking Barriers](#)) According to the 2019 OutSport survey, nearly 90% of people consider homophobia and particularly transphobia a problem in sport. The same study reveals that 20% of LGBTQI+ people refrain from participating in sport due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. What's more, 82% have witnessed homo-/transphobic language in sport in the last 12 months.
- **Socio-economic inequalities:** According to recent reports, people from lower socio-economic groups are less likely to exercise regularly, only 24% of people who consider themselves working class exercises regularly, versus 51% of upper-class people, but occupational physical activity is less common in higher socio-economic groups. ([OECD](#)).
- **Ethnic and racial inequalities:** Studies indicate that ethnic minority groups are both less active and more sedentary than the majority population and that factors influencing these behaviours may differ. ([Systematic mapping review](#))
- **Disability inequalities:** Data from both the Eurobarometer Surveys and the SIVSCE research project indicate that people with a disability significantly underperform when it comes to active participation in physical activity, (club-organised) sport and fitness. According to a 2018 Eurobarometer survey, having a disability or illness is the third most frequently mentioned reason – by 14 % of respondents – for not practising sports more regularly. ([Research](#))

In addition to understanding the challenges around physical inactivity and access to sport through sport organisations, the EQUIP project team also found that although research and advocacy are strong in prioritising equality, there is a major lack in concrete actions and implementation. Furthermore, although existing resources are abundant such as tools, best practices, and policies regarding equality in sport generated through various European projects, frameworks, and commitments, these hardly seem to be practically and sustainably implemented at the national, regional and local sports governance levels by sport organisers such as sport agencies, and especially sport federations and sport clubs. The main challenge is that most sport organisers only have a very limited amount of organisation capacity to actively explore, translate, and implement these resources, tools, best practices, and policies within their daily operations.

With a general overview of the existing tools, policies, practices, and processes to address inequalities in sport, the EQUIP project developed a project methodology to equip the sport federations and sport clubs with the organisational capacity and support to be able to use the existing tools and practices in real time with their stakeholders and communities. The key component to the proposed methodology was the role of the umbrella or coach organisations to not only coach and mentor the sport organisations and federations but also to find ways to bring them together to form local and regional networks of equality within sport practitioners, advocates, and organisations.

Returning to the larger project goal of ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity in the life and practice of sport in Europe, the project team set the following shorter and mid-term outcomes for the three-year time frame:

- EQUIP will advocate and support the prioritisation of equality at the governance level within sport through awareness raising and concrete actions.
- EQUIP will develop a network across Europe to drive equality and equity within sport.
- Through EQUIP, the umbrella coach organisations will develop their own knowledge levels on the inequalities in sport.
- Through EQUIP, the umbrella coach organisations will develop their competences and capacities to coach other organisations on inequalities in sports in their own context
- Through EQUIP, Champion Clubs and Federations will address local level inequalities which will effectively:
 - Reduce discriminatory practices
 - Prioritize equality in governance decisions
 - Increase diversity within the life of the organisation
 - Increase understanding, empathy and knowledge on issues of equality
 - Increase the capacities and confidence to address issues of inequality

In relation to longer-term outcomes beyond the project timeline, the team committed to supporting clubs and federations to work towards the elimination of discriminatory practices, increase diversity among participants, staff, volunteers, and decision-makers and increase membership bases within clubs and federations. These longer-term outcomes target those outside the direct control of the project scope, including the sport participants in the clubs or who feel the effects/ benefits of the champion federation practices and policies, the other clubs, federations and sport organisations in sport who will be influenced by the work and outcomes of the Champion Clubs and Federations and lastly, the local communities which are homes to the sport clubs and federations.

The EQUIP project principles were mainstreamed throughout all aspects of the project and were monitored through surveys and open discussions with all project stakeholders. The following principles guided the implementation:

- **Being intentional about equality and diversity:** observing the number of all genders participating in the project activities, and taking conscious actions to ensure the diversity of voices at events and project outputs
- **“Nothing about us without us”:** ensuring that those concerned have an active role in developing, executing, and evaluating the project outcomes, for example, those people who have first-hand experiences of inequality will be represented in the project consortium and will be involved as ‘experience experts’; clubs and federations to be targeted by the project will be involved in the development of outputs.

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- **Linear and horizontal cohesion:** ensuring that the project builds upon previous projects, coordinates with other contemporary actions, and leaves a tangible legacy for future projects to exploit.

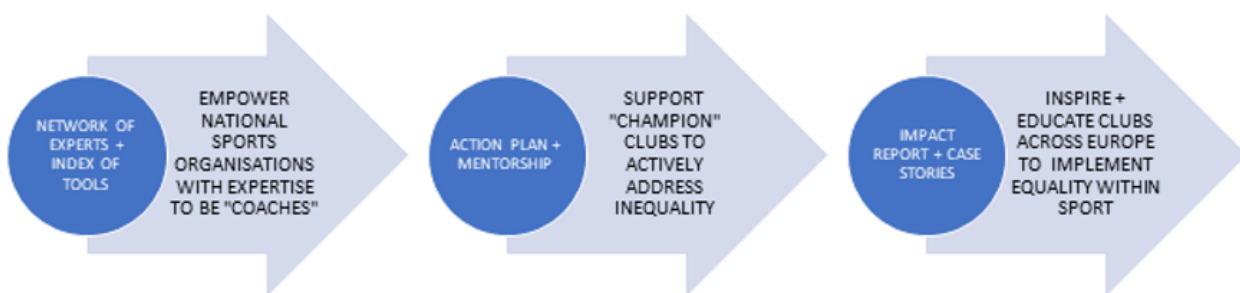
Another key project principle which was instrumental to the development of the project intellectual outputs concerned the processes put in place to foster collaboration, exchange, and which promoted a mentality of testing out, refining and improving upon the deliverables. This piloting or testing out approach came from the recognition that for a practice to be effective, it must adapt to and respond to the local context and environment.

Project Overview

This section will provide an overview of the three phases of the EQUIP project and the project main stakeholders.

The EQUIP Project Work Plan

The three phases of the project were preparation, implementation and evaluation and dissemination. The implementation phase kicked off when the Champion Clubs and Federations started to design their action plans to address one or more inequalities in their sport organisations and/or sport environments. All the steps which took place before the action plans are covered in the preparation phase. This preparation entailed the building of the network of experts, the development of the index of tools as well as the workshops designed for the partner organisations to go from umbrella to coach organisation to coach organisation. From the figure below, one can get a glimpse of the main outputs for each phase of the project (in the darker blue circle) which then enabled the key outcomes which pushed the project forward.



Each phase had key milestones to achieve to move the process forward. The following list provides an overview of what was achieved:

Preparation phase

- Established the Panel of Equality Experts - led by ENGSO-EWS
- Developed the first draft of the Index of Top Policies and Practices (IO1) - led by ICES
- Developed the 'Equality Within Sport' Workshop Delivery Guide (IO2)
- Delivered the 'Equality Within Sport' Workshop on each topic (see below) with the support of the Equality Experts and specifically for coach organisations
- Coach organisations implemented their first National Multiplier Events
- Confirmed 'Champion' Clubs and/or Federations for each country

Implementation phase

- Developed the Equality Action Plan - Design Guide (IO3) inclusive of template and instructions on how to use the guide

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- Co-creation of tailor-made Action Plans with 'Champion' Clubs and Federations
- Action Plans implemented by the 'Champion' Clubs and Federations with the continued support and coaching from the Coach organisations
- A Mid-term Report presented with recommended improvements (IO4)

Evaluation & Dissemination

- Coach organisations implemented their second National Multiplier Events
- Final conference co-created and delivered with project partners and Champion Clubs/ Federations
- Development and dissemination of IO5 – case studies from the field

The EQUIP project stakeholders

The six “Coaching Sport Organisations” played key roles and took on many responsibilities during the three-year project. Coming from 6 different European countries, Portugal, Sweden, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Greece, each arrived in the project bringing their experience, network and expertise working in sport in their own specific contexts. In addition to the coaching sport organisations, the project stakeholders included equality expert organisations and supporting organisations who had all been identified for their specific area of expertise. The two organisations from Belgium (ICES and BOIC) decided to closely cooperate to better support clubs and federations in the country with the development and implementation of their action-plans.

Name	Full Name of the Organisation	Country	Participation	Role
ENGSO	European Non-Governmental Sport Organisation	Sweden	Coordinator & Steering Committee	Equality Expert
ICES	Centre for Ethics in Sport	Belgium	Partner	Equality Expert and supportive 'Coaching' Sport Organisation
EGLSF	European Gay & Lesbian Sport Federation	Netherlands	Steering Committee	Equality Expert
PSC	Portuguese Sports Confederation	Portugal	Steering Committee	'Coaching' Sport Organisation
RF-SISU Örebro	Riksidrottsförbundet Örebro	Sweden	Partner	'Coaching' Sport Organisation
OPES	Organizzazione per l'Educazione allo Sport	Italy	Partner	'Coaching' Sport Organisation
BOIC	Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee	Belgium	Partner	'Coaching' Sport Organisation
HPC	Hellenic Paralympic Committee	Greece	Steering Committee	'Coaching' Sport Organisation

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NL NOC*NSF	Dutch Olympic Committee*Dutch Sports Federation	Netherlands	Partner	'Coaching' Sport Organisation
EL	European Lotteries	Belgium	Support	Support
CoE	Council of Europe - EPAS	France	Support	Support

The diversity in the types of Coaching sport organisations brought a strong collection of skills, competences and experiences to the project as some were accustomed to working with clubs at the grassroots level and others with federations of different sizes and capacities.

The EQUIP Champions & Federations

Each Coach organisation worked with a minimum of 3 Champion clubs and Federations in their national context. Below is the list of Champion clubs and federations per country and the specific focus area they concentrated on through their action plans.

Country	BOIC/ICES Belgium	OPES Italy	HPC Greece	NOC*NSF Netherlands	PSC Portugal	RF SISU Orebrö Sweden
Champion 1 Name	Judo Vlaanderen	"ASD Falco "	Hellenic Archery Federation	Beach Rescue	Equestrian Federation	Skateboard Club
Champion 1 Focus area	Gender- and sex diverse persons	Disability	Gender, disability and sexual orientation	Ethnicity and disability	Gender equality	LGBTQI+
Champion 2	Royal Belgian Football Association	"ASD Centro Ippico San Benedetto	Hellenic Volleyball Federation	Ice Skating	Sport fishing	Sports Club Bandy
Champion 2 Focus area	Gender- and sex diverse persons)	Disability	Gender, disability and sexual orientation	Diversity and Inclusion	Sexual orientation	Gender equality
Champion 3	Vlaamse Hockey Liga	"Nissa Rugby missing"	Hellenic Sports Federation for Persons with Disabilities	Rowing	Amateur Wrestling	Swimming Alliance
Champion 3 Focus area	gender- and sex diverse persons)	Socio-economic	Gender, disability and sexual orientation	Diversity and Inclusion	Gender equality	Economic discrimination

Supporting Mechanisms

The project team set up different mechanisms to support the progress and implementation of the EQUIP project.

- The **Steering Committee** was comprised of select partners who were responsible for reviewing project progress against set targets and indicators, assessing risks, dealing with different challenges, and securing resources and agreeing on adaptations if necessary. The partners involved agreed to a higher level of responsibility for the process, outputs and outcomes of the project and committed to structured meetings with some taking place in person. In total, the Steering Committee met for 7 meetings specific to their group.
- The **Panel of Equality Experts** was a network set up which included individuals and organisations with recognised expertise in the challenges and solutions for achieving equality in sport, and in society in general. This group consisted of project partners as well as external experts who supported the project in an advisory capacity.
- The **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Team** was comprised of two individuals responsible for the IO4 but also for supporting with the quality control and final evaluation of the project. On one hand, they were part of the ENGSO project team, however, as evaluators of the project milestones, outputs and outcomes, they also

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took an external perspective and viewpoint to be as objective as possible. The MEL team worked closely with the umbrella coach organisations, had frequent communications with the EQUIP experts and supported the design of the project tools (IOs) to ensure they could be evaluated as they were being implemented and tested by the project partners and Champions.

- The **ENGSO project team** used an accessible shared folder where all project documents, meetings, updates, presentations, and tools were stored. One key document which was always kept up to date was the “Live Progress Report” where all project partners could find the details of all main project meetings, decisions made, and/ or any changes made. This document as well as the shared folder allowed all project stakeholders to align on the status of the project and next steps.

Methodology

A common framework and methodology were created in the beginning of the project to be able to effectively guide in the design and development of the IO4 in response to its two main purposes, namely, to be an additional mechanism for project quality control and to capture the key learnings from the implementation phase. Regarding the quality control mechanisms, the IO4 team used the following tools and processes:

- A theory of change to align on the inputs, outputs, outcomes, assumptions and projected impact.
- A framework with the project key indicators for each intellectual output, meetings, workshops, national sessions, and communications
- In-person or hybrid presence at all project meetings
- MEL sessions with partners during key meetings (in-person and online)
- Surveys with partner organisations and experts following project events and engagements.
- Interviews and partner consultations at the mid-term point of the project

Concerning the IO4's goal to capture the learnings of the project, there was a particular emphasis placed on the implementation phase as this is where actions took place and at the grassroots level with clubs or mid-level with the federations. As the project was designed around three main phases: preparation, implementation and evaluation/dissemination, the team decided to also pay particular attention to capturing the learnings from the preparation and evaluation/dissemination phases as all were delivered in an interconnected format. For example, the methods and tools which the coach organisations used in the implementation phase were influenced by the preparation phase where not only did they learn more about the inequality topics but also had different opportunities to be part of the co-creation and design phases of the coaching tools.

Capturing the learnings required a mix of tools and processes which were like the list above but different in some respects. The following are some examples:

- MEL sections integrated into the IO2 Equality within Sport Workshop Guide, IO3 Action Plan
- Multiplier Sport Event evaluation 1 & 2 templates
- Partner check in calls on implementation plans, Champion Clubs and implementation learnings – done on site and virtually
- Interviews with Champion Clubs and Federations at the final conference
- On-site or online observations during key meetings and events
- Final project evaluation workshop done on site with partners and experts
- Delivery and co-facilitator of IO3 Action Plan with conference participants

The table tracks the different MEL tools/ processes implemented during the project for both quality control measures and capturing learnings:

Name of Tool	Description	Format	Intended user	Frequency	Total
EQUIP project theory of change (ToC)	The ToC provided a roadmap for understanding how and why the set of	The ToC was shared with the project partners and experts for	Everyone involved in the project but most	Created at the beginning of the project and referred to	1

Learnings from the EQUIP Project

	activities planned would lead to the desired outcomes.	their feedback and confirmation	importantly the project partners, experts and champions	throughout the project	
Framework of key indicators	The framework was co-created with the project team, particularly the IO teams to align on the indicators to assess the deliverables and other project components	The MEL team consulted with all IO teams and received their sign-offs for the framework	Everyone involved in the delivery of the project, IO teams	Created at the beginning of the project and referred to throughout the project implementation	1
Observations at project workshops & meetings	The MEL team was present to observe and take notes at each EQUIP online / in-person meeting/ workshops	MEL team members took notes, created and distributed surveys to monitor the different project meetings	Project team and partners	All project meetings which took place in person and online	16 meeting s- online, in-person and hybrid formats
MEL- focused inputs during project meetings	The MEL team reported back to the project partners on all items related to project monitoring, evaluation and learning	Updates, findings and learnings were shared through presentations shared during the meetings	Project team and partners	During key project meetings including the Equality in sport workshop, in-person meetings	10 meeting s
EQUIP partner and expert surveys	Surveys were designed and distributed throughout the project to capture the perceptions, experiences and learnings of the different stakeholders	A standardized project survey template	Project partners and experts	After each project in-person meeting, Equality in Sport workshop	9 surveys
Partner (umbrella) organisation interviews	Online semi-structured interviews with partners to learn about their coaching approach and to hear about implementation challenges and solutions	Zoom unrecorded interviews with a set of standard questions	Project partners and experts	2 sets of interviews with all project partners and 1 project expert	12 in total for 45 minutes - 60 minutes each
Discussions with Champion clubs and federation	Semi-structured discussion questions to hear directly from the Champions regarding their experience	In- person discussions with some note taking	Champion clubs and federations	During the final conference, different discussions took place with champions	5 in-depth semi-structured interviews

Learnings from the EQUIP Project

	implementing their action plans				
MEL tools/ components added into project IOs	To ensure that project tools had questions for the user relating to the overall MEL indicators	Depending on the deliverable, evaluation sections included into the template tools	Project partners	For IO2, IO3, evaluation sections were included. National multiplier events, a separate tool was created	3
Final conference survey	To ensure to capture whether the final EQUIP conference met its objectives	A standardized project survey template	All event attendees	During and after the conference it was distributed	1

With a comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and learning methodology, it was very important to get the buy in and alignment with the project team, partners, and experts. This was done at the beginning of the project with various consultations concerning the project's theory of change, logic model and indicators framework. Below are snapshots of some of the key tools used throughout the project.

EQUIP Project Theory of Change

The ToC was derived from the project proposal as it was already conceived how change would take place through the phases of implementation and the specific methodology. The ToC explains how instead of reinventing the wheel with new policies and practices, the project would focus on identifying the existing good practices and methods for supporting sport organisations, clubs and federations, package them and deliver them through a coaching and mentorship approach for the local implementers. The ToC made the following assumptions: that there are existing good practices and policies to address inequalities in sport, that grassroots clubs and sport federations are interested in addressing inequalities within their sport structures and programmes, that empowerment of partner organisations can take place through equality within sport workshops and a structured knowledge transfer on the 5 areas of inequalities and finally that addressing inequalities in sport at the local club or federation levels can be approached through a technical lens with an action plan, consultations and coaching methods.

→ EQUIP THEORY OF CHANGE

CONTEXT: Good governance approaches can **improve equality** in sport by making sport organizations more diverse, more inclusive and participatory

- Research supports this claim
- To survive, sport organizations need to adapt to a more diverse society

PROBLEM: Existing resources, tools, best practices and policies regarding equality in sport and good governance are **not being readily implemented** at different levels, including at regional and local

- Limited knowledge of the different practices, policies and tools
- Limited capacity of regional and sport organizations to actively explore, translate, integrate, adapt and implement these practices and resources within their daily practices

SOLUTION: Empowerment of umbrella, regional and local organizations through capacity building, increased knowledge, coaching / mentoring and equality action projects

- A collection of tools to support the regional and local organizations
- A coaching and mentoring model
- Support in the design and delivery of local and contextualized projects

EQUIP Logic Model

The EQUIP project logic model details how the project planned to achieve the overall project objectives through a focus on resources (those existing or created), activities led through the project, outputs (those items directly relating to activities) and then outcomes at short and mid-term perspective. The long-term impacts were also planned; however, it was understood that these would entail checking in on the Champion Clubs and Federations as well as with the project partners at a later point post-project completion.

→ EQUIP LOGIC MODEL

A logic model presents a picture of how the EQUIP effort or initiative is *supposed* to work.

The table below makes an explicit statement of the activities that will bring about change and the results the partnership expects to see for the community and its people. A logic model keeps participants in the effort moving in the same direction by providing a common language and point of reference.

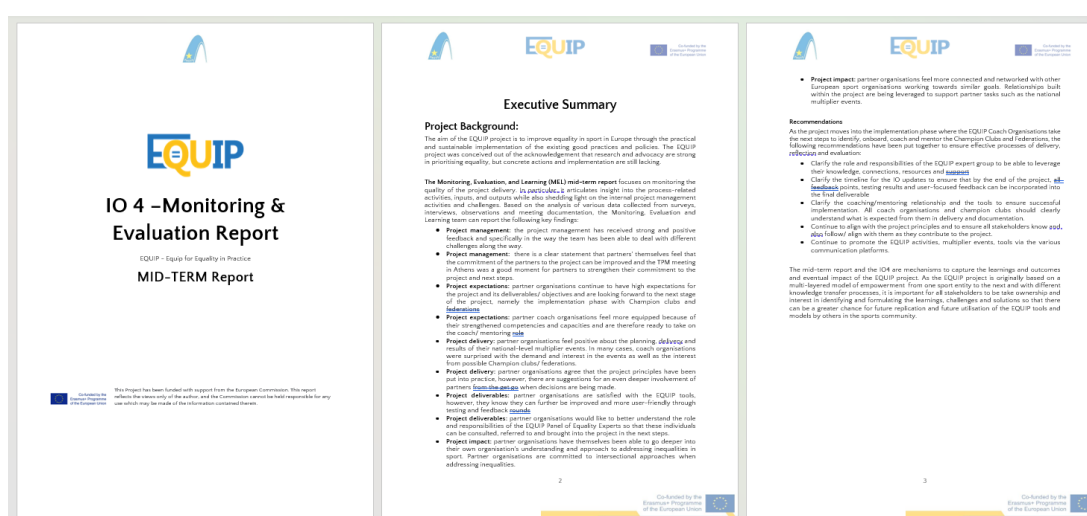
OBJECTIVES (what EQUIP's direct (and indirect) audience will be able to do/say/feel, etc. after the project)	RESOURCES (what's needed to deliver the EQUIP project)	ACTIVITIES (what to do to make EQUIP's project happen and meet the project objectives)	OUTPUTS (what's produced or delivered as part of the EQUIP project)	CHANGE	
				Short-term to mid-term Outcomes (audience changes during or immediately after (1 - 2 years) the project)	Long-term Impacts (audience changes after a longer time – 2+ years after the project)
1. Raise greater awareness about inequalities in sport and equality practices and policies to address the <u>inequalities</u> .	Panel of Equality Experts and their respective organizations (IO1) Existing equality policies and practices (IO1)	Preparation: Collecting and identifying equality practices (across five areas of equality) via pre-	Panel of Equality Experts Number of Meetings with the Panel of Equality Experts Robust and diverse network of Equality	Increased knowledge on equality practices and policies of umbrella organizations Increased knowledge on	Sustainability and continued equality action beyond the project's lifetime Continued use and awareness of the

After achieving alignment on the project's theory of change and logic model, the team aligned on the Project Key Indicators Framework for each intellectual output, the project meetings and main events. Identifying and agreeing on the indicators as well as the source and means of collection and personal responsible was an important step in the project preparation phase. As different project partners were responsible for the different IOs and overall, the Coach/Umbrella organisations had key roles in the implementation phase, it was crucial to align on the indicators, tools for collection and timelines. Coach/ Umbrella organisations became key partners in many areas of data collection and quality control as they had hands on roles throughout the project from the preparation to implementation phases. They were also responsible for connecting the theory to the practice by testing out the various tools or IOs, such as the IO3 and were therefore in the position to provide feedback to improve upon the project deliverables.

The snapshot below shows the key indicators identified concerning the IO1- Index of Top Policies and Practices and this was done for all IOs.

Project Key Indicators							
IO1 Index of Top Policies and Practices							
Deliverable/ activity/ stakeholder	List of KPIS (as developed at project initiation stage)	Source & means of data collection	Periodicity / timeline	Assigned to	Baseline indicator	Targeted indicator	Collected data
All participating stakeholders: Partners & Equality Experts	EVALUATION: Level of satisfaction by participants (panel of equality experts and partners) in alignment with the project principles: equality and diversity in all activities, 'nothing about us without us' and cohesion.	Survey	End of IO1 or/and then throughout the project (equality experts will be involved in IO2)	MEL Team, with ICES & PM	<i>This first survey and its results will serve as the baseline for the equality experts and separately for the partners.</i>	<i>Depending on the scale, but aim is to have a high level of satisfaction from the equality experts in their roles.</i>	Through project surveys
Coach organizations	EVALUATION: The knowledge base of partners on specific areas of inequalities	Survey	End of deliverable to capture partners knowledge on different equality markers	MEL Team, with ICES & PM	<i>This first survey and its results will serve as the baseline for the equality experts and separately for the partners. The baseline will have to use questions to decipher the individual / organizations knowledge levels across equality topics.</i>	<i>Depending on the scale, but aim is to have a high level of acquired knowledge from all partners involved, even those not directly involved with the IO1.</i>	Through project survey

The mid-term reporting was an integral reporting piece due to its timing, findings and recommendations for the project stakeholders moving forward into the implementation phase. The report was made available in a full and abridged format with a clear summary.



Findings: Quality & Control Mechanism

This section of the report will cover the findings from different areas of the project, which were instrumental to achieving the overall project outcomes and which led to the key learnings. These include the Panel of Equality Experts, Intellectual Outputs (IOs), umbrella organisations (coach organisations) and project events (transnational partner meetings), including the EQUIP final conference.

Panel of Equality Experts

A voluntary network of individuals and organisations with expertise in the challenges and solutions for achieving equality in sport was formed in the beginning of the project. Agreeing to take on advisory roles as well as more hands-on roles during the design and delivery of the project deliverables, the experts brought deep knowledge, resources, experiences and support to the project partners and team. Reaching out to experts across the five areas of inequalities, the project team was able to form a strong network of 28 individuals with an array of experience who shared an interest for supporting the EQUIP project and partners to reach their equality in sport objectives.

Representing 16 different European countries, the panel of experts included representatives who brought their experiences working in a specific field or fields of inequality in sport including:

- Gender equality and women's empowerment
- Disabilities – physical disabilities & intellectual disabilities
- Intersectionality around inequalities
- Sexual orientation & LGBTQI+
- Human rights & law
- Masculinities, toxic masculinity
- Socio-economic disparities
- Racial and ethnicities, racial discrimination

The table below indicates some of the organisations represented by the panel of experts. With a diverse range of supporting organisations and entities, the project team was able to early on start to build the foundations for the EQUIP network.

Learnings from the EQUIP Project

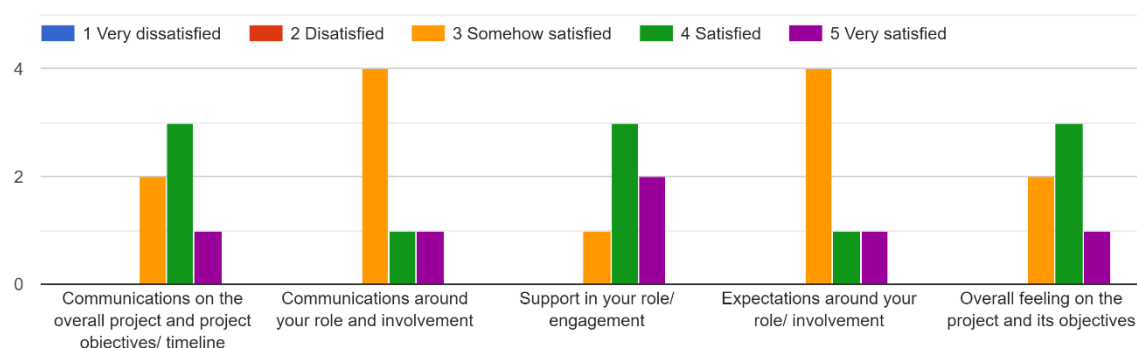
Council of Europe – EPAS	International Working Group on Women and Sport	Sport and Recreation Alliance	Centrum Ethiek in de Sport	RF-SISU Örebro County
Global Active Ltd	Coaching Portugal	London Marathon Charitable Trust	EU High Level Group on Gender Equality	Swedish Sports Confederation
European Broadcasting Union	Finlands Svenska Idrott	ENGSO EWS Committee	Flemish Ombudswoman for Gender	Norwegian School of Sport Sciences
MoveMen	European Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation (EGLSF)	Uisp Comitato Territoriale di Bologna APS	Special Olympics Europe-Eurasia	Parantee-Psylos
LEAP Sports Scotland	Associação Jorge Pina	Demos	Lebenshilfen Soziale Dienste	MentorDanmark

Concerning their involvement and contributions in the project, the experts took part in four main activities where their participation looked different depending on the tool, the process involved and the experts' capacity.

1. Design and review of the Intellectual Output 1
2. Equality within Sport Workshop & Intellectual Output 2
3. Implementation of action plans by Champion clubs & federations with IO3
4. Final EQUIP conference

Their involvement and contributions as well as experiences in the project were evaluated through surveys, observations, and end of the project interviews. After the Equality within Sport Workshops in Rome (December 2021), where many experts held key positions in the delivery of the educational aspects of the hybrid programme, a survey was conducted to assess their experiences up to that point in the project. The following findings indicate their level of satisfaction concerning different aspects of the EQUIP project and their likelihood to recommend the expert role and overall EQUIP project to others in their network. It should also be noted that at that point, experts had contributed many hours to the project with the average being 17 hours. There were some who contributed as many as 35 hours while others had contributed one working day, 8 hours to the project.

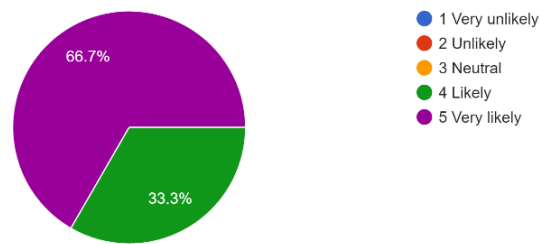
Please indicate your level of satisfaction with your engagement as an expert.



Learnings from the EQUIP Project

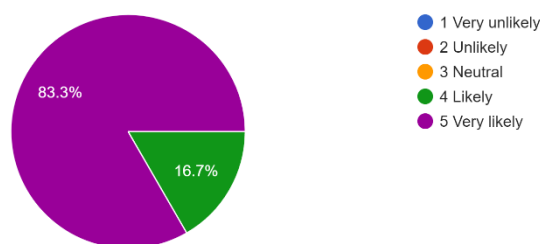
How likely would you be to recommend the EQUIP expert role to a colleague or contact?

6 responses



How likely would you be to recommend or share the EQUIP project with others?

6 responses



Additionally, experts were asked about their expectations for the EQUIP project and how it could be positioned to bring change around inequalities in sport. The following are some ideas presented:

- *"I think the project has significant potential to contribute to such change but would encourage continued engagement with other related initiatives to maximise potential."* – Expert A
- *"I have a clear expectation that the project will be tested in practice and not just remain a theoretical exercise on how to include groups of people that from whatever reasons stands outside the sports community. And because of the practical take will have a much better chance on becoming entrenched in the world of sports."* – Expert B
- *"Change can take time, so I would expect the EQUIP project to continue to promote materials, information, and opportunities for others to work together. It would be great to see EQUIP promote their work at external conferences such as the International Working Group (IWG). Collection of information is valuable, but it can be outdated within a couple of years, so it is important to make the most of this in the short period of time available."* – Expert C

Combining the different feedback points from the experts as well as the inputs from the umbrella organisations, one main recommendation in the mid-term report was to reassess the expert role, the group of experts and how they could be better positioned to support the project as it was going into the implementation phase. There was also an emphasis on ensuring that all experts were well informed about the EQUIP project developments and tools as it was made clear that they were enthusiastic about the project and its objectives and could share it further within their networks. These measures were actioned in the second half of the project where some experts were able to support with the implementation phase of the

Learnings from the EQUIP Project

action plans and others were invited to take part in the EQUIP final conference. The following list of highlights exemplifies how the experts contributed to the EQUIP project during the different phases:

- IO1: more than 20 individuals or organisations shared good practices or revised the policies.
- Workshops in Rome for umbrella sports organisation: 12 people were involved as expert speakers, and several of them were then involved in local workshops.
- IO5: all members of the EWS committee (10 people) revised the video scripts before the production process started
- Final conference: 11 experts participated in the Human Library
- All experts received regular information about ENGSO's events on equality, diversity and inclusion and participated in online seminars, communication campaigns, etc.

Expert spotlight: LGBTQI+ inclusion expert from European Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation (EGLSF)

Amongst the group of experts who were consistently and actively engaged in the project from the start to the end were two experts from the European Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation. It is important to note that their organisation was part of the project consortium as an equality expert partner, which also added a level of commitment to their engagement in the project. Overall, the organisation and the individual experts demonstrated a high level of involvement in the intellectual outputs, particularly around IO3 and IO5, the series of case studies. As they were present in most of the project meetings, they acquired a high level of understanding around the project, the project tools, objectives, and overall plan, which also contributed to their high level of satisfaction around their role and responsibilities. When asked about the implementation of the EQUIP project principles throughout the project, they gave strong ratings (highly satisfied) which is an important indicator for the project delivery.

In the final project interview with one of the EGLSF experts, it was shared that for them and their organisation, the role shaped out to being an advisory expert for topics around LGBTQI+ inclusion in sport. They felt they were able to provide the most knowledge on their expertise during the Equality within Sport workshop where many topics of inequality in sport were discussed and shared with the umbrella organisations in a hybrid format. During the implementation phase, they were called upon to support or advise in the national-level workshops and to provide their expertise around trans inclusion in sport, either by making connections for coach organisations within their own network or by reviewing policies/practices. Although their experiences were described very positively, there was still mention of the expert role being underused, particularly during national level implementation. This point was also expressed by a couple of the Coach organisations who didn't know the best way to engage experts in their local context.

However, despite this point of feedback, overall, the experts felt equipped when called upon and confident in the EQUIP tools being made available and accessible through the project. From their perspective, the project became a springboard for next actions and was effective in creating more visibility and relevance around the inequalities in sport, particularly but not exclusively around LGBTQI+ issues, which for many sport organisations is a very sensitive and complex issue. From their perspective as an advisor, they were able to witness how the

Champion clubs and federations were able to learn more about LGBTQI+ issues in sport and within sport organisations and through the coaching format, ask questions and eventually become less afraid to discuss and move forward with an action plan that fit their specific contexts.

Intellectual Outputs

The project team carefully monitored the design, development, and testing processes of the EQUIP project intellectual outputs to ensure that they would be effective tools not only for the project partners and stakeholders, but to other sport organisations looking to address inequalities within their own sport environments and contexts. For each intellectual output, smaller teams were created who were then responsible for leading the processes behind the tools.

For example, the Centre for Ethics in Sport led on the collection, review and standardisation process for **IO1, the Index of Top Policies and Practices**. As policies were collected for each country represented in the project consortium, the process required different phases of input and review to establish the final tool which included country-level policies but also good practices addressing the various inequalities and which worked across different categories, such as awareness-raising, educational programmes, equipment and infrastructure, fundraising, frameworks and codes of conduct and codes of ethics. Identifying good examples across different types or categories of practices was a necessary step as the tool would later be used by Umbrella organisations when working with and guiding the Champion clubs and federations to create their own action plans around specific practices. Feedback was received during the design of the tool and incorporated into the final version of the tool which has been made available on the EQUIP project website. The following table details the content of the IO1.

Policies	Gender practices	Sexual orientation practices	(Dis)ability practices	Socio-economic status	Racial and ethnic discrimination
EU wide and specifically about 6 countries including Belgium, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, The Netherlands	13 practices in total covering grassroots sport initiatives, codes of conduct / codes of ethics, strategy and policy frameworks, educational programmes and materials, awareness raising and handbooks	5 practices covering awareness raising, educational programmes and grassroots sport initiatives	8 practices covering infrastructure, educational programmes, awareness-raising, and equipment	6 practices covering funding, equipment, strategy and policy frameworks, grassroots sport initiatives and educational programmes	6 practices covering grassroots sport initiatives, awareness-raising, educational programmes

The **IO2: Equality Within Sport Workshop – Delivery Guide** was designed and tested out through two strands of work. The first strand consisted of the Equality within Sport Workshops which were designed and delivered in a hybrid format with the project partners in Rome, Italy. During the two-day meeting, a variety of workshops on the inequality topics were delivered either in person or online. For each of the 5 topics of inequality, 2-4 experts were involved in the delivery of the content and knowledge to the participants, the Umbrella

organisations. The intention of the workshops was to build the capacity and knowledge of the Umbrella organisations to take on the coach organisation role and responsibilities. This series of workshops was instrumental in the empowerment and capacity building processes of the organisations and to assess the effectiveness, surveys were distributed to the participants and during the delivery of the workshops, time and space was provided for questions and further discussion.

In addition to the knowledge on the five inequality topics, content and materials shared, a specific session was held for the umbrella organisations concerning coaching and mentorship methodologies, good practices and processes. This session, led by OPES, drew from the organisation's experience as a coach and mentor to clubs and sport organisations within their extensive network. As the IO2 tool was intended to become a guide for the umbrella organisations in their own planning and delivery of their national level equality within sport national workshops, it was necessary to integrate an evaluation pillar of the tool to allow for a way to collect qualitative and quantitative measures during and after the delivery of the workshops. This evaluation tool presented a clear structure as to what was mandatory to collect regarding the numbers of participants and organisations and then with a section which included questions for the event organisers to reflect on what took place, what went well, what could be improved. Additionally, optional tools were included whereby event organisers could collect testimonials, quotes, and observations from a third party or participant.

A snapshot of two different IO2 evaluation forms from the national events can be found below. Each of the 6 umbrella/coach organisations designed and delivered two national multiplier events where they decided on how to integrate the equality within sport topics and workshop methodologies into the events. The project team collected 12 completed evaluations with signature lists and additional photos and documentation to demonstrate what had been delivered. Within the evaluations, quantitative and qualitative data points were collected, with a sample of some of the quotes/statements from participants below:

Framework for partners to report on the Multiplier events

We kindly ask you to submit a report of your Multiplier event within 2 weeks after it took place. Please use the following table in your reporting.

BASIC INFO ABOUT THE EQUIP MULTIPLIER EVENT			
Name of the event:	Equip Workshop	Date of the event:	21/05/2022
Location of the event: (city & country)	Serradifalco, Sicily (Italy)	Host of the event:	Centro Sportivo Polivalente Falco
Event objective (s) as per the invite: talking about disability in and through sport with the specific experience of martial arts and within the projects, talking about the role of sport in favoring inclusion of people from vulnerable groups and in particular people with low income and minors in jail, Presenting good practices, presenting the project Equip and European opportunities in sport through it.			
Your event Key Performance Indicators			
Number of participants:	16 (in presence) + 10 online	Number of organisations represented:	8
Type of organisations represented (clubs/federations):	Clubs, no profit organization from the area	Number of "Educational Hours"	3 hours
% of participants willing to use the tool	65%	% of participants willing to be an active Champion Club/federation	75%
% of participants who said the event matched their expectations	90%	% of participants willing to recommend this type of training / awareness raising session to a friend or a colleague	90%

What were your main objectives of the second multiplier event?	The purpose was to discuss, raise awareness and share best practices of inclusion work targeting disability and socio-economy in sports. One participant said "With some silver tape and a friend that knows how to weld you can come a long way in disability sports" which I found really interesting and, to some extent, true. Creativity can solve several problems and obstacles.
How did you communicate or spread the word about the second multiplier event?	A couple of SISU consultants were contacted. These consultants support clubs that operate in the targeted area. Ten clubs were then selected, addressed and invited. I also invited a club that recently started a big project and asked them to speak about the project and share the vision and goal. We also encouraged the clubs to share the invitation with other clubs.
What is the one takeaway or learning from your side?	Voluntary leaders benefit from meeting other leaders from other clubs. It is fascinating to experience how easily people start to talk with each other when they find out a common interest. Another insight was the importance but also the difficulties of reaching the grassroots and motivate leaders to engage within this area of sports. We also discussed how the prioritising of these topics is dependent on the purpose of club and why the individual, voluntary leaders/coaches are engaged in the club.
What element (if any) has worked well and could be replicated in future Multiplier events? Aware that for this project, this is the last round of events.	Since a broader topic risks becoming vague and irrelevant, it is essential to have a relevant topic and specific topic when organising a workshop. It should be useful for a voluntary leader to spend an evening with others. Since the continual and processual work is obtained every day, the gatherings should also have a dimension of giving "energy" or motivation to each other, building networks, gain new knowledge, and so on. A surplus must be created for the volunteers.
What element (if any) did not work as anticipated and should be raised as tricky or deleted for future Multiplier events?	It is always hard to make voluntary leaders leave their home club/context and engage in an activity 'outside' their home area. Some are discomfort with this, and some are only interested in their own club businesses.
What worked better at this multiplier event compared to the first one? Why do you think this was the case?	The participants' mix of sports and backgrounds created a fascinating discussion.
How were your Champion clubs or federations involved in the multiplier event? What feedback did you receive from the Champions who took part?	The three clubs I worked with before were invited. One participated on-site and one on 'distance' preparing answers via email (they were away on Rhodes), and one did not respond to the invitation. The two clubs that participated appreciated the initiative.
Appendix to this Report- List of Supporting Docs to be sent	
A1. Event Signature list (compulsory)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A2. Event Agenda (compulsory)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Statements from participants attending the national multiplier events:

Learnings from the EQUIP Project

- Dutch NOC multiplier event: *"It was a great day. Not only the content of the event was good, but I think it was also great that there were loads of different organisations who are interested in the inclusion and diversity theme. It was a useful event to get to know more people, more best practices and more information about inclusion."* - Chairwoman of the Skateboard Federation
- Portuguese Confederation multiplier event: *"I was at the first workshop, and I loved it, this one was even better, there must be more projects like this, with an impact in the organisations and on people's lives."* - Coach and board of the Portuguese Cycling Federation
- Portuguese Confederation multiplier event: *"It was very important to discuss these topics openly, without taboos, I learned the best way to approach "different" athletes as equals."* - Coach

OPES, the leading organisation behind the IO2 used the evaluation findings to revise the original IO2 template, ensuring that all sections had been tested and reviewed before finalising and making the IO2 available to the public via the project website. Below is a summary of the 12 national multiplier events designed and delivered by the Umbrella organisations. Whereas the first of the two events aimed to introduce the EQUIP project, cover one or all of the inequality in sport topics and to create interest from potential champion clubs and federations, the second aimed to highlight the action plans and outcomes of the Champion clubs and federations, create more awareness around the EQUIP project tools and to grow the national level networks. Overall, Umbrella organisations had the authority to decide on the design and delivery of the events and were encouraged to consult with the EQUIP panel of experts and integrate, when possible, the EQUIP tools.

Umbrella organisation	Country	Event formats	Total # of participants	Total # of organisations	Summary
Portuguese Sports Confederation	Portugal	Online & hybrid	155	27	EQUIP project values and Champion good practices
Riksidrottsförbundet Örebro	Sweden	In-person	15	10	Gender equality and disability – existing challenges and good practices
Organizzazione per l'Educazione allo Sport	Italy	Hybrid	61 participants + 33 children in second event	16	Focus on disability and socio-economic inequalities
Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee, with the support of ICES	Belgium	Both in – person	53	17	Gender and sex diverse people in sport was the main topic
Hellenic Paralympic Committee	Greece	Both in-person	61	10	Disability in sport was the main topic discussed
Dutch Olympic Committee	The Netherlands	Online & in-person	89	54	Diversity & inclusion in sport, Dutch Charter

Learnings from the EQUIP Project

Depending on a set of factors relating to how the umbrella organisation set up the event, including its format, objectives, communications around registration, agenda and speakers, a different number of participants and organisations took part. Building a larger and more diverse European sport for equality network is one of the EQUIP project objectives and the national multiplier events were instrumental to achieving this objective. Framing the events as part of their commitment and role in the EQUIP project, umbrella organisations were able to create greater awareness around the project and the importance of positioning equality in sport on the agendas of their national sport organisations, federations, and clubs.

To support the Champion clubs and federations, the project team recognized the importance of establishing a standard action plan to guide any sport entity, no matter the size nor capacity, to plan, design, carry out and assess their actions towards addressing inequalities in sport. The **IO3 tool** had to be designed to work for sport entities across countries and in different contexts. The tool was first designed through an initial brainstorming and design session where many ideas were gathered from the project partners. After different review stages, it was finalised and translated into the 6 different languages: Dutch, Italian, Swedish, Portuguese, Greek and Belgian.

Each umbrella organisation used and tested out the IO3 with their Champion clubs and federations which led to 18 different organisations using the tool with the guidance and support of their respective coach organisations. It was reported that in some country contexts, for example, in the Netherlands more than 35 organisations were introduced to and some used the IO3 to plan out their respective actions around equality even if they weren't considered a Champion club or federation within the project.

Below is an example of a completed IO3 submitted by one of the Champion Federations of the Dutch NOC. In this case, the Dutch NOC worked with the Champion Federation to go through their action plan, starting from the goal to the specific equality topic, type of action and so forth. In addition to the plan below, the tool included a section where the Champions would document their specific actions/steps to be taken, by when and with a space to indicate the status. This tracking section allowed for alignment with the Coach organisation on the status of the implementation.

EQUALITY ACTION PLAN CANVAS

The goal What is the change you want to see? An active policy on the discrepancy between sports offer and the reflection of society in two areas: ethnicity and disability			The action What action will you take to reach your goal? Creating a sounding board and a consultative group. Organize brainstorm sessions. Hire experts to get a vision on inclusion in diversity in our organization.		
Equality topic What topic of equality will your action address? Other or multiple: specify:	Area Where in the organisation will the action take place? Participation	Type of action What form does the action take? Sports programme	Resources		
			Which people will help you implement this action plan? NOC*NSF	Timeline When do you expect to start the action? 01/04/2021 When do you plan to complete the action? 01/04/2025	
Stakeholders			What budget is available to implement this action plan? Right now, we spent 10.000 euros	How much time will you allocate to this action plan? 0,5	
Who will directly benefit from this action? Sporters who are either disabled or have an ethnic background	Who will indirectly benefit from this action? The Beach Rescue organization itself and the beach visitors in whole Holland.	Who will you partner with to make this action plan a success? NOC*NSF and the local teams	Stages Break the action down into 4 to 5 stages. Brainstorm about a long term action plan Creating support within board Concretizing ambition Creating sounding board and consultative group Make a policy document		
Outcomes What are the specific changes you want to see? 1 We want to have a policy document, in which is written how we are going to 2 We want to have more people with disabilities or ethnic background in 3		Indicators How will you know if you have achieved each of these? 1 Practical, it was very hard to monitor our results. So the monitoring we 2 The idea is now to talk with the target group the campaign is built for: people 3		Risks What might threaten the success of your action plan? 1 To not get disability and ethnicity people on board of the project 2 That the policy plan (written on paper) will no be used anymore in a couple of 3	Preventative measures What can you do to minimise the risks? 1 Meet people with an disability background 2 Make a divers soundboard group 3

According to the final EQUIP project final conference survey, 80 % of respondents indicated high satisfaction with the tools presented and a strong likelihood to use them in their own sport context. This finding is significant as during the conference there was a specific workshop about the I03 action planning tool, its purpose and as the participants were given the opportunity to use it and test it out, there was an overall very high interest in the tool and applying it in their own sporting contexts.

The **I05** represented a unique digital and communications related deliverable which was designed and developed to share case studies of the inequalities in action and ways to address or even prevent these types of inequalities or discrimination from happening in the first place. The five I05 case studies tied into the five inequality topics of the entire EQUIP project: gender inequalities, LGBTQI+ inclusion, disability in sport, challenges around socio-economic status and discrimination around racial and ethnicity. Each video proposed a good practice around a specific level of action which a sport club, organisation or federation could take to address the specific type of inequality. For example, the case study speaking to addressing challenges and discrimination around inclusion of individuals and communities of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, the video highlighted a grassroots club which welcomes migrants and is using different approaches to ensure their needs are met, such as getting the support of a diversity and inclusion mentor, reviewing own club policies and actions and most importantly, speaking with the target community to understand their situation, experiences and expectations within the club setting. Each video required a lead from within the project consortium and various steps in the process to go from brainstorming, storyboard development, identification of the main speakers and then production and review. As aforementioned, during the review process, 10 Equality Experts contributed by reviewing the scripts of the case studies which was an important step of the quality check.

The development of the I05 was closely monitored to ensure its successful completion and distribution as a key pillar of the educational and legacy pillars of the EQUIP project. The videos also offered an opportunity to include the voices, images, perspectives, and learnings from other sport stakeholders, who are through their actions, addressing inequalities in sport in Europe, such as athletes, grassroots organisations and clubs. The case study series can be found on the EQUIP project website, with subtitles available in all the languages of the partnership, and project partners are encouraged to disseminate them further within their networks.

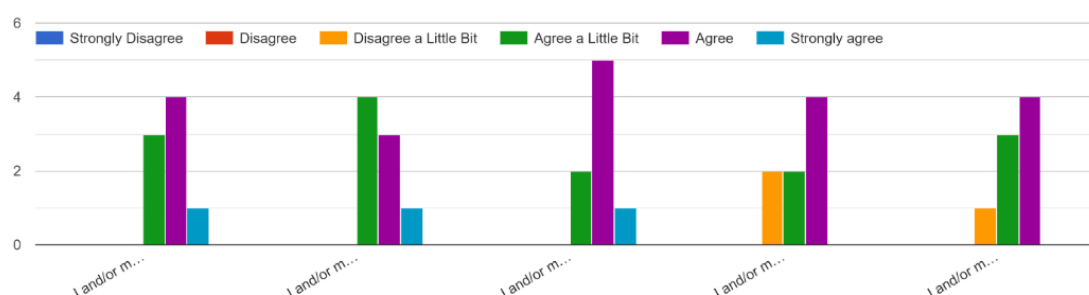
Umbrella Organisations

The project model was designed to equip the 6 umbrella organisations with the tools, experience, practice, support, and increased capacity to take on coach and mentorship roles with their national level Champion clubs and federation. As each umbrella organisation and their respective project representatives came into the role from a different starting point, it was important to assess their development along the way. This was done through an assortment of surveys, observations, and semi-structured interviews around each capacity-building workshop and transnational meeting.

Learnings from the EQUIP Project

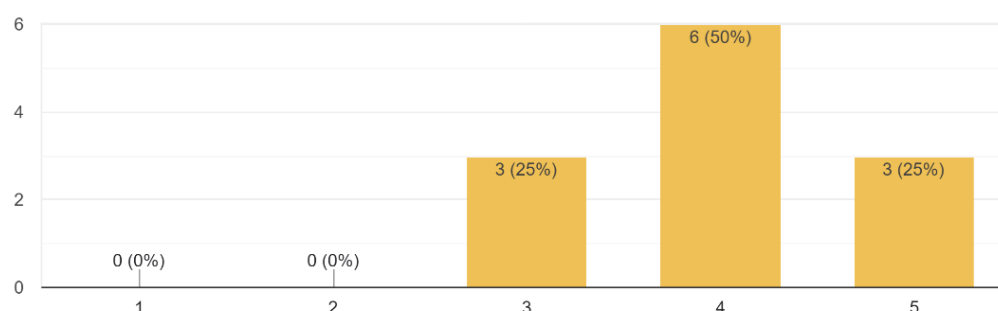
The mid-term survey included many questions for the umbrella organisations to respond to which aimed to assess their perceptions of their knowledge on the different inequality topics, skills around their role and ability to use and deliver the tools. The five questions below ask the umbrella organisation to assess their level of knowledge on the topics of inequality from gender equality, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, disability, and racial and ethnic minorities. The results below indicate how they agreed with the statement - I and/or my organisation learned important information about gender inequality, gender and sexual orientation inequalities, socio-economic status and inequalities, ability level inequalities and racial/ethnic inequalities.

One of the main indicator of success for the project and for IO1 in particular is your increased knowledge on some inequality topics. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by ticking the best answer:



Questions around the coach organisation knowledge on specific inequality topics were also asked at different points in the project with the one below being drawn from the post-equality within sport workshop in Rome. These types of questions allowed the project team to gauge how the umbrella coach organisations felt in their coaching roles and overall, how they intended or were using the tools and other project resources.

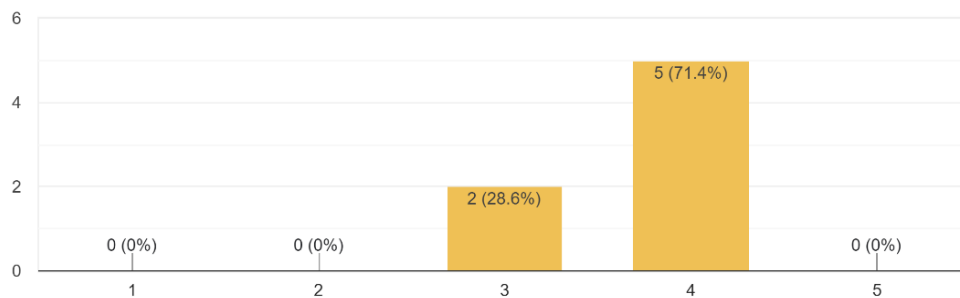
From a range from 1 (knew very little) to 5 (very knowledgeable), please rate your level of knowledge and understanding about gender inequalities after at.... This includes all the presentations on the topic.
12 responses



Learnings from the EQUIP Project

From 1 to 5 with 1 being very unconfident to 5 being very confident, how confident do you and your organization feel regarding the tools created through this project?

7 responses



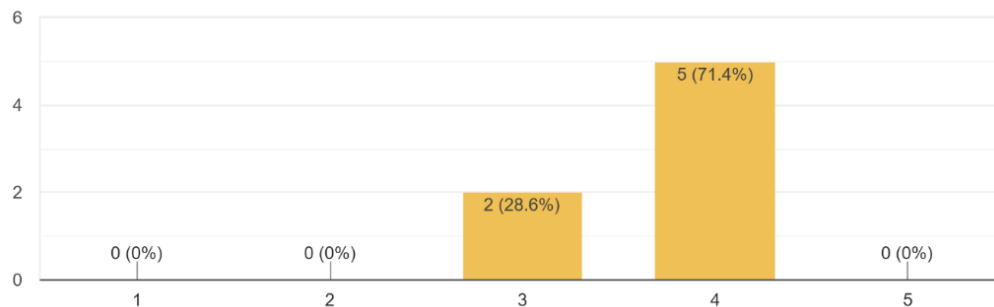
Regarding key takeaways or learnings which the organisations planned to use in their own work context as well as in their role as a coach organisation, the following were drawn from the survey relating to the gender equality and sexual orientation workshops:

- *"There is still a long way to go on gender equality, however, there are more people/organisations looking for solutions. It is important to always push that this is not a women's problem it is a society problem."* – Umbrella organisation A
- *"I learned how slowly advance is still around gender inequalities and in working on any of these issues, it is important to consider an intersectional approach."* – Umbrella organisation B
- *"In order to work with sport organisations, it will be important to always ask for more information, gain an inside perspective from the field organisations and look for brave examples of people that have taken a step in the same direction."* – Umbrella organisation C
- *"In terms of the sexual orientation workshop, it was reinforced that gender binary is still very unknown as we are still receiving some very basic questions around sexual orientation. There is the thought that maybe there is still a lot of uncomfortableness about approaching this issue?"* – Umbrella organisation D

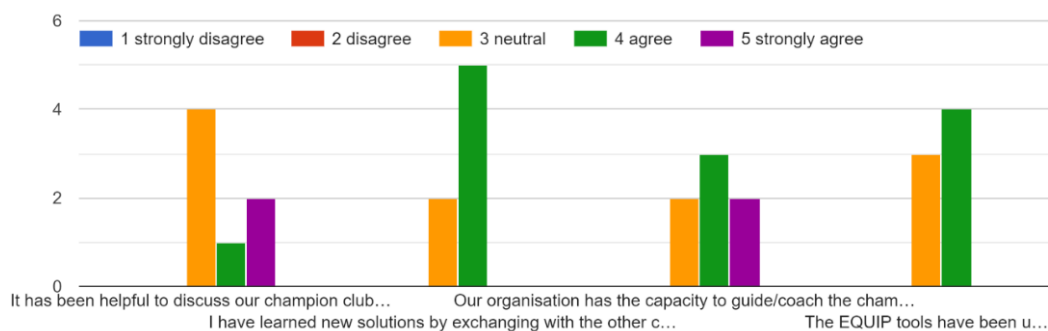
In the third year of the project, surveys and semi-structured interviews and discussions were held with the coach organisations regarding their perceptions and experiences in the implementation phase of the project. The aim was to assess how it was going for them as they were working with the Champion clubs and federations, coaching them on different inequality topics and overall supporting them in different formats to achieve their action plans. Below are some of the snapshots from the survey and data collection tools.

Learnings from the EQUIP Project

How confident do you and your organization feel with the role you are taking to support the champion clubs/federations in implementing their... 1 being very unconfident to 5 being very confident
7 responses



Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. 1 indicates strongly disagree and 5 indicates strongly agree.



In the first chart, coach organisations didn't feel overly confident in their coaching roles, however, all indicated that they had the capacity to take on the role. In the second chart, we see again that the perceptions of each coach organisation on their capacity to coach differed and that the exchange between coach organisations on challenges and solutions was helpful to their own development. Importantly, the EQUIP tools were positively received and due to the review and co-creation process, the organisations who were not as satisfied with the tools were able to provide feedback to lead to improvements.

In the final evaluation done in-person with the coach organisations at the EQUIP closing meeting, similar findings were reported on capacity building, however, as it was done at the end of the project, the ratings were higher across the board. There was an overall feeling that the coach organisations themselves learned a lot about the five different inequality topics through the process, reflected on their own organisations' practices and through coaching, their learnings became even deeper. Discussions around the capacity building revealed that there was a lot of learning for the specific person involved in the project, however, the transfer to their larger organisation/team was challenging. This can be reflected in the responses around the individual representatives' learnings as indicated through the surveys, which are generally very positive. For example, it was shared by one representative that being

Learnings from the EQUIP Project

part of the EQUIP project has *“brought a constant self-reflection on my own inclusive (or non-inclusive) behaviours and interpretations. It put light on my own privileges and encourage the deconstruction of my beliefs”*. However, the question about how the individual(s) transferred the knowledge and capacity to the wider organisation is another topic to explore.

Additionally, digging deeper into the capacity building and where it could have been better, some coach organisations suggested that a stronger focus on the coaching and mentorship methods and approaches could have been beneficial for them as not only were they being positioned to support but also to consult and lead in a change management process as an external stakeholder. This feedback was taken and integrated into the improvement of the IO2, the workshop and coaching/mentorship guide.

EQUIP project events: transnational meetings & the final conference

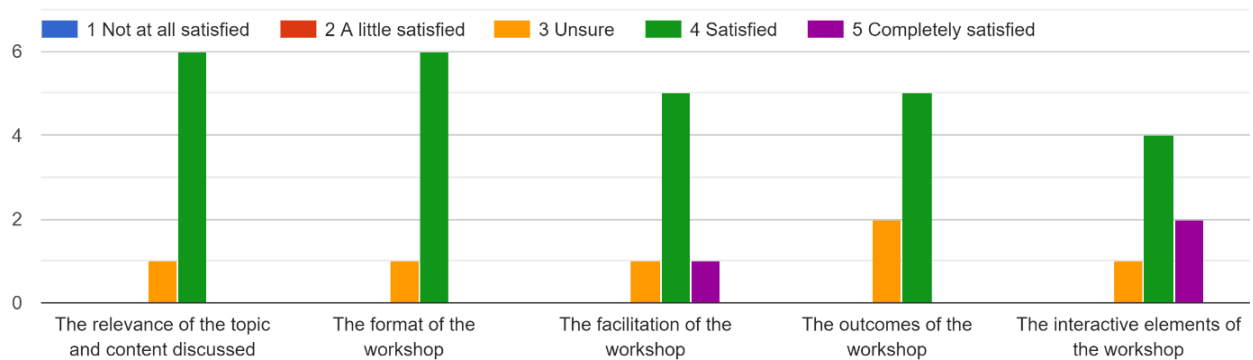
Over three years, there were various EQUIP project meetings which took place, online, in-person and through a hybrid format. As the project kicked-off during the Coronavirus pandemic, the initial meetings were held online. This possibility for online engagement also carried over into many project meetings where hybrid options were made available. As transnational meetings, particularly the in-person events, allowed for more collaboration and project-specific tasks and decisions, each one was designed, delivered, and evaluated to ensure the meeting objectives were met and the experiences of the participants were captured. This was done through in-person participation of the MEL team who observed and contributed to the agenda but also through post- event surveys.

In each post-event survey, a section was crafted around the project meeting and its adherence to the EQUIP project principles as well as an assessment on how well it met the project objectives. These surveys were then analysed with the learnings contributing to the set-up, design and delivery of the subsequent events and meetings.

Below are examples of questions asked in the survey to assess the transnational meeting held in Brussels. The first chart indicates how partner organisations evaluated the workshop which took place during the meeting while the second chart depicts how the partners' expectations around the TPM were met or unmet. For the project and MEL team, understanding how the partners experienced the process was important to assess as well as how the methods of the different workshops were received.

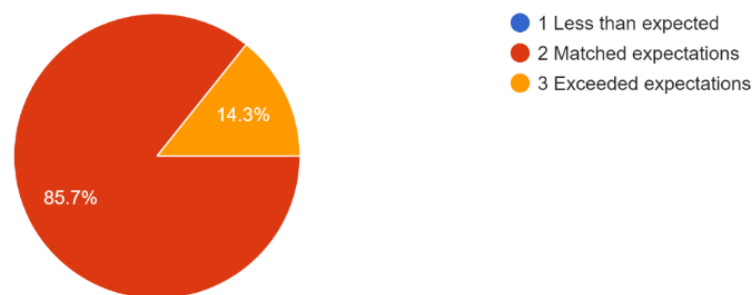
Learnings from the EQUIP Project

Workshop 1: Legacy, dissemination and sustainability workshop Rate the following elements of the workshop according to a scale of 1 being not at all satisfied to 5 completely satisfied.



Please indicate below the extent to which your expectations for this TPM were met.

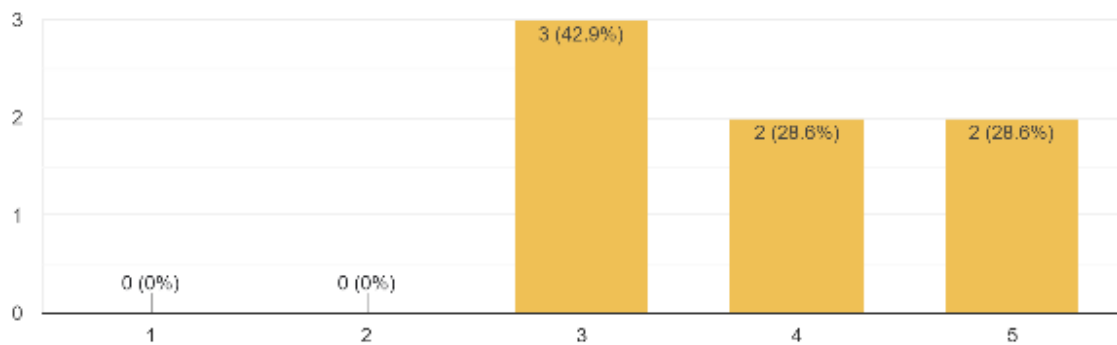
7 responses



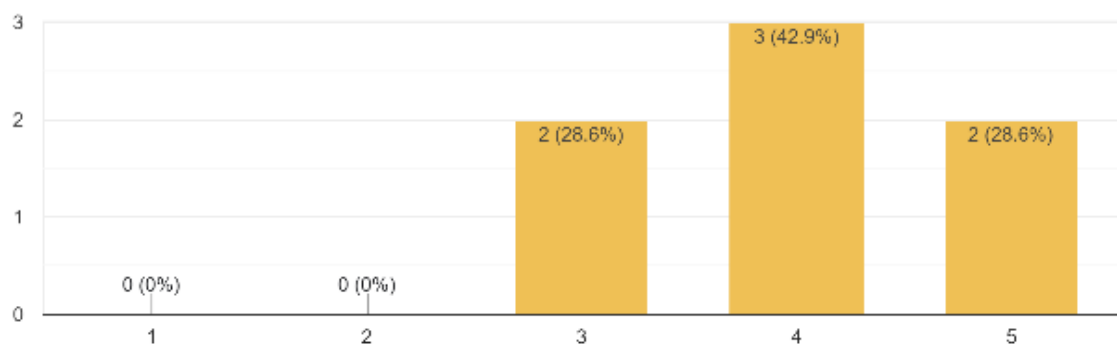
After the transnational meetings, partner organisations were asked to assess how the project principles were being implemented. The first chart is from the post-Papendal TPM and the second graphic from the post-Brussels TPM. From these questions and others, it is apparent that there were certainly good practices being implemented by the project team to align with the project principles, however, there was still room for improvement. With those that indicated a 3 or neutral stance, a follow-up was done to gain a better understanding behind the response and to see ways to improve the project delivery and development.

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How well have the project principles been upheld? These include being intentional about equality and diversity, nothing about us without us, linear and horizontal cohesion,
7 responses



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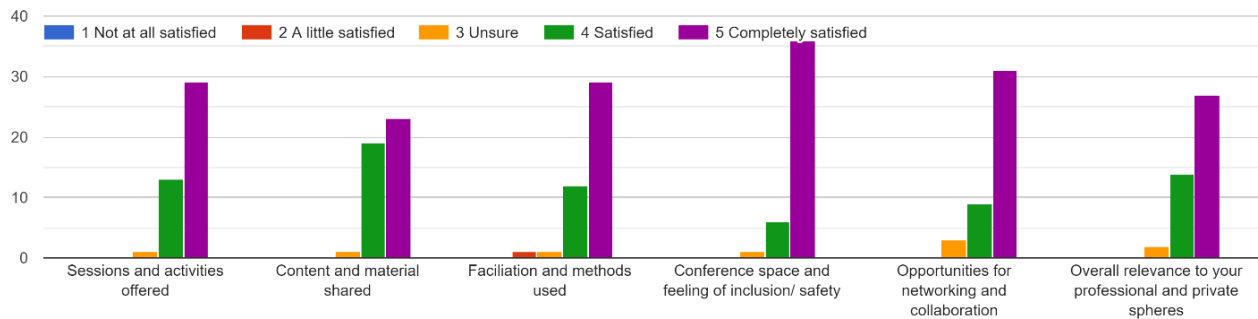
The EQUIP Final Conference was not just the project's final event to showcase the tools, partners and achievements but more importantly, it was designed by and for the project stakeholders to come together in one space to reflect, interact and discuss on how the European grassroots sport movement can and is moving from policy to action when it comes to equality, diversity and inclusion in sports. The umbrella organisations and experts were instrumental in the co-creation and delivery of the final conference with many preparatory meetings having taken place to determine the agenda, objectives, activities, and delivery.

The post- event survey was administered during the conference through a digital QR code and through this intervention, 43 responses were collected. Overall, all elements of the conference received high ratings and importantly, as the conference was about inclusion and equality in sport, it was well received by the event team that the participants expressed that they felt the conference space was safe and inclusive to their needs. When asked what parts or aspects of the conference contributed most to the satisfaction levels of the event, the dominant responses alluded to the workshop methodologies used and the level of interaction amongst the participants and with the facilitators/experts. Since the individual elements

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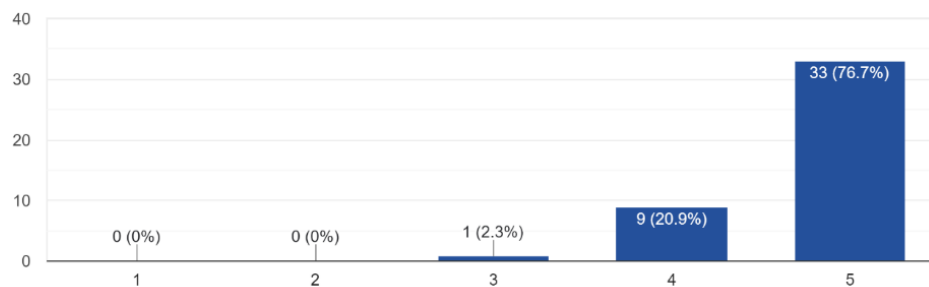
were well received, the overall satisfaction level with the EQUIP conference was also noteworthy with 77 % evaluating it as excellent.

Rate the following elements of the conference according to a scale of 1 being not at all satisfied to 5 being completely satisfied.



Please rate your overall satisfaction with the EQUIP conference. 1 = Poor, 5 = Excellent

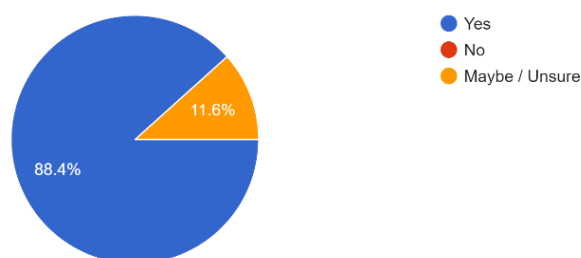
43 responses



Three interactive workshops took place, each tying into a tool or practice around the EQUIP project. The main objective was for all attendees to leave the conference with at least one takeaway/tool or practice around addressing inequalities in sport to implement in their own context. According to the survey responses, this objective was achieved.

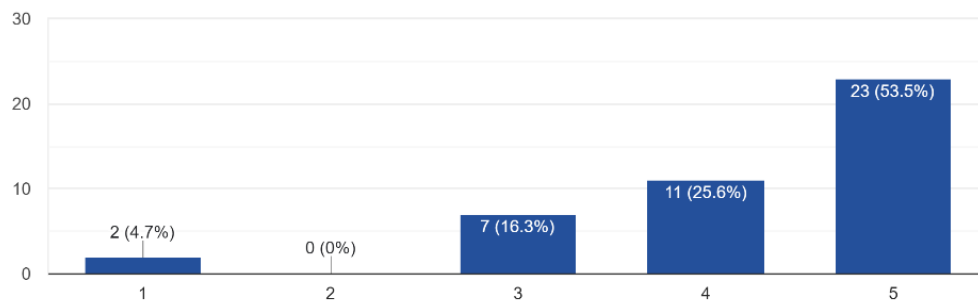
Are you leaving the conference with at least one practical takeaway or good practice that you can apply in your work or life?

43 responses



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Different tools (deliverables) created through the EQUIP project were shared during the conference. How likely are you to use at least on...ork environment? 1 = Very Unlikely, 5 = Very Likely
43 responses



Specifically, the IO3 action tool was introduced and used in one of the workshops with the objective being to get the participants familiar with the tool, the process involved and the other good practices and actions to address inequalities. In smaller groups, the participants worked on a specific case study, using the IO3 as their guide to dissect the problem, the type of action required and the steps which would be involved. The IO5 case studies were also integrated into the conference agenda and all other tools were also mentioned through the presentations. The following chart provides evidence that the conference and the way the tools were introduced led 79% of the audience indicating that they were very likely/likely to use the EQUIP tools in their own local context.

To ensure that all conference participants, including the experts and facilitators, felt safe and seen/heard in the conference space, the project team had a designated safeguarding officer on site to respond to any situations. Their contact information was distributed to all participants and during the conference, no reports or cases were shared with them.

The following quotes taken from the survey provide further insights into what was appreciated and enjoyed by the participants at the conference as well as what else could be considered or improved upon such as the diversity in terms of race and ethnicity of the participants and the speakers. These points were also taken into consideration for future events.

- *"I found the conference extremely eye-opening. It was able to include all the relevant issues, many of which are not always considered in other contexts. Sharing the importance of these practices and values can be applied not only in the participants' organisations and clubs but also at a personal level."*
- *"I believe all the deliverables produced by the project are going to be very useful to my job."*
- *"The conference provided a great opportunity to network with delegates from other countries. It was well planned and there were interesting exercises."*
- *"The most important for me was hearing about initiatives of people who are faced with the same challenges."*
- *"I enjoyed the great variation of methods that make you think a bit differently about this complex question of inclusion."*
- *"We need more diversity among the participants for example when it comes to ethnicity/colour."*

Findings: key learnings

This section will present the most significant learnings and insights gained from the different phases of the project. These learnings are organised under the following categories: EQUIP project empowerment methodology, Equality within Sport Workshops and the implementation of the Equality action plans.

EQUIP project “empowerment” and coaching methodology

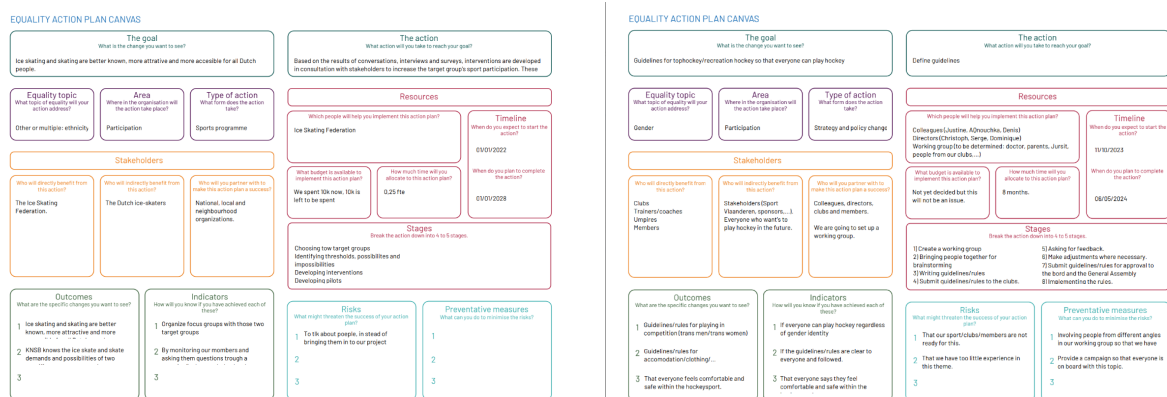
The project methodology and theory of change made two assumptions in the design of the phases and activities. On one hand, that enough good policies and practices existed which could be used to effectively address different inequalities in sport (at different levels) and on the other, that with the right tools and capacity building, the participating umbrella sport organisations could effectively coach champion clubs and federations to bring change in their local contexts. As the process behind the collection of practices and policies for the IOI demonstrated, there are ample practices spread across the type of inequalities and which provide examples of different areas of action. The collection process also demonstrated the many practices outside of Europe which also could serve as good examples. Although the practices are ample, there is still work to be done on understanding the process behind implementing best practices, what is required within the sport environment and context and what additional factors need to be considered. With the policies collected, it was noted by different experts that as policies change in each country and around certain areas, it will be key that the review and updating process continues so that the tools remain relevant. Another point of feedback for future revisions of the tool is to consider how intersectionality needs to be considered and integrated into the overall approach for addressing inequalities.

The project methodology assumed that the reason more sport organisations, clubs and federations were not implementing these policies and practices was due to a lack of know-how and a lack of guidance and support. This is where the umbrella organisations were positioned as taking on key roles as coaches and mentors to the champion clubs and federations. The project surveys, observations and interviews confirmed that the project umbrella sport organisations were able to effectively take on coaching and mentorship roles with clubs and federations, however, even with the tools and the capacity building, more elements need to be considered in the process of supporting the Champions in their respective implementation process. These additional elements can relate to their national context and including experts from their local area into the coaching process or even specific change management consultants who are better equipped with the methods on how to support different sport federations or clubs.

By monitoring the development of the umbrella organisations around their levels of knowledge on the inequality topics and their competences, and capacities as coaches, it was possible to see that they were becoming more equipped to take on the coach/mentorship role, however, some findings also indicated that there were still gaps which prevented them from maintaining higher levels of confidence in their roles. For example, during the final evaluation it was shared that although they felt more knowledgeable about the topics and had the different tools, they didn't feel fully prepared to guide another sport organisation through a change management process or on how to deal with the different challenges which came up

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during the implementation processes. It was also shared that for those coach organisations who focused on one or two areas of inequalities in the workshops and with their Champions were able to dive deeper into the area as opposed to trying to cover all five areas of inequalities which each having their complexities and challenges requiring specific expertise and insights. However, on the other hand, coach organisations also recognised the lack of intersectionality as an approach which could have had a more prominent role in the project. Overall, the movement from theory and practice to hands on practical changes within a club and or federation proved to be a process for many which only just began through the EQUIP framework and which would need to continue to be worked on to lead to outcomes. Many of the IO3 action plans also indicated that the activities, actions, and steps needed to address the specific inequality in a specific area required a timeframe past the end of the project. In those cases, Coach organisations spoke about their plans and commitments to continue supporting their Champions past the EQUIP project framework which also indicated a commitment by both the Champions and the coach organisations. These type of post- project activities will have to be monitored to understand the full impact of the project at the grassroots/ community level.



The interviews with the coach organisations revealed that each approached the coaching and mentoring in a different way which seemed to be highly dependent on their own organisation's capacity, existing resources, and approaches. For example, one of the coach organisations integrated EQUIP into an already existing framework where sport federations had committed to a diversity and inclusion charter. As part of this framework, change consultants worked with the coach organisations to support the many champion federations in the design and delivery of their action plans. The EQUIP tools were added to the already existing toolbox for the change consultants and because they were integrated into an existing framework, they were used and tested effectively. Another coach organisation has the mandate to support clubs and federations on a variety of topics and challenges. They figured out ways to integrate the EQUIP tools into their existing approach, which prioritises smaller and more in-depth workshops with a set of standard methodologies to dive deeper into the challenges of the sport organisation. For this coach organisation, it was found that from the EQUIP project, the EQUIP framework and network became the valuable tools for them in their particular context.

Recruiting clubs and federations into the Champion role was also an interesting process for each respective umbrella organisation. The first multiplier sport events were often helpful to bringing more awareness and attention around the project, however, securing and then

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keeping the Champions on board and active for the entirety of the project posed a different set of challenges and opportunities. For example, one coach organisation working with grassroots clubs explained how she and her organisation had to figure out the best way to convince the club by sharing how they would build a process together and involve them in the different decisions. Especially when she couldn't offer them any funds, it had to be clear to the club that something could change if they were able to work together. In this case, she took a step-by-step approach to show them what they could gain from being part of the project and how these gains could contribute to addressing some of their day-to-day challenges around participants, members, and volunteering for the club. In this situation, the action plans were very specific to the club and were in fact implemented effectively during the project timeline. The snapshot of the action plan below provides further details on what was done at the programme level.

EQUALITY ACTION PLAN					
Obiettivo Quale cambiamento volete ottenere? promoting integration and social skills of individuals with disabilities. Enhancing their autonomy and sense of responsibility.			Azione Cosa farete per raggiungere il vostro obiettivo? individual lessons of horse riding but within the creation of a group dynamic (together all the phases- i.e. taking care of the horses but then 1:1 lessons). the group takes care of the horses and then in each lesson there is individual side		
Argomento Qual è il tema della vostra azione? disability	Area In quale punto dell'organizzazione l'azione avrà un impatto? Affrontare la discriminazione	Tipo Che tipo di azione è? programma sportivo	Risorse		
Beneficiari			Chi attuerà questo piano d'azione? ASD F.A.L.CO ASD CENTRO IPPICO SAN BENEDETTO		Sequenza temporale Quando pensa di iniziare? 1 July 2022
			Qual è il budget disponibile? 600 euro	Quanto tempo trascorrerete? 2 hours per week until December	Quando pensate di completare l'attuazione del piano d'azione? 31 December 2022
Chi beneficerà di questa azione? young people with motorial disabilities	Chi beneficerà indirettamente di questa azione? families our association	Con chi collaborerete per attuare questo piano d'azione? other associations of the territory and in particular ASD Falco	Fasi Definire 4 o 5 fasi per l'attuazione del piano d'azione. 1) preparation 2)recruting of participants 3) first approach to horses 4) horse riding (basic lessons) 5) evaluation 6) promotional event		
Risultati Quali sono i cambiamenti specifici che volete ottenere? 1 inclusion of people with disabilities within a group dynamic 2 improving motorial skills 3 starting a new activity hich can be sustainable	Indicatori Come si fa a sapere se si sono ottenuti questi cambiamenti? 1 observing the group dynamics 2 participation to the lessons 3 individual evaluation		Rischio Cosa può minacciare il successo dell'attuazione del vostro piano d'azione? 1 lack of participation 2 lack of funds 3	Misure Preventive Cosa si può fare per ridurre al minimo il rischio? 1 looking for funds 2 promoting the activities 3 families support with a small subscription fees for insurance	

Another umbrella organisation recognized the value of the EQUIP branding as a European project funded by the Erasmus + Programme of the European Union. Leveraging this branding and international or regional aspect helped to get their champion federations on board. Working with federations it was noted that often when one or two showed an interest, then others would follow suit. This is explained due to the nature of federations paying close attention to what the others are doing and especially when it is around social topics, such as the inequality topics. Even with multiple federations joining the project, a common challenge when coaching them was to not only understand their specific challenge around the inequality but to understand how they worked, including but not limited to their structures, their governance and how decisions were made and implemented. This wasn't new

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information for all coach organisations, however, it was noted that working with federations on equality and inclusion issues was challenging because not only is there not a quick fix but also these topics have to compete for attention on their agendas which have many other priority areas.

All the coach organisations expressed how much they learned about the clubs and federations through the coaching and mentorship experience. There was an overall acknowledgement of the significance of meeting the club and federation where they were at and working with them from their starting point. All coach organisations agreed that it would be ineffective to arrive as a coach organisation imposing a method, framework on the Champions. As the actions (even if just small steps) taken by the Champions around addressing inequalities required a buy in, a clear plan, resources, and time, it was important that the coach organisations found the right approach when working with the individual Champions. There was a difference in the approaches depending on whether the Champion was a grassroots sports club or a Federation. In fact, one of the coach organisations working with Federations explained that it was helpful to categorise their federations on their resources and capacity and then adjust their coaching accordingly. They explained that three categories existed – big federations with a lot of capacity and resources, including human, to work on action plans, middle to big where resources existed but not as much and capacity was present, and then smaller federations where lower membership, lower resources, and smaller teams within the federations meant a lower level of capacity. Knowing where each Champion federation was in this categorisation helped them to provide the most effective level of support.

The following learnings from the coach organisations were shared during the final evaluation:

- *"We shouldn't impose, we should share points of view and lead the partners to a path of implementation in their organisation in the way they understand to be the best, because they have the inside knowledge about it."* – Coach organisation A
- *"There is a need for information that is accessible and applicable for the sport context. At the beginning of the project, the knowledge of the federations on the topic was rather limited. Organizing the workshops and providing them with support was helpful for them to start thinking about the topic within their own federation."* – Coach organisation B
- *"When coaching/mentoring the federations, we found there was a need for collegial consultation when receiving questions about the topic. To provide good advice to federations we often consulted expert organisations in our local context."* – Coach organisation B
- *"A federation must not write a diversity and inclusion plan of action because it is forced through society for example. We learned that there are two ingredients needed for such action plan to work: The federation has to be internally motivated, and time must be created by a federation, in terms of giving a worker a number of hours a week to spend on the action plan."* – Coach organisation C
- *"The project and the canvas were useful to help defining everything and having a scheme and a schedule to comply with. This was a good support for orienting clubs. This was an important support for clubs who had for the first time to follow a structured scheme decided by them."* – Coach organisation D
- *"In general, it has not been easy to implement an external project into the clubs' and federations' businesses. It is somehow in the logic of an independent club/federation that they do their own thing. Change and inclusion work 'from above' seldom works in*

that sense. Therefore, our strategy has been to rather strengthen and support clubs that already were committed to inclusion work.” – Coach organisation E

- *“A very important learning is that every federation has its own difficulties. Custom help is needed from the coach organisations.” – Coach organisation F*

Equality within Sport Workshops

Regardless of the approach or format taken by the coach organisation when working with the Champion clubs and federations, the Equality within Sport workshops, which were integrated into the national multiplier sport events delivered in each coach organisation country, became key events to the development of the EQUIP project at the national levels. Not only were they significant opportunities for the coach organisations to showcase their involvement in the European project but also for the clubs and federations who could use them to connect and share with others in their national context. Generally, the first of the two events was designed and delivered to introduce the EQUIP project, create awareness, share knowledge about inequalities in sport and attract potential federations and clubs into the project. How the coach organisations reached out to their existing and new members in their ecosystem, designed the agenda, introduced the inequality topics, decided on a format for delivery and shared about the EQUIP project was decided upon according to each context. It was clear that the coach organisations working within an extensive network of federations would have a different strategy than the coach organisations working with clubs and within a more grassroots network. Below the examples from the three countries provide deeper insights into the key learnings around these workshops.

- **Coach organisation – OPES**

The Equality within Sport workshop 1 was designed and delivered with a more institutional approach. To showcase the international aspect of the EQUIP project, international guests joined via an online format and in total 16 participants took part and represented 8 organisations. The objectives of the workshop were to discuss disability in and through sport with a specific focus on projects which used sport to favour inclusion of people from vulnerable backgrounds, for example those with low socio-economic status and minors in the jail system. The EQUIP project and different exemplary practices were shared with the participants and participating organisations and clubs. Other coach organisations, such as the Portuguese Sports Confederation and EQUIP project experts were also invited to share their insights. The aspects of the event which worked well included the sharing of good practices directly by the protagonists or those involved, for example, former athletes and the framing of the event under the European wide project which brought even more credibility to the event.

The second workshop focused on creating a space for the coaches, trainers and those involved in the EQUIP project implementation in country to come together to share their experiences, exchange on learnings and speak about their next steps. The workshop allowed the clubs to present on what they had been working on and even to guests who were relatively new to the project framework. For the coach organisation, the second workshop was a moment to reflect on the achievements of the entire project as it was possible to see and hear from the actual participants on how they grew through their club's action plan implementation around inclusion of those with disabilities. In addition to the discussions, the workshop hosts organized a tournament for the club beneficiaries including 33 youth and

their families. This second workshop was perceived as a successful pilot with plans already to deliver another similar workshop in the region even outside the scope of the EQUIP project. When reflecting on the elements that went well with the second workshop, the coach organisation noted the importance of having meetings in presence to understand the realities of the clubs and the needs of their beneficiaries. Co-hosting the workshop and meeting with the Champion club tallowed for EQUIP to reach different locations and to create more awareness in new territories. Having representatives, whether speakers or experts from the specific territory on the specific inequality topics, taking part in the workshop was also received well.

- **Coach organisation - Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee (BOIC) & the Centre for Ethics in Sport (ICES)**

The two organisations worked closely together in their country context to design and deliver the workshops within the national multiplier events as well as on how to approach the coaching and mentorship of the Champion federations. The first workshop included 29 participants who joined to learn more about gender equality, sexual orientation and gender and sex diverse persons in sport. The hosts invited different experts to give their insights, including one of the gender equality experts who had presented at the original Equality within Sport workshops for the capacity building of the coach organisations. The participants of the workshop provided their feedback on the event with 100 % indicating that because of the workshop they had gained new knowledge on gender topics and amongst the group, 67 % had plans to use the Equality Action Plan (IO3) in their own context. Another important finding was that 100% of the participants would recommend the workshop to other sport federations which indicated that they found a lot of value in the event.

In the second workshop, the two organisations used the opportunity to bring together experts, federations, and different stakeholders in the LGBTQI+ community, including local organisations specializing in gender- and sex-diverse persons. With a total of 18 participants representing 12 organisations (10 which hadn't been present in the first workshop), the workshop created a space for a mixed audience: people from federations on the one hand and people from the LGBTQI+ community on the other hand. The IO3 action plan was a key part of the workshop and groups were formed to test out and provide feedback on the tool. Additionally, through smaller group work, the coach organisations could observe and listen in on the discussions and questions being posed to learn more about the challenges and issues facing federations around the inclusion of gender and sex-diverse persons. The second workshop was considered a great success and the organisations attributed this to the safe space which was created where the 15 federations could discuss, learn from each other and importantly listen and learn from members of the LGBTQI+ community. The participating federations also learned that they could contact the two host organisations with any questions on the topic and this did take place with more than 10 federations contacting them for advice.

- **Coach organisation - RF-SISU Örebro**

The Coach organisation, RF-SISU- Örebro is accustomed to organising meetings, workshops, and network building for and amongst sport clubs in Sweden. In the Swedish system, meetings and workshops tend to be organised around a transfer of knowledge and ideas amongst the entire group. RF-SISU Örebro took this same approach through their workshops and events where instead of approaching the Champions with the assumption that they would

support them by transferring knowledge externally and from top down, their method was based on the IPA approach with the focus on the why behind the workshop. IPA stands for individual reflection, pair conversations and all discussions and this was used when working with the specific club in each workshop. Instead of hosting larger events with many clubs and federations, the format was to work closely with one club and its allies to become more specific around a challenge and or opportunity. The purpose set for the first workshop with 8 participants and 3 organisations was to identify how to best support the specific club to identify their problems/challenges and solutions with an overarching aim to lead to a concrete action program. The club had identified their aim to strengthen girls'/women's sports without reducing the scope of boys'/men's sports in the county and through the method, they came up with a concrete action plan.

In the second workshop, the objectives were to discuss, raise awareness and share best practices on inclusion work targeting disability and socio-economy in sports. For the coach organisation, it was necessary to identify a specific and relevant topic for the workshop as past experiences had taught them that trying to take on too broad of topics had the risk of becoming vague and irrelevant. It was also recognised that because most of the people working in the sport ecosystem are doing so on a voluntary basis, the workshops and events had to be designed to give energy or motivation to the participants, build networks and/ or gain new knowledge. There was also an appreciation shared by the club to have a space to discuss their work, challenges, and opportunities with someone from the outside and to receive support in change management methods. The coach organisation stressed the importance of having the members decide and lead on the aim and vision of the club's action plan as well as to be fully integrated into the change processes. When reflecting on their role as an EQUIP coach organisation, RF-SISU- Örebro emphasised the importance of providing each club with a similar quality of support which means that the consultants should be trained and equipped with similar tools and capacity levels.

Equality action plan implementation

Each coach organisation worked with a minimum of 3 Champion clubs and federations in their national context. Some coach organisations, like the NOC*NSF were able to integrate the EQUIP project into an existing equality and inclusion framework and therefore they secured a higher number of Champion Federations, which in their situation was a total of 40.

To describe the key learnings from across 6 national contexts, different questions with their key responses will be shared.

- **What were the main challenges you faced as a Coach organisation?**

- Getting a strong interest from federations as they have a lot of work and they have to choose what to focus on first and what to prioritise.
- Challenges around understanding a federations approach to equality policies and importantly, how they implement them.
- Challenges around meeting and coaching online and not having the chance to be in present with the Champion club to understand their context and realities
- Challenges around using some of the EQUIP project tools which were not always seen as user-friendly or accessible. This feedback was shared back into the review process.

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- Challenges around finding the right person in the right position to work with in a federation
- Lack of funds or real incentives to push the Champions to implement their action plans
- Being perceived as an outsider and challenges around how much to reveal about the specific topics
- **What were the main challenges faced by the Champions?**
 - Challenges even getting diversity and inclusion policies through the organisation
 - Challenges around deciding on which inequality topic to focus and how to take the first steps
 - Challenges around finding best practices which fit their specific context
 - Challenges for smaller federations and clubs around not having the human resources and capacity to write a plan of action nor to implement it
 - Challenges around Champions not having the funds/ no budget to implement their action plans.
- What were some solutions tested?
 - Getting buy in from the board to work on the equality action plan. This is because support from the board makes it much easier to prioritise the diversity and inclusion topics.
 - Customising the support to fit the needs and realities of the Champions.
 - Strengthening the local and international network around the project to bring in fresh knowledge and opportunities for all the organisations
 - Creating a network amongst the Champions to be able to share experiences but also to provide a space to ask questions, share challenges and failures.
 - To have and be able to provide concrete examples that can show how to overcome the barriers and to show the benefits for the Champions
 - Connecting the Champion clubs/ federations with others who could also provide support such as NGOs or change consultants.
- **What do you consider as the concrete outputs and outcomes from this project with your Champions?**
 - The Rowing Federation started a campaign, called 'Words can touch, including yours', based on their action plan. The campaign is about misplaced jokes and comments in rowing clubs.
 - The group of disabled participants who got to take part in the new sports-programme. Their parents were so satisfied that they decided to sustain some expenses.
 - Participating federations and sport clubs vowed to implement the equality policy in their organisations and use the Equip Equality Canvas to assess their organisation and create an action plan which will go beyond the project timeline.
 - Several federations have been or are still working on adapting their registration forms so when becoming a member of the federation, one is allowed to not just indicate male or female but also a third option.

- **Please share learnings you took away as a coach organisation which can support others**
 - There is a need for information on the inequality topics that is accessible and applicable for the sport context.
 - You need to have the approval of the decision makers within federations to be able to make a difference.
 - Each organisation is different and therefore it is very difficult to implement the same strategies. Therefore, a differentiated approach is needed and a process that involves many stakeholders should be implemented to create an organic process that will lead to a customised action plan.
 - Champion Clubs and federations can and should lead the way and act as an example for similar or smaller organisations.
 - It is important to be well organised and schematic as a coach organisation. If the scheme is clear and obstacles are taken in consideration, it is easier to manage eventual risks or to achieve the foreseen results.
 - Make sure to be simple and to give practical information and consider ways to use new technologies.
 - For many federations and clubs, the plans of actions required more time to achieve, and, in this way, they become a vision document which will be beneficial for the federations as they move beyond the EQUIP framework.

Recommendations & Conclusion

By analysing the various feedback points, learnings and insights shared through the forms, discussions and meetings with the project key stakeholders, the project and MEL team were able to reflect back on the project design and implementation to ascertain what factors or elements of the project were more and less effective in contributing to the project objectives. The following recommendations reflect these main findings.

- Equipping umbrella organisations with the tools, competences, and capacities to take on coaching roles is a challenge and comes with a lot of responsibility. It is important to monitor the empowerment process of the organisations to ensure that the processes and practices in place are sufficient to support umbrella organisations to become coach organisations. Capacity building for coach organisations should also consider methods, approaches and theories on organisational change which can support coaches to guide champion clubs and federations in their various challenges.
- When the co-creation process is done well it can lead to a set of high-quality and valuable tools which have the potential to be distributed and used across networks.
- Forming a panel of experts working across the inequality topics can be a strong asset to a transnational project, however, it is crucial to provide them with a consistent flow of project communications as well as clear opportunities for engagement and significant contributions.
- Considering each country has its own sport models (even at the grassroots level) and systems and structures in place to address inequalities, it is imperative for coach organisations to be well versed in the local context, challenges and opportunities facing their champion club or federations.
- Exchanging good practices around addressing inequalities in sport contexts across countries can be beneficial, however, nuances and context specific factors need to be considered when going from practice to implementation.
- Designing an action plan to address an inequality (or more) in one's sport environment takes time, consultations, resources, data, and clear communications.
- Moving from action plan to implementation is a complex process and even three-year projects require more time and resources to lead to changes which can reach the wider communities engaged in and around these sport entities.
- Employing an intersectional lens as a framework to understand social inequality allows sport organisations to analyse intersecting and overlapping effects of multiple social categories such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation, disability, and more. Using an intersectional lens when designing an action plan can support to designing a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of inequality which helps to craft a more inclusive and effective strategies for addressing social inequalities.
- Addressing inequalities in sport requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that encompasses various aspects of organisational structure, culture, policies, and practices. The EQUIP project gave organisations the framework to take initial steps, however, implementing these measures (and next steps) requires a sustained and collective effort, with ongoing commitment from all stakeholders within the sports organisation. It's essential to recognise that addressing inequalities is an ongoing process that involves continual reflection, adaptation, and improvement.
- Continuing to support the development of the network created through the project will entail creating a collaborative and supportive environment that fosters exchange,

Learnings from the EQUIP Project

learning, innovation, and collective action. This network, now across the 6 European countries and beyond, has the potential to drive positive change and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable landscape in the world of sports.

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