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## Erasmus+ Sport Programme

### Small Collaborative Partnerships

### *Success@360<sup>o</sup> - Bridging Sport, Safety and Health*



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**Recommendations for Policy Makers to Improve  
Health & Safety**

**June 2019**

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## **Executive Summary – The Project**

### ***Success@360° - Bridging Sport, Safety and Health***

Birkirkara Badminton Club are proud that the application under Erasmus+ Sport Programme (Small Collaborative Partnerships) has been selected for EU co-funding by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

The project Success@360° - Bridging Sport, Safety and Health (BSSH360) with a project duration of 18 months between January 2018 and June 2019 will be led by Birkirkara Badminton Club (Malta) having as associated partners ASV Mals Badminton (Italy), BK TU v Liberci, z.s. (Czech Republic) and TJ Slovan Vesec, z.s. (Czech Republic).

This project focused on a number of activities that sought to increase awareness, exchange knowledge on how to protect athletes, especially the youngest, from health and safety hazards by improving training and competition conditions. As a result, the main objectives of this project targeted:

- review of current practices within the clubs on health and safety hazards that hamper the athletes' development
- discussions on ways how the clubs may develop synergies and improve their training and competition conditions
- raising awareness amongst members and local sport clubs of preventing health and safety hazards in badminton

The project Success@360° sought to eliminate or reduce heavily the element of health and safety hazards in sport with a special focus on the work carried out by grass root organisations in the field of badminton. Without doubt, the most effective focal point is that of school children and their parents/guardians. Cultivating an attitude which makes sport a safe environment must be done at a very early age. Over and above, it is imperative that parents/guardians and sport organisations are educated and aware of ensuring safety of athletes. The use of media such as radio, television, newspapers and social media will be used to focus on different age groups to increase further awareness.

The project intended to raise awareness and help our athletes identify risks and seek ways to reduce and prevent such risks. In order to fulfil all the above, the project worked with various stakeholders to find solutions by obtaining support from the national authorities, public bodies, education providers, sport organizations, businesses and last but not least by the athletes themselves.

Being 4 clubs offering the same sport opportunities within our respective communities, Success@360° - Bridging Sport, Safety and Health directly involved the experts in the field and the policy makers to discuss how we can broaden accessibility of sporting activity at recreational, leisure and competitive levels and implement hazard-free sport by addressing the needs and constraints of the athletes, develop programmes amongst children and their parents towards a higher level of awareness, to educate people on the health and social benefits resulting from regular participation in clean sport, to assist in strengthening the sport administration culture and competencies of sport organisations in this area, and to share with other sport organisations the knowledge and information acquired as a result of this project.

Implementation – (February 2018 – April 2019)

Four Transnational events held as follows with the participation of club administrators/coaches, athletes and relevant stakeholders, all contributing directly to the project themes.

- 1st event: Italy (March 2018)
- 2nd event: Czech Republic (July 2018)
- 3rd event: Italy (December 2018)
- 4th event: Malta (April 2019)

Transnational events included thematic sessions, educational sessions, simulation exercises with the involvement of athletes and representatives from each club and relative stakeholders and professional speakers in the field.

This project is in line with the main objectives of the Erasmus+ Small Collaborative Partnerships since it sought to explore tailor made solutions for our clubs using the guidelines included in the EU Dual Careers Guidelines on the safety and welfare of athletes as a backdrop and reference point during our meetings, discussions and knowledge sharing activities.

This project adopted a two pronged approach. The first approach was to focus on the organisational level by ensuring adequate reflection, discussion and sharing of ideas amongst the participating organisations on the various aspects of health and safety, risk prevention and promotion of hazard-free environment both at the training and competition level. It united the partners involved in this sport to exchange best practices between countries and institutions, to improve conditions for athletes and promote synergies between sport, health, education and training and improve training and competitive conditions which are ultimately to the benefit of our members. The second approach focused and included directly the participation of athletes, stakeholders, school children, parents/guardians and policy makers. This made sure that the project tackled this thematic area from a multi disciplinary perspective and resulted in tangible and concrete results to be sustained over time.

## Section 1.0: Stakeholders and Participants involved in the Project

- All Project Partners Organisations
- Project Steering Committee
- Administrators
- Coaches
- Athletes
- Stakeholders
- Experts
- Policy Makers
- Schools
- Sport Organisations

### **Experts and decision makers:**

- Government representatives from –  
Ministry of Sports  
Ministry for European Funds
- National Sport Bodies and Olympic Committees
- National Badminton Associations/Federations
- Experts in the field of Health and Safety in Sports

## Section 2.0: Targets and Challenges

Health and safety have long been discussed in our clubs mainly because all the clubs involved in this project are grassroots organisations and often struggle in ensuring a fully safe environment and constant awareness on health and safety when practising the sport. This poses a number of challenges to the athletes and the clubs who have to strike a balance between performance whilst at the same time ensuring safety at all times.

Similarly one of the project objective builds on the importance that the athletes themselves should also realise the importance of their role in the decision-making process, in preventing injury and in ensuring healthy living. While the sport authorities have a duty of care for athletes, the decision-making of athletes themselves should be respected.

Health and safety needs to be a major area of focus for sport clubs. This will bring many benefits to the clubs including better relations with sports stakeholders; improved engagement and communication with players; and better support from members. Risk prevention can also help improve current sports performance for players. Increased focus on the various aspects of health and safety is a relatively new area for many sports but an exciting one which offers many challenges and opportunities. We have to make sure that our organisations lead the way in promoting best practices on health and safety particularly in grass root organisations and badminton specifically.

Since the respective clubs' inception we have long been witnessing a direct link between the type of training provided, the possible of health and safety risks and the well being of the athlete. After consulting various papers concerning the subject and also during various informal discussions held with other stakeholders at the EU Sport Info Days in 2015 and 2016, we considered that discussions and protection of athletes which are tailor made for badminton remain missing.

After taking into consideration the recommendations brought forward to Commissioner Tibor Navracsics by the High Level Group on Grassroots Sport namely to 'to gain and maintain awareness of, support, coordinate and supplement the good actions of Member States, in the spirit of subsidiarity' we decided to collaborate together, share our knowledge, experience and current practices and look into new ways of promoting sustainable dual career programmes within our organisations. The idea is to use clubs currently operating at a grass root level to test and share their experiences to ensure that proper risk assessments are carried out and that the necessary measures are adopted to ensure that health and safety precautions are taken both at the level of the club and competition and which are tailor made to the need of our athletes and our sport in particular.

Similarly, the project team also inspired itself from the Study on the Minimum Quality Requirements for Dual Career Services issued in 2016 by the EU on the need to ensure that support is adapted to the needs of the individual athlete and considers the Dual Career as part of a whole-life development plan, taking into account the wellbeing of the individual athlete.

### **Section 3.0: Adequate Needs Analysis**

All organisations (Birkirkara Badminton Club (Malta), ASV Mals Badminton (Italy), BK TU v Liberci, z.s. (Czech Republic) and TJ Slovan Vesec, z.s. (Czech Republic). have partnered together and during the meetings organised we identified a number of areas that are common challenges to all the organisations concerned. These include:

- all responsible (coaches and administrators) should be in possess of a valid first aid course. Thus it is fundamental that everyone knows how to handle such situations should the need arise;
- all children aren't aware at times of the hazards and dangers around them during training times. Young ones especially tend to play with the racquet as if it is a toy;
- assessing the safety of training facilities and how they should be clear of hazard and danger;
- during competitions organised there should be good ventilation and good supply of hydration sources;
- clubs should have a database of each athlete and his/her medical conditions/ medical requirements; How to balance this with data protection?
- proper rest times should be considered between a game and another to avoid respiratory problems;
- administrators should check flooring is to the optimal conditions before starting training sessions;
- awareness to guardians/parents on type of footwear, clothing to be used to avoid unnecessary injuries;
- awareness should be given to guardians/parents on the proper nutrition to prepare to the best conditions the athlete for the physical session;

- heart rate should always be monitored during physical and strenuous activity;
- awareness should be given especially to adolescents about the effects and risks of administering illegal and illicit substances.

Through this project we can apply key concepts related to risk prevention, health and safety measures and the importance of promoting the combination of sport, education, health and athlete development for clubs which are focused specifically on badminton to prevent hazards which may hamper athletes' development. The intention is to identify new ways of promoting our sport, free from hazards whilst also paying particular attention to the well being of our athletes and in helping them identify and prevent risks.

## **Section 4.0: The role of Media in support to Grassroots sports organisations**

Media can play an important role in supporting Grassroots sports organisations in their strategies towards improving health and safety within the sports communities.

Possible measures and tools to implement: minimum standards

1. Develop education and training.
2. Develop, for the attention of the media and journalism schools, educational tools on health and safety in sports, encouraging the creation of a multi-stakeholder working group and support research on health and safety hazards.
3. Integrate the media coverage of health and safety as a key element in strategies for development and marketing strategies of sport organisations. Include close cooperation with the media on the coverage of existing training and competition conditions, events and innovative products.
4. Promote sports organisations as role models and stories that convey the issues of health and safety in sport.
5. Support sport organisations in awareness raising campaigns promoting health and safety in sports.
6. Assist grassroot sport organisations to pursue their key messages to higher authorities and policy makers

## **Section 5.0: Recommendations to Improve Health and Safety**

### **1. *The Introduction of a General Policy on Health and Safety***

Commitment to achieving environmental, health and safety excellence.

This is a responsibility of management/administrators and coaches/employees in all functions. Badminton Clubs will strive to provide a safe and healthy environment within their facilities and to avoid adverse impact and injury to the environment and the communities in which we interact. Our arrangements must combine clear leadership by management together with the participation of all athletes and members.

Requirements:

- Comply with applicable environmental, health and safety laws and regulations.
- Take appropriate measures to prevent injuries and illnesses at facilities, provide Athletes with a safe and healthy training/competition environment.
- Assess environmental, health and safety impacts before starting a new activity or project.
- Eliminate unreasonable risks from Badminton facilities and activities.
- To the extent reasonably practicable, reduce the use and release of toxic and hazardous materials, prevent pollution, and conserve, recover and recycle materials.
- Continue to improve our environmental, health and safety systems and performance as an integral part of Badminton Clubs operational strategy.

Managers' Responsibilities:

- Implement effective programs, training and best practices for environmental, health and safety, review new and redesigned activities and services.
- Regularly assess operations and management. Establish measurements to ensure compliance with this policy and applicable laws and regulations.
- Promptly inform the Head of Operations of any significant accidents/ incidents with potential adverse environmental, health and safety impacts
- Work cooperatively with Badminton business partners (being Public and Private) to ensure that our relationships with them support this policy.
- Communicate responsibly with athletes, members, communities, customers and government agencies regarding environmental, health and safety issues.

Athletes/Members Responsibilities:

- Follow this policy, applicable laws and regulations and the environmental, health and safety policies, procedures, and rules to protect your own health and safety as well as that of others, the public and the environment.

- Know and support the environmental, health and safety goals of the organization.

Environmental, Health and Safety is everyone's responsibility.

- Promptly raise any concerns about possible unsafe conditions, activities or violations of this policy to your administrators/coaches or other designated person.

- The Head of Operations of Badminton Clubs is responsible for ensuring that the Health and Safety requirements are implemented and for updating as necessary.

Updating will include consultation annually, or as appropriate, with all Badminton Clubs staff.

As far as reasonably practicable, the policy of Badminton Clubs is to:

- Provide safe and healthy working conditions, safe equipment and to maintain these conditions and equipment.
- Provide necessary information and training in order to avoid or minimise accidents and health disorders.
- Make sure that any hazards arising from the undertakings of Badminton Clubs are identified and that the risks involved are assessed, rectified or controlled.
- To comply with legal responsibilities relating to other persons who may be affected by the activities of Badminton Clubs (i.e. general public).
- Badminton Clubs considered as grassroots sport organisations whose staff works from a number of different bases. Therefore,
  - ✓ Awareness of fire precautions and training.
  - ✓ First Aid – including who is trained as first aid officers or contact in the building.
  - ✓ General safety inspections.

## **2. Risk Assessment**

Each club to be appointed with a Health & Safety Officer to carry out an Occupational Health & Safety Risk Assessment.

Frequency: Yearly

Requirements:

- Purpose and Scope
- General information on assessed workplace
- List of identified Hazards
- Identification of Risks and who might be harmed
- Guide to the Risk Matrix
- Calculation the Risk Level and Categorising the Risks
- Occupational Health and Safety Control Measures to Minimise Risks
- Occupational Health and Safety Residual Risk Assessment
- Recommendations and Conclusions

Control measures and recommendations are to be addressed and reviewed by the Health & Safety Officer to confirm and certify such corrective actions taken.

This will lead to addressing health and safety hazards and minimizing risks for coaches and athletes, both within training conditions and competitive events.

National Occupational Health and Safety Entities/Agencies are to collaborate with Clubs to support this initiative through their knowledge and expertise.

### **3. Awareness raising campaign**

Clubs are to hold awareness raising campaigns on Health and Safety at national level in collaboration with Sports Authorities, Health Authorities, Olympic Committees, Badminton Associations/Federations. Thus ensuring maximum impact and awareness.

To drive key messages to promote healthy lifestyles, safety when practicing sport and how to prevent injuries

Such campaigns to target Local Communities and work directly with Schools and Municipalities.

### **4. Nutrition**

In conjunction with Sport Authorities, Health Authorities and Professionals in Athletes wellbeing, Clubs to organize nutrition talks for coaches and athletes and consider a hands on experience.

(offer a cooking class whereby the participants would be able to prepare a snack that is appropriate for before training, or something for after training)

### **5. Facilities Inspections**

At all times the Training and Competition Facilities and Equipment, including:

- The staircase
- Floors
- Ways in and out
- Washrooms and storage areas must be maintained in a safe and clean condition.
- Fire Control Equipment
- Badminton Equipment
- Manual Handling
- Lighting and Electricity Safety
- Noise
- Indoor Air Quality/Climate
- Radiation
- Information Technology Set-Up
- Hazardous Substances

Inspection frequency should be specified and checklists completed accordingly, with the Introduction of a Standard Operating Procedure and Safety Inspection List. Club Administrators are to ensure that such Documentation is to be kept up to date.

## **Section 6.0: Conclusions**

Since we are grassroots sports organisations, financial limitations also constrain us from being able to offer certain opportunities to our players and professional development for our staff. Implementing a small collaborative partnership project, assisted by EU funds, enabled us to implement a project such as this one which will boost our capacity-building. It also enabled us to face common challenges as sports clubs through a concerted effort which benefits us all.

Collaborating together on the project activities meant that our project had an impact in three countries spread throughout Europe. Our aim was also to disseminate the project results and outcomes to other badminton organisations in Europe, through our national federations and Badminton Europe Confederation - which brings together 52 federations as official members. Thus our project is beneficial to sports clubs throughout Europe and underlines further the importance of cooperating together to the benefit of different badminton organisations across Europe.



Recommendation to Improve Health & Safety