Network for the exchange of good practices on the integration of youngsters at risk of radicalisation through sports

OFFICIAL PARTNERS

HANDBOOK ON PREVENTING RADICALISATION OF YOUTH AT RISK THROUGH SPORT

Programming Guidelines for European Municipalities

Table of Contents

NETWORK FOR THE EXCHANGE OF GOOD PRACTICES ON THE INTEGRATION OF YOUNGSTERS AT RISK OF RADICALISATION THROUGH SPORTS 1

1. INTRODUCTION 4

1.1 RADICAL (EX)CHANGE 4
1.2 PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK 4
1.3 METHODOLOGY 5
1.4 TIMELINE 6
1.5 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 7

2. LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS 7

2.1 DEFINITIONS AND THEORIES 7
2.1.1 TERMINOLOGY 8
2.1.2 THEORIES OF PREVENTION 10
2.2 UNDERSTANDING RADICALISATION 12
2.2.1 UNDERSTANDING RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM 12
2.2.2 YOUTH RADICALISATION 14
2.3 SPORT AS A TOOL TO PREVENT RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM 16
2.3.1 SPORT, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND RADICALISATION 16
2.3.2 TRANSFERABLE VALUES AND CONTRIBUTION OF SPORT TO PREVENT RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM 18
2.3.3 WHEN SPORT FAVOURS EXTREMISM AND RADICALISATION 23
2.3.4 KEY PRINCIPLES OF PROGRAMMING INITIATIVES ON THE PREVENTION OF YOUTH RADICALISATION 24

3. DEVELOPMENT OF A SPORT-BASED INITIATIVE FOR THE PREVENTION OF RADICALISATION OF YOUTH 25

3.1. DIAGNOSIS (SITUATION ANALYSIS) 26
3.1.1 NEEDS ASSESSMENT 27
3.1.2 IDENTIFY FACTORS OF VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE 27
3.1.3 IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS 28
3.2. PLANNING (THEORY OF CHANGE) 29
3.2.1 REACH YOUR TARGET GROUPS IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS THROUGH SPORT 30
3.2.2 IDENTIFY PREVENTION MEASURES IN SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE INITIATIVES 32
3.2.3 ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS 33
3.2.4 BUILD THE THEORY OF CHANGE 33
3.2.5 DEVELOP INDICATORS 34
3.3. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION (ACHIEVING CHANGE) 35
3.3.1 PROMOTION 35
3.3.2 PREVENTION 36
3.3.3 LEADING BY EXAMPLE 38
3.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION 39
3.5 SUSTAINABILITY (TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE, LEGACY) 39
3.5.1 SUSTAINING THE IMPACT AND ENSURING THE PERDURABILITY OF THE NETWORK 39
3.5.2 TRANSFERRING KNOWLEDGE FROM ORGANIZATIONS WORKING IN THE PVE FIELD TO SPORT ORGANIZATIONS AND VICE VERSA 40

4. GOOD PRACTICES 40

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY 49

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Radical (Ex)Change

The "**Network for the exchange of good practices on the integration of youngsters at risk of radicalisation through sports**" - Radical (Ex)Change - is a 2-year project jointly designed by the International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS) (UK), through its Save the Dream initiative, with the International Olympic Truce Centre (IOTC) (Greece) and involving other two international partners, the University of the Balearic Islands (UIB) (Spain) and the European Multisport Club Association (EMCA) (Belgium).

Radical (Ex)Change is a EU Preparatory Action funded by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture – Unit C4 (Sport), and coordinated by the IOTC, which aims at developing a collaborative network amongst the organisations working on Sport for Development and Peace and those engaged in the prevention of marginalisation and radicalisation (through sport or not).

Giving priority to communities where social inclusion and sports are still treated as separate items, the project partners work in five selected countries, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Greece, and the United Kingdom, where they adapt and transfer good practices developed in the field of 'sport for development and peace', to address the issue of radicalisation and violent extremism.

The project's specific are the following:

- Development of a multinational group of experts in preventing radicalization through sports.
- Establishment of working groups, in which experts from NGOs and other grassroots organisations, related to social inclusion through sports, join forces with experts on the prevention of violent extremism, regarding the detection of risks of radicalisation and prevention by using sport as a tool for social inclusion.
- Production of a Handbook, which includes guidance from professionals, grassroots associations, counselling and education boards, NGOs, and municipalities, working with youngsters at risk, on how to adapt their methodology to use sport as a tool for prevention and integration.
- Creation of a transnational network by setting a horizontal framework, between local governments, non-profit organisations, and private sector agents across European countries.

1.2 Purpose of the Handbook

The purpose of the Handbook is to provide practical guidelines for municipalities and stakeholders in sport for development and peace - NGO's, local government associations, sport clubs, academic institutions, religious and community leaders - for the programming of sport-based interventions to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism.

1.3 Methodology

This Handbook adopted a drafting methodology with the intent to add value to the existing methodologies that are being used in projects addressing sport for the prevention of radicalisation. In order to develop project-friendly practical guidelines, the methodology used a blended approach between academic knowledge and practitioners' content. The ultimate aim was to address the need to identify useful steps and practical answers in order to respond to the question "How to facilitate the programming of sport-based interventions for the prevention of radicalisation through sport, to be implemented at municipal/local level?".

Practical component: the Radical (Ex)Change project relied on repeated brainstorming sessions and a feedback mechanism among partners with the ultimate goal to make it as much participatory as possible. This endeavor conduced to the analysis, synthesis and incorporation of the input provided by the experts of the Focus Groups, whose principal aim was to discuss and share knowledge on relevant topics and good practices related to the prevention of radicalisation through sport in their respective country throughout the project.

Five focus groups were conducted to collect relevant good practices in 5 participating countries: Belgium, Spain, United Kingdom, Italy, and Greece. Discussions about how sport can be used as a tool of integration for youngsters at risk were collected to find relevant good practices, including country specific key insights. The focus groups methodology consisted of the following conceptual steps:

Preparation
First phase — Project documents and guiding questions shared with all participants prior to focus group sessions.

Focus Group Discussion
Second phase — Experts and panelists attended sharing valuable key information and research in five different Focus Groups.

Content Analysis
Third phase — Emerging themes and concepts within each country. Content was also analyzed to find country- specific insights.

The Focus Group discussions were instrumental to identifying **emerging themes** at country level and producing **shared outcomes** that would be incorporated in the Handbook.

An additional practical element of the drafting was the organization the Europe-focused transnational meeting, co-hosted by the Sports Diplomacy and Governance Hub & Sport, Human Rights & Safeguarding Research Group at the SOAS University of London. This event, which brought together 20 experts from Spain, Belgium, Greece, Italy and the UK, organized within the framework Radical (Ex)Change, represented a valuable opportunity for project partners and experts to discuss relevant topics inherent the Handbook.

This intellectual output attempted to respond to specific questions discussed at the focus group-level, which are reported as introductory guide in relevant paragraphs.

Theoretical component: the drafting process followed the above-mentioned rigorous process whereby the project partners were involved at different stages. Parallel to the thorough analysis provided by the participants, the theoretical component was auxiliary to complement the practical input with *ad hoc* research and analysis of selected literature. The literature review focused on a targeted selection of topics from Google, Google Scholar, and academic research databases. The EC Research e-Library on Radicalisation, which makes available a total of 868 entries on the topic, was also consulted. The combination of keywords included sport, radicalisation, youth, prevention mostly referred to the last 10 to 15 year's time span. A recurring theme in the academic literature is the need for policies and practices to be grounded in theories, to fill an "evaluation gap" in projects and to ensure feedback mechanisms to reciprocally inform research and practice. Thus, the effort to integrate this Handbook with state-of-the-art research insights.

The Handbook in numbers:	
5 countries	*61 Expert and panelists*
5 focus groups	

1.4 Timeline

1. *Drafting of the Handbook Outline (4 -5 2022).*
2. *Presentation of the Outline to the Transnational Meeting in London (10 5 2022) and discussion of key aspects*
3. *Incorporation of written feedback after the transnational meeting and preparation of the Final draft (summer 2022)*

4. *Translation – August 2022*
5. *Testing in a Municipality in Greece and Spain (autumn 2022) and input for revision of first draft*
6. *Synthesis of the testing outcome by the final expert group meeting (and share experiences gained during the project training camps and draw conclusions on a shared set of good practices): final revision of the Handbook. (winter 2022/2023)*

1.5 Executive summary

Radical (Ex)Change is a trans-partnerhsip collaborative network of organisations working on sport for development and peace and those engaged in the prevention of marginalisation and radicalisation. To guide local programming at municipal level of sport-based interventions to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism, a shared intellectual contribution by all project partners has led to the drafting of this Handbook. As far as this contribution is concerned, a preliminary note refers to the work that the national focus groups have carried out under the guidance of each national partner – ICSS in Italy and the UK, the IOTC in Greece, the University of the Balearic Islands in Spain, and EMCA in Belgium – and that has greatly enriched the content of the document. This effort resulted into these guidelines, which are structured in five chapters. The introductory section reflects the methodological approach underpinning this endeavour, which mixes academic input and practical insights. The preoccupation of creating a shared terminology and understanding of the main theoretical frameworks embracing youth radicalization and sport-based intervention for its prevention, is dealt with by the second chapter. The third chapter focuses on the key steps for the development of a sport-based initiative for the prevention of radicalisation of youth: the situational analysis of the resilience and vulnerability factors coupled with the Theory of Change are those diagnostic and planning tools providing the groundwork for the following steps. To achieve change, the implementation can assume different forms: promotion, prevention and leading by examples, which are thoroughly detailed into illustrative examples that conduct the reader towards those measures that have proved successful. Monitoring and evaluation tools and sustainability concerns are described as final compendium of this chapter. A final descriptive section attempts to summarise relevant good practices gathered throughout the project, at national, regional and international level, thus offering practical instruments (guides, reports, platforms, etc.) that can be applied to other countries and/or organizations. To reinforce the practical aspects in using these guidelines, the drafting includes key takeaways and hyperlinks that are instrumental for deepening the study of relevant topics. Finally, the bibliography spans over policy, academic and project references mostly related to the last fifteen years.

2. LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

In order to build a sport-based intervention within the framework of prevention of radicalisation with a focus on youth at risk, this chapter helps you to think through the theoretical infrastructure consisting of the terminology, theories, practices and principles that need to underpin such initiative.

2.1 Definitions and theories

2.1.1 Terminology

A **project-specific reference glossary** aids the reader to comprehend the terms used throughout the project. The definition of terms draws from academic and policy references and synthesizes broad concepts that are herewith scrutinized within the context of radicalisation and violent extremism.

Deradicalisation: The social and psychological process by which a person's individual commitment and involvement with violent radicalisation is reduced to the extent that he or she is no longer at risk of involvement and commitment to violent activity. Deradicalisation can also refer to any initiative that attempts to achieve a reduction in the risk of recidivism by addressing specific and relevant disengagement issues. Deradicalisation involves a cognitive shift; a fundamental change in understanding.

Discrimination: Attitude that accords inferior treatment to individuals or groups on political, economic, cultural, ideological, social or individual grounds.

Diversity: Differences among people, which may be based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion, mental and physical capacity, class and migratory status.

Empowerment: Acquisition of power and independence by a disadvantaged social group to improve their situation.

Equality: Aspect related to the equalization of rights, in any situation.

Extremism: Refers to an attitudinal or behavioral tendency that is considered outside the norm, far from what most people consider correct or reasonable. Obviously, this is subjective and culture-dependent, since something will be considered "extremist" depending on a reference group, culture or ideology.

Gender Perspective: Involves taking into consideration and paying attention to the differences between women and men in any given activity or area of a policy.

Inclusive language: To promote the emission of messages that do not violate the dignity of women or men and encourage non-discriminatory communications and non-sexist language in any organizational environment. The most general objective of inclusive communication is to give relevance to the presence of both sexes in the different messages issued and also to avoid the use of images that could affect the dignity of women/men or convey sexist stereotypes.

Mentoring: Professional relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) assists another (the mentoree) in the development of specific skills and knowledge that will enhance professional and personal growth. A strategy to support young people to enhance their comprehensive training with a humanistic and responsible vision.

Peer learning: Didactic strategy of knowledge exchange and/or collaboration between colleagues.

Polarization: refers to the process through which complex social relations come to be represented and perceived in 'black and white' terms, as resulting from an essential conflict between two different social groups (e.g. migrants vs natives, elites vs the people) and likely to trigger factors of extremism. [1]

Prevention: The European Union's counter-terrorism strategy focuses largely on Counter Narrative and Counter Extremist Violence. It aims to reduce or eliminate the risk of individuals becoming involved in terrorist activities. Prevention is concerned with the identification and referral of individuals susceptible to violent extremist drifts to appropriate interventions. These interventions aim to prevent these individuals from embarking on the path of violent radicalisation.

Racism: Development of certain ideologies, beliefs and socialization processes that discriminate against people on the basis of their supposed belonging to a group. It is, therefore, a set of statements that affirm the superiority of some human groups over others and that legitimize "social practices that reinforce the distribution of power between groups differentiated by physical characteristics or selected cultures".

Radicalisation: A dynamic process whereby an individual may adopt ever more extreme ideas and goals. The reasons behind the process can be ideological, political, religious, social, economic and/or personal. A radical may seek to bring about a system-transforming radical solution for government and society through violent or non-violent means (e.g., democratic means using persuasion and reform). There are several phases in the radicalisation process to take into consideration, such as activism, extremism, violent extremism and terrorism, each constituting different levels of growing radicalisation. In the present Handbook, radicalisation is acknowledged as a process leading into violent extremism, and the importance of preventing that process, including through sport and sport-based interventions, is also acknowledged in the context of primary prevention.

Resilience: The ability of an individual or society to overcome challenges that have a negative impact on its well-being and/or stability. In the context of violent extremism, this would imply the ability to resist and counter views and opinions that legitimize hatred and the use of violence. Developing this protective factor in society, in general, and in young people, in particular, is a priority objective.

Social exclusion: The concept of social exclusion refers to a series of social processes that make it impossible to enjoy social rights and, in general, the whole set of rights that make up citizenship.

[1] Reference is drawn from the concept paper of the EU Horizon 2020 -funded BRaVE - Building Resilience against Violent Extremism and Polarisation

Social inclusion: Incorporation as equals in society or an organization of individuals from different groups.

Sport: the term “sport” is used as a generic term, comprising sport for all, physical play, recreation, dance and organized, casual, competitive, traditional and indigenous sports and games in their diverse forms. It is a tool for acquiring values, habits and encouraging personal development and relationships with other people.

Stigmatization: A condition, attribute, trait or behavior that causes the bearer to be included in a social category towards whose members a negative response is generated and they are seen as unacceptable or inferior.

Tolerance: Attitude towards the other or towards what is different, which consists of suspending value judgments to avoid rejecting practices or values that are unknown, different or even contrary to one's own.

Violent extremism: There is no universally agreed definition of violent extremism. However, it is used to refer to the beliefs and actions of someone who promotes, supports, facilitates or commits acts of violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals, which can encompass terrorism and other forms of politically motivated violence.

Violent radicalisation: A process through which individuals adopt an extremist belief system - including the intent to use, encourage or facilitate violence - to promote an ideology, political project or political cause as a means for social transformation.

Youth: There is no universally agreed definition of the term. For statistical purposes, the United Nations defines “youth” as persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years.

Xenophobia: Refers to hatred, suspicion, hostility and rejection of foreigners, contempt for the mere fact of not sharing the same nationality.

2.1.2 Theories of prevention

Being the purpose of the Handbook to contribute to the overall prevention effort, it is thought to approach the **frameworks around the Theories of Prevention of radicalisation**. This paragraph investigates the **the relationship between prevention, terrorism, extremism, and radicalisation**.

A few preliminary clarifications are due: firstly, prevention is a challenging concept as it can lead to different interpretations depending on the subject area on which it is focussed. For this reason, it is affirmed that theories of prevention are notable for their absence (Gough 2013). For the sake of writing this Handbook, light needs to be shed on the three concepts linked to prevention: terrorism, extremism and radicalisation. As thoroughly explained by Shmid (2020) in his Handbook of Terrorism Prevention and Preparedness,it is necessary to

choose the proper theoretical framework: prevention of terrorism, prevention of extremism and prevention of radicalisation can, at times, overlap but are to be considered separately.

The prevention of radicalisation to violent extremism is studied within the umbrella category of countering violent extremism: prevention-oriented initiatives that happen before a person radicalizes to the point of using violence fall under this category; in contrast to this, intervention-oriented initiatives deal with the deradicalisation and disengagement of a person who is already radicalized to the point of using violence[2].

For the scope of this Handbook, radicalisation and radicalisation leading to violence/violent extremism are used interchangeably to mean the process of radicalisation of youth which may result in young people resorting to the use of violence to pursue their ideas, beliefs and goals.

Two distinct classification frameworks are generally used in prevention: one employs the terms 'primary', 'secondary' and 'tertiary' prevention, and the other 'universal', 'targeted' and 'indicated' prevention[3].

Primary / Universal	*Secondary / Targeted*	*Tertiary / Indicated*
focuses on the population as a whole	targets individuals who are at risk of falling prey to radicalisation	is concerned primarily with rehabilitating radicalized individuals and building the resilience of those persons who have extricated themselves from the radicalisation process

To offer a project-specific contribution of relevant theories of prevention (models and approaches), selected theoretical approaches are summarized as emerging from the prioritization resulted from the focus group discussions among **project partners**:

Gordon W. Allport (1954) developed the Contact Hypothesis, or **Intergroup Contact Theory** (ICT), whose central proposition is that social contact between different groups can, under the right conditions, improve intergroup relations, thus offering solutions to conflicts existing among such groups. The premise is that interpersonal contact can reduce prejudice between majority and minority group members, under appropriate conditions. If one has the opportunity to communicate with others, they are able to understand and appreciate different points of views involving their way of life. As a result of new appreciation and understanding, prejudice should diminish. Issues of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination are commonly occurring issues between rival groups. Allport's proposal was that properly managed contact between the groups should reduce these problems and lead to better interactions. In order for this to occur, these four criteria must be present:

[2] Koehler and Fiebig. 2019. pag. 4

[3] Centre for the prevention of radicalisation leading to violence (CPRLV)

- Equal Status: both groups taken into an equal status relationship.
- Common Goals: both groups work on a problem/task and share this as a common goal.
- Acquaintance Potential: the opportunity of group members to get to know each other as friends, and not merely as actors playing out social roles or as representatives of their social groups; the familiarity between group members involving the task or situation at hand.
- Support of authorities, law or customs: some authority that both groups acknowledge and define social norms that support the contact and interactions between the groups and members.

A study conducted by Rothbart and John (1985) found that the Contact Hypothesis is an effective technique for reducing prejudice and stereotyping if three criteria are met.

- The minority group members behavior is not consistent with their stereotype.
- Contact between group members occurs often and in a variety of social contexts.
- The minority members are perceived as typical of their cultural group.

With these premises, the hypothesis technique helps two groups (such as sport teams) in competitions to work together, thus overcoming potential rivalries and fights. Therefore this technique falls within the prevention category.[4]

2.2 Understanding radicalisation

2.2.1 Understanding radicalisation and violent extremism

What are the reasons behind radicalisation and how do you identify the risks of radicalisation?

Radicalisation is complex phenomenon and the absence of a shared definition in the empirical literature constitutes an analytical limitation. This occurs because the terms of radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism are used interchangeably. In reality, "violent radicalisation and terrorism are an outcome of a method of political violence, while radicalisation is a process or a state of being".

The American psychologist and academic **Moghaddam** conceptualizes radicalisation using the analogy of the **staircase**. Each step represents a level of radicalisation and people climb up the stairs according to the psychological process and radicalisation stage they are in: the ground floor is pictured as the starting stage where people are affected by the same external environment such as, for instance, discrimination; while some people remain at this level, others make one or more steps up and may reach the top floor, where they can perpetrate violence and terrorist acts. So what makes some individuals climb the staircase and others, who are in the same situation, remain at the ground floor?

[4]https://psychology.fandom.com/wiki/Contact_hypothesis#Contact_Hypothesis_and_Anti-Muslim_Attitudes_in_Europe

Psychologist Albert **Bandura**, who is the "father" of the **Social Learning Theory**, comes to help. According to this theory learning can occur through observation and modelling (I observe others and act based on this); one person's own mental states are important to learning (the external environment is not the only factor influencing learning and behaviours as internal rewards such as satisfaction, a sense of pride and accomplishment are crucial); and, finally, learning is not always conducive to change in behaviors. This theory has enormous application in real life as it can explain how violence can be transmitted through observational learning; but it can also be used to understand how role models can influence positive behaviours.

Part of this the theory is the notion of **self-efficacy**. This concept helps explain why some individuals perpetrate violent acts in the name of an extremist ideology and others do not. Self-efficacy refers to "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations". Self-efficacy is a person's belief in his or her ability to succeed in a particular situation. Bandura describes these beliefs as determinants of how people think, behave, and feel. And this, if applied in real life, can explain why some people move up the staircase. The higher the confidence in his/her own agency, the higher the probability to execute a certain action. If applied to the radicalisation sphere, the concept of self-efficacy can be key to understand why people undergo processes of violent radicalisation.

The frameworks presented above provide the theoretical background to the description of what is **radicalisation in the European Union** context.

Terrorist attacks, often perpetrated by European citizens, the increased polarization of society, and the affirmation of new technologies highlight the emerging threat derived by radicalisation, which is defined by the European Commission as the phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas, which could lead to acts of terrorism.[5]

The relevance of extremist ideologies and increased polarization, and their potential consequences on the radicalisation processes, led to the adoption of the EU Strategic Orientations on a coordinated EU approach to prevention of radicalisation 2022-2023, which cater the priorities set out in the Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU adopted in December 2020. This strategy sets out the thematic priorities and implementation approaches (such as the Project-Based Collaborations) that are driving the EU prevention and response to this phenomenon.

The first-level of the **analysis of radicalisation** is to understand the **radicalisation factors:** while it is important to recognise that there are different degrees and speeds of radicalisation, it is necessary to investigate the radicalisation process through the lenses of the interplay between push- and pull-factors within individuals.
While there is no single cause to explain why a person begins a radicalisation process, it is general conviction that are many causes of radicalisation that lead to violence, and their roots are diverse and multi-layered (UNESCO 2018).

[5] European Parliament: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/security/20210121STO96105/radicalisation-in-the-eu-what-is-it-how-can-it-be-prevented (accessed 9 6 2022)

There are **three categories of drivers** that are conducive to radicalisation in the European Union. The first category comprises "push factors", which are structural conditions that "push" individuals towards violent extremism. The other category comprises "pull factors", which are individual motivations that attract individuals and pull them into violent extremist groups. Finally, the third category is represented by "personal factors" inherent the personal feature of the youth.

Push factors: marginalization, lack of employment, weak governance, inequalities, human rights abuses

Pull factors: ideology, group belonging, group mechanisms and financial incentives

Personal factors: personality, psychological disorder, traumatic life experience

It is true that radicalization processes are multifactorial and can be understood in different ways, but normally empirical studies focus on risk factors. Importantly, it must be taken into account that there are also protective factors (Wolfowicz et al., 2020), and people who do not become radicalized are not sufficiently analyzed, even though conditions for it seem to exist, such as an accumulation of risk factors (Lösel, King et al., 2018; Smith, 2018).

As a consequence, the evaluation instruments commonly used are aimed at analyzing risk factors rather than protective ones (in a very similar way to how fair play behaviors are studied in sport, Ponseti et al., 2017), although it seems that if it were done in this "double" way, the questionnaires would increase their validity (Lösel, King et al., 2018). Only a few instruments such as the VERA-2R[6] take protective factors into account (King et al., 2018; Pressman & Flockton, 2012).

Surely this orientation and focus on protective factors could improve the concept of prevention, since it could be extended to the understanding of why people do not join radical movements despite the existing conditions for it.

The following paragraph narrows down the scope of this analysis of youth radicalisation.

2.2.2 Youth radicalisation

Why are youth more at risk and easier to recruit when it comes to radicalisation?

[6] The Violent Extremism Risk Assessment 2 Revised (VERA-2R) is an evidence-based risk assessment instrument specifically designed to assess risks related to terrorism and violent extremism developed by the Ministry of Justice and Security of the Netherlands.

"Although each country is different, all youngsters share one commonality and that is vulnerability (home, employment, family and education)". (Quote from the UK Focus groups)

In recent years, youth radicalisation and the associated use of violence has posed a growing threat in Europe and its neighboring regions. The increased approximation of youth to extremist groups of different religious and political inspiration, and manifestations of violence and intolerance (violent xenophobia, homophobia, juvenile gangs, hooliganism, hate crimes and attacks on migrants and refugees, propaganda) as well as a rise in terrorist attacks in Europe and its neighboring regions has put radicalisation high on the agenda.[7]

Threats can derive from[8]:

- Right-wing and left-wing extremism
- Political-religious extremism
- Hybrid ideologies – Covid crisis. QAnon conspiracy theory
- Single-issue extremism (e.g. anti-abortion extremism)

Radical ideologies are an easy way in for youngsters as they are built on the promise of a better life in return for loyalty or something else of significance to the youngster. As said at the outset, radicalisation can be the initial step towards violence and towards the commitment of atrocities that can be inspired by terrorist and violent groups ideologies.

The entry point for radical ideologies to emerge is through the vulnerability a young person, which is often due to their path of identity building. **Vulnerability factors** are grouped according to[9]:

- Relational
- Personal
- Social identity
- Psychological
- External

All the above-mentioned threats can be amplified by the **influence of gaming (E-Sport) and social media**, which may take different forms: from online hate directed at sports stars to the 'pastime pathways' that are accessed by extremist recruiters to radicalize young people. In the internet age, children or early adolescent as young as 13 or 14 embrace a radicalisation process, and they do it fully online. This self-directed recourse to the terrorist cycle is a trend that characterizes youth, who interiorize such process (sort of lone-wolf), relying fully to the **internet**. (UK Focus Group)

[7] Youth work against violent radicalisation. 2018

[8] Classification adapted from types of radicalisation in https://info-radical.org/en/types-of-radicalisation/

[9] Centre for the prevention of radicalisation leading to violence (CPRLV)

2.3 Sport as a tool to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism

How can sport be used to prevent violent extremism and radicalisation and as a tool for social inclusion for youngsters at risk of radicalisation?

International framework on Sport and Prevention of Radicalisation

The thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice held in Doha, Qatar, in April 2015, adopted the Doha Declaration, which stresses youth participation in crime prevention efforts.

Responding to this Declaration, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) launched a global youth crime prevention initiative that uses the power of sport to build resilience in young people by enhancing their life skills, and to increase their knowledge of the consequences of substance use and crime, with a view to positively influencing their behaviour and attitudes, and preventing antisocial and risky behaviour.

In 2020, the Global Programme on the Security of Major Sporting Events, and Promotion of Sport and its Values as a Tool to Prevent Violent Extremism was launched with the objective to use sport and its values as a tool to build resilience especially among youth and prevent violent extremism. The programme is led by the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism in in partnership with UN Interregional Criminal Justice Research Institute, UN Alliance of Civilizations and the International Centre for Sport Security.

2.3.1 Sport, youth development and radicalisation

Today, two years after the pandemic breakout, there is a growing concern for youth development and the risk of radicalisation which is due to a number of intersecting trends: interruption of physical activity/sport, increasing social exclusion and sentiment of loneliness of youngsters, a greater exposure to violent ideologies and narratives, also amplified by the time spent on social media.

Both practitioners and academics agree that each process of radicalisation leading to violence is unique and different, and it is not possible to define a checklist for identifying youth prone to violent radicalisation. But it is possible to explore the path that led young people into the radicalisation process and define prevention measures, also through sport-based programmes, which can help stop these trajectories from looming ahead.

Sport and the practice of physical activity have been commonly used to try to prevent both crime and the radicalization of young people. There are different possible explanations for this, all of them based on the implication of individual or group psychological variables. For example, sport can serve as a "hook" for young people in projects (Ekholm, 2013; Haudenhuyse et al., 2013). Likewise, the social bonds generated by sport and the informal

social pressure-control that is produced can also act as protective factors (Bandura, 1973; Gubbels et al., 2016; Veliz & Shakib, 2012).

Therefore, it is not surprising that sports practice is part of the implementation of projects aimed at radicalization and extremism (e.g., Amin et al., 2018; Johns et al., 2014; Lösel, Jugl et al., 2021). However, and despite its apparent effectiveness, and as indicated, the lack of empirical evidence and empirical or experimental designs, is also the norm on this point, and, therefore, very little is known with certainty regarding the effectiveness of sport-based initiatives to prevent radicalization or crime (e.g., McMahon & Belur, 2013).

Albert Carron (Carron et al., 2002) developed the concept of group cohesion (and focused on sports teams) to explain why belonging to a group with common goals produced an emergent increase in affective closeness between players, that entered a positive feedback circuit if the necessary conditions were met (democratic group management, instructions presented correctly, etc.). In a practical way, it is known that establishing a motivational climate based on group cohesion leads to positive group pressure (preventive factor) that also prevents, or at least hinders, the abandonment of the group by an isolated player.

A. Garcia-Mas and P. Vicens developed the theory of sports cooperation, based on the generation of a positive motivational climate derived from the interactions between players (which differentiates it from cohesion, which is a group) and their respective objectives (Fuster-Parra, Garcia-Mas, et al., 2016) produces group pressure for the feeling of belonging to the team and motivation to achieve the common goal. In addition, in relation to radicalization, the theory of cooperation includes the existence of non-cooperative ("selfish") people but who, through interaction with cooperators -sports, for example- can develop a certain level of cooperation and prosocial cohesion. Both theories have been shown to be very effective in determining (in part) prosocial behaviors at a personal and collective level (Ponseti et al., 2017) as well as mediating the generation of a greater personal commitment to the group's objectives.

Therefore, and as indicated by other studies already cited (Lösel, Jugl et al., 2021), the implementation of games and sports that take these two conditions into account can increase the possibility that group pressure prevents the manifestation of antisocial behaviors and, therefore, a first step -in the concept of risk factor (Wolfowicz et al., 2020), as has been shown in the use of doping within the team.

Globally, the **importance of sport** in tackling social development challenges and promote youth development is widely recognized. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Security Council resolution 2419 (2018) on Youth, Peace and Security recognizes the “growing contribution of sport and culture to the realization of development and peace”. Specific contributions relate to healthcare (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), social inclusion/inequalities (SDG 10), and peace and security (SDG 16).

Within the European Union, the European Commission Strategy on Radicalisation affirms the “importance integrated prevent approach, formal and non formal education, culture, art, and

sport. For a more effective outreach and impact, especially vis a vis young people, it will be of utmost importance of increase knowledge on digital prevent work at local level"[10] .

The relevance of the sport sector in the EU is further testified by the financial resources attributed to it: a recent overview of the European + Sport Projects reaches 1175 hits, with a considerable number focusing on radicalisation.

If, on one side, the international recognition of sport is affirmed, on the other the **relationship between sport and prevention of radicalisation** needs further investigation. Coalter (2007) examined the typologies of interventions that use sport to enhance diverse social outcomes, including the social inclusion of youth at risk of radicalisation, and identified three main types of programmes that can be delivered: sport programmes, 'sport-plus', and 'plus-sport' (see table 1).

Sport-based program : intervention purely based in sport. Sport is the centre of the intervention and it is the core activity within the program.
Sport-plus program: the sport environment is intentionally set to transmit certain values, or to promote specific changes. These initiatives generally provide parallel initiatives (e.g.: workshop) aimed at developing a certain social awareness or changes (e.g.: gender equality, racism, social inclusion; development of skills).
Plus-sport program : sport is a marginal activity within the program and it is used only as a hook to reach people who live conditions of marginality or exclusion.

Table 1 – Coalter's (2007) classification of sport-based programs

The Radical (Ex)Change Handbook embraces the principle of sport-plus programme, where sport is intentionally set to transfer values and specific skills for inclusion. In this respect, a sports-based programme aimed specifically at preventing radicalisation should provide dual opportunities for youth: to train or participate in sports in a safe setting; and to provide space for joint learning, awareness-raising, fostering critical thinking skills, mentoring, a community in which emotions and vulnerabilities can be discussed and shared, or other clearly distinguishable pedagogical or social and youth work elements. (RAN.2021)

2.3.2 Transferable values and contribution of sport to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism

The *UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism* (2015) spells out that sport is a tool for development, peace, and prevention of violent extremism. The United

[10] EU Strategic orientations on a coordinated EU approach to prevention of radicalisation for 2022-2023 (pag 5)

Nations Counter-Terrorism Office highlights how the positive values and contribution of sport clearly align to the priority areas set out in the Plan of Action:[11]

Plan of Action priority areas	Contribution of sport
Dialogue and conflict prevention	• Builds bridges across social, economic and cultural divides by building a sense of shared identity and fellowship among groups that might otherwise be inclined to treat each other with distrust, hostility or violence. • Opens the door to peaceful dialogue at local, national, and international levels. • Reduces social tensions and conflicts by addressing the sources of grievances and providing alternative entry points into the social and economic life of communities[12].
Strengthening good governance, human rights, and the rule of law	• When conducted in accordance with its fundamental values (i.e., tolerance, respect, fair play, non-discrimination, etc.), sport is an incubator for promoting and upholding human rights, good governance, and rule of law. Individuals who experience democratic, accountable, and transparent practice in sport are more likely to expect and apply these actions in broader society.
Engaging communities	• Builds trust and establishes a sense of ownership at the community level. • Encourages multistakeholder engagement at all levels, linking community groups and institutions and connecting these with influential leaders and decision makers. • Generates social ties and community infrastructure that help to build peace, stability, and social cohesion by establishing and engaging community sport organizations and volunteers.[13]
Empowering youth	• Builds confidence, self-esteem and leadership skills in young people and helps them learn the values of tolerance, respect and teamwork. These qualities not only build resilience, but also equip young people to enact positive social change in all aspects of their lives.

[11] UNOCT (2022): Global Programme on Security of major sporting events & promotion of sport and its values to prevent violent extremism

[12] Right to Play (2008): *Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace: Recommendations to Goverments*.

[13] General Assembly, "Sport: a global accelerator of peace and sustainable development for all", report of the Secretary General, (A/75/155), 2020; available at https://undocs.org/A/75/155 .

Gender equality and empowering women	• Increases self-esteem, self-confidence and enhanced sense of control over one's body. • Provides leadership opportunities and experience . • Produces positive shifts in gender norms that give girls and women greater safety and control over their lives.[14]
Education, skill development, and employment facilitation	• Improves academic performance and school attendance. • Provides a platform for education scholarships to help individuals achieve career goals. • Builds a range of developmental, emotional, and social skills that help young people control their emotions and channel negative feelings in a positive way. • Improves overall emotional well-being, provides a sense of belonging, and teaches individuals how to follow rules and accept decisions, and to cooperate with others. • Enhances employability by teaching valuable skills in teamwork, strategic planning, communication, discipline and adaptability. • Education should not be encouraged for PVE, however, but rather should be utilized to develop youth groups which tangentially help PVE goals.
Strategic communications, the Internet, and social media	• As a source of global mass entertainment, sport is one of the most powerful and far-reaching communications platforms for public education and social mobilization[15].Athletes can be extremely influential role models and spokespeople for peace and can create opening for positive dialogues that support a broad range of social agendas and build bridges between antagonistic groups[16].

To understand the importance of transferable values, examples of how they can be harnessed based on the experience of partners within the focus groups of the Radical (Ex)Change project and the literature review are illustrative.

[14] UN Women (2020): "Sport for Generation Equality Framework: Driving implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action through the Power of the Sport Ecosystem"; available at https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/News%20and%20events/Stories/2020/Sport-GenerationEquality.pdf .

[15] Right to Play (2008): Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace: Recommendations to Goverments.

[16] Right to Play (2008): Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace: Recommendations to Goverments.

When exploring the values and contribution of sport activities that are transferrable for prevention purposes, the Radical (ex)Change focus groups produced a list, which is reported in the table below:

Examples of values and contribution of sport emerging from the Radical (Ex)Change Project	
Spain	Respect (of the adversary, officials and referees) Delaying reward Group identity Teammates interdependence Team spirit and cohesion/cooperation Fair play Solidarity Tolerance Justice
Italy	Aggregation Sociability Respect Cooperation Integration and Membership Competition Emotion Discipline Constancy Commitment Sacrifice
UK	Teamwork Togetherness Critical thinking Leadership communication
Belgium	Perceived self efficacy Healthy level of self-esteem Sense of group belonging (social cohesion) Equal/ human rights and democratic participation
Greece	Respect Fair play

Such values can be transferred operationally by getting familiarised with the target groups and individuals, and by engaging them in education and training processes. And, importantly, these values are to be transferred to **a life plan** for the youths.

Sport-based programmes aimed at preventing radicalisation revolve around clear mechanisms to address the drivers of radicalisation and build resilience, particularly among youth, and in communities against ideological narratives that promote terrorism or violence.

The Guide for Policymakers for the use of Sport for the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) of UN Office of Counter-Terrorism clearly describes the mechanisms through which sport is conducive to personal and social development:

Building resilience — or the capacity to successfully cope with significant change, adversity or risk — which requires an array of life skills. Sport is used in a variety of social-development models, including crime prevention and peace and development, to develop those skills in an organic way.

In individuals, sport is widely acknowledged to:

- Support the development of self-esteem, confidence, critical thinking skills, and other qualities that enhance an individual's overall mental and emotional well-being

- Improve academic performance

- Develop skills and attitudes that enrich social interactions and employability.

In groups and communities, sport:

- Strengthens understanding and tolerance, reduces stereotypes, and connects people through a common experience or goal

- Contributes to the resilience of individuals and communities against the propaganda and rhetoric of violent extremist groups.

The UNOCT Guide also provides a comprehensive list of examples of sport-for-PVE programmes and practices. This list comprehends both national and global programmes using PVE mechanisms such as social inclusion and cohesion, personal and social development and improvement of well-being. To provide overall guidance for future project implementation, it is recommended to read through the **selection of relevant examples targeting youth radicalization**.

Examples of sport-for-PVE programmes and practices	
Not in God's Name (Australia)	Not in God's Name (NIGN) is a non-profit association that is dedicated to the prevention of radicalization and extremism, as well as the promotion of tolerance, equal treatment and understanding between religions and cultures. Together with famous and well-recognized athletes (role models), the programme offers free activities like "Exercise with Role Models", where martial arts stars train with young people and between exercises, they talk about respect, violence in everyday life, and extremism.
Local Youth Corner (Cameroon)	Local Youth Corner Cameroon is a youth-led organisation with a focus on empowering youth in prisons in the domain of peacebuilding, preventing and countering violent extremism. In 2015, the organisation launched Creative Skills for Peace, a prison-based project that aimed at facilitating the rehabilitation of violent offenders and preventing radicalization through sports, education and recreational activities. This project was an outcome of a continuous rise in the number of young people in conflict with the law, radicalized and recruited by violent extremist groups. As part of this project, Local Youth Corner Cameroon launched the sport for peace tournaments that aimed to build team spirit and promote social cohesion and friendship among the inmates.
Darfur Dreams (Sudan/Global)	The Darfur Dreams project, implemented by Save the Dream, a global non-profit movement of organizations, people and athletes who believe in the power of sport to build more fair and inclusive societies, aims to promote peace, prevent violent extremism, integrate society, peacebuilding and reconciliation, and development through sport. It targets IDPs in Darfur, Sudan within the framework of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD). Field activities target youth who are more vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment to violent extremism. Associated activities and networks are comprised of multiple sport and cultural activities, advocacy campaigns, and training workshops on "Sport for Peace and Development". The initiative has provided intensive training to 50 youth leaders from different IDP

	communities to develop their "Skills to Act as Agents of Change" and to strengthen their abilities in the areas of capacity building, community engagement, and social inclusion.
National Security Advisor, Nigerian Prisons Service (Nigeria)	In Nigeria, the National Security Advisor and the Nigerian Prisons Service implemented an 18-month programme which applied a wide range of approaches, including sports and games, to address extremism issues among prisoners. The programme received a positive response from both prisoners and staff. Sports activities were credited with facilitating new channels of communication and allowed staff to manage and engage with extremist prisoners in a different, more positive way. Notably, organized sport and team games provided the foundation for these new relationships and subsequent group discussions highlighted the inconsistencies in extremist beliefs. Furthermore, the prisoners developed essential physical and social skills, which improved their ability to reintegrate into mainstream society and pursue vocations
Hooligan Initiative (Poland)	In Poland, the Provincial Police Headquarters in Rzeszów delivered the Hooligan initiative from 2007 to 2010 to offset the impact of football hooligans in incidents of hate speech, racism, and violence. This programme incorporated sports activities; meetings with youth, parents, representatives of sport clubs and fan clubs and feature athletes and sport activists; and the distribution of information and advice. It focused on increasing young people's awareness about criminal offences, including those involving "hate speech" and extremist acts committed in connection with mass gatherings, especially football matches, and promoting positive attitudes during sporting events. A similar programme for teenagers at the Warsaw Metropolitan Police focused on preparing young people for cultural participation in sports events and promoting proper behaviour of fans in connection to the organized mass sports events.
Extremely Together (Global)	Extremely Together is a global, youth-led initiative that aims to empower young people to prevent violent extremism launched in 2016 by the Kofi Annan Foundation. By using a peer-to-peer approach, the youth-led initiative acts upon the gap in international and national efforts aimed at PVE , where young people are understood as a threat to security rather than enablers of peace. Its youth-led projects and networks utilize various approaches such as theatres, arts, sports, dialogue, communication campaigns and training to reject narratives of violent extremism and promote togetherness within communities. Extremely Together aims to provide a sense of identity and purpose to young people worldwide, helping them work for positive change and peace in their communities. By equipping young people with tools and knowledge as well as reinforcing alternative narratives and positive values of "togetherness", Extremely Together seeks to enable youth to engage and play a leading role in peace and PVE at local, regional, and international fora.

2.3.3 When sport favours extremism and radicalisation

A clear separation between "Prevention of radicalisation through sport", which delineates the framework for the application of this Handbook and "Prevention of radicalisation in sports" is to be made.

This latter category exemplifies the reality when sport can be vulnerable to extremism and radicalisation. This happens when youth want to fulfill their sense of belonging, identity and protection, for instance by joining an extremist sport clubs. A detailed account on the vulnerability of combat sports and football to (right-wing) extremism is provided by the Radicalisation Awareness Network. According to a recent paper on the subject martial arts

such as boxing or MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) can serve as breeding ground of radical groups. Also, the creation of hooligan groups in Europe taps into the identity-building dimension of sport. Competitive sports can lead to a process in which some of the resilience factors of sport can assume the connotation of negative factors, depending on the context and individual needs and other influential factors.

This happens when there is an overestimation of certain aspects of sport, which leads to the creation of a "cult": the "body cult", when performance improvement is the only objective of the practice; the "cult of victory", when the only scope of the game is the defeat of the adversary with possible consequences such as excessive ambition, and a hostile attitude towards opponents; and the "cult of violence", where the dynamic of competitive sports causes verbal and physical violence, both between competitors and in the social context of the match. These negative aspects in sports offer potential entry points for recruitment strategies by extremist actors.

2.3.4 Key principles of programming initiatives on the prevention of youth radicalisation

What are some key principles to take into consideration when designing a sport program at preventing violent extremism and detecting radicalisation?

The cross-cutting **principles of programming** are geared towards the promotion of **youth participation, gender equality, and human rights**.

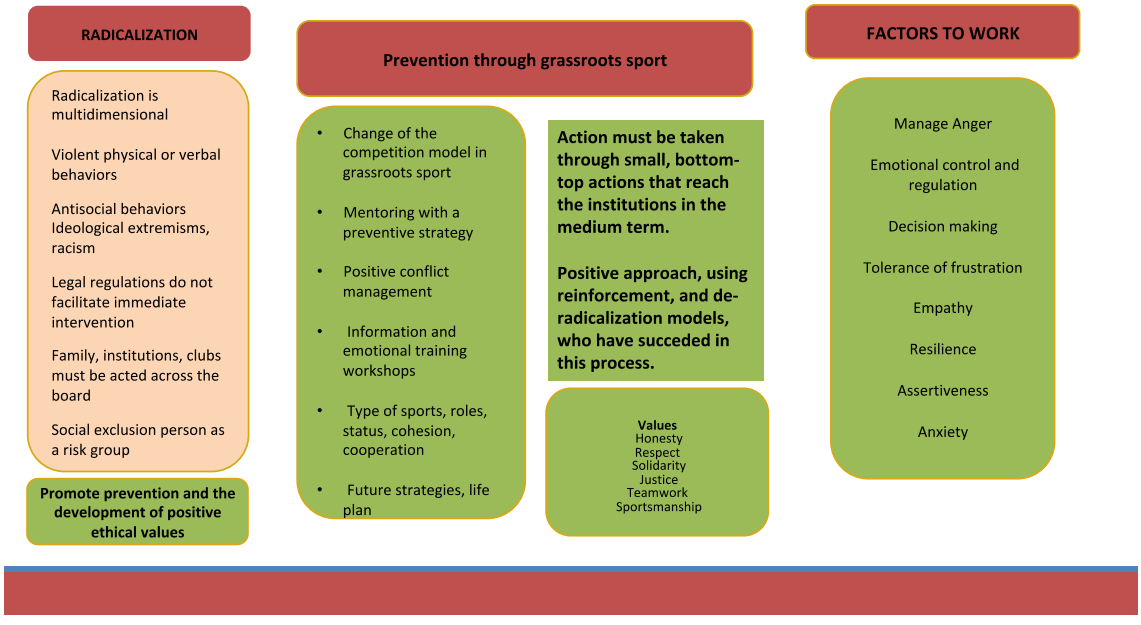
Youth participation: current global initiatives such as the "First Online Youth Consultation on Preventing Violent extremism Through Sport", which is part of the *United Nations Global Programme on Security of Major Sporting Events, and Promotion of Sport and its Values as a Tool to Prevent Violent Extremism* put forward a number of Recommendations on Strengthening Youth Participation in Decision-making Processes. This policy recommendation also appear clearly stated in the expert's remarks during the project, as the need to focus on youth is central if any sport-based programme is to achieve success: the assessment of the setting and definition of a baseline of the conditions of youth as a starting point; the creation of a methodology revolving around youth to perceive where and what they are sharing, what they are learning; and a regular engagement with youth and the community (including social media expert to be involved). When it comes to programme design, this principle is to be reflected in the Theory of Change.

Gender equality: Many practitioners and researchers have implemented a range of programmes using sport to reduce conflict and violence among youth, counter and prevent violent extremism and radicalisation, and increase youth conflict prevention and resolution skills. It is evident though that the gender perspective was not included in most of the experiences reviewed (Focus Group Spain). Therefore, this is a central theme that partners have requested to investigate and reported in this Handbook.

Other focus groups put in evidence that interventions aimed at working with only half of the population will only achieve partial results. For this reason, gender equality is to be reached through mixed teams. Also recommended is the adoption of an educational strategy for both men and women on the issues each gender faces on the streets (youth). Sharing problems and ensuring a shared strategy where both genders support each other and advocate for each other, will imply that they would have a foundation to build on.

Human rights: Leaders and practitioners in the sports sector increasingly recognise the need to respect people's human rights and the need to develop sport-based programmes that take human rights due diligence in consideration: this means to know and show that human rights are respected in practice. A step-by-step guide on how to incorporate human rights in programming is presented by the *UNODC Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport - Practical Guide*.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF A SPORT-BASED INITIATIVE FOR THE PREVENTION OF RADICALISATION OF YOUTH



An analysis-intervention proposal within the Radical (Ex) Change Project

Throughtout the project, partners have strived to conceptualize a working methodology that would analyze and reflect on those strategies and mechanisms for youth participation and inclusion as a means of preventing radicalisation and violent extremism through sport.

Sports activities have become one of the main working modules in the fight against radicalisation as governments are making provisions to use soft measures such as sports to

achieve this goal. Community and grassroot sport activities make socially vulnerable people feel better due to increased self-esteem, self-efficacy and motivation to set and pursue health-related goals, resulting from processes of peer experiential learning, taking responsibility and reflexivity (Naseer and Abro, 2019).

As that participation in sport can improve self-esteem, increase social bonds, and provide participants with a sense of purpose, the introduction of an educational element can improve outcomes after programme completion, providing participants with a plan for life a future (Richardson, Cameron, & Berlouis, 2017).

In order to work effectively to prevent radicalisation and violence through sport, it is necessary to work a step-by-step, interdisciplinary and coordinated approach, which relies on the principles defined by the UNODC Technical Guide[17]:

Programming principles	Phase of Programming
→adopt a conflict sensitive approach	Diagnosis
→define of prevention of extremism and radicalization	Diagnosis
→understand vulnerability factors	Diagnosis
→understand the role of sport	Diagnosis
→identify and engage stakeholders and key partners	Diagnosis/Planning
→build capacity through network	Implementation
→carry out monitoring and evaluation	Monitoring and Evaluation

3.1. Diagnosis (situation analysis)

The assessment of the local environment and setting, including the challenges and needs with respect to the radicalisation and violent extremism processes (e.g. understanding the narratives), and the mapping of all relevant stakeholders in sport and radicalisation spheres are the foundational elements of the planning phase.

Before embarking on developing a sport-based initiative for the prevention of radicalisation of youth, it is necessary **to consult the policy and national agenda on prevention in each country of intervention**[18].

[17] UNODC (2020): *Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport Technical Guide*. See Prevention of violent extremism and programme design principles, pag. 72

[18] https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/internal-security/counter-terrorism-and-radicalisation/prevention-radicalisation/prevent-strategies-member-states_en

→Key takeway: every project must define radicalisation and violent extremism in its own setting and define a baseline[19]

3.1.1 Needs assessment

The needs assessment looks at the different facets of the local context while providing a snapshot on the characterization of the sport ecosystem.

The participation in sport activities as a tool to hinder the radicalisation process in a municipality is to be assessed by exploring and **identifying the links** between:

a) Radicalisation trends and **vulnerability and resilience factors** in the community
b) Characterization of the **sport ecosystem**

According to project partners, there are a lot of sport organizations (federations, clubs, associations, grassroot organizations, etc.) working in the sport sector, mostly without an effective coordination. Also, to take stock of the potential for preventive work, differentiating between big clubs with professionals and sections in charge of the promotional and engagement work with families, players follow-up, etc., vis a vis the small and more grassroot clubs with little professional capacity and reduced facilities, is important to define the features and needs of the sport sector. Coaches, trainers, managers and other professional figures are all part of the sport ecosystem and is necessary to assess their need for capacity building.

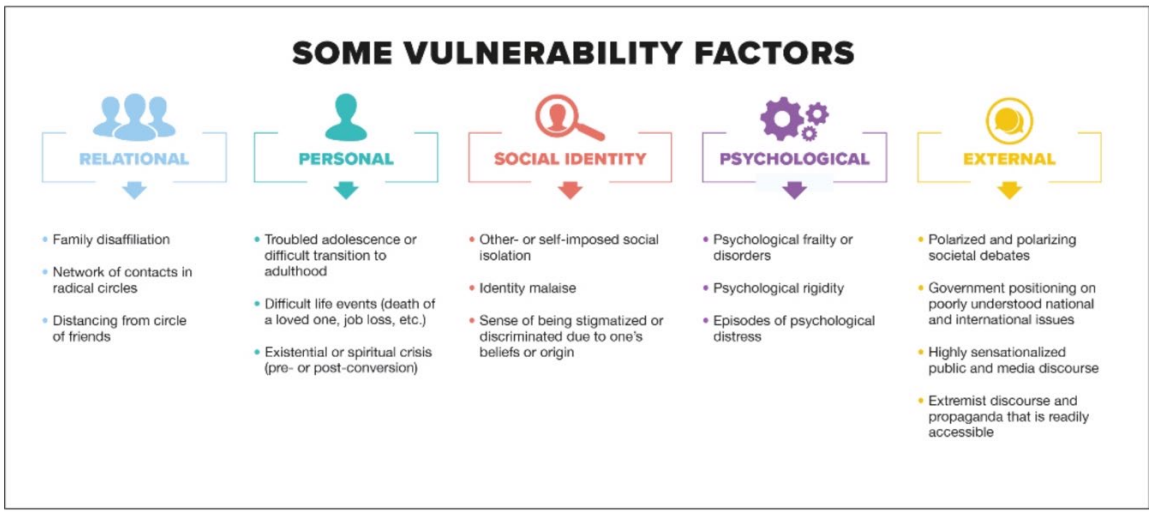
Another level of analysis relates to the **impeding factors and barriers to participate in sport**-based activities[20]

- access: availability and accessibility of sport and recreation equipment, including parks and sport facilities and programmes accessible for people living in communities at risk
- resources: a hindrance to sport practice is the scarcity of financial and material resources to play, travel, purchasing equipment, enroll to a sport practice; but also, lack of trained in schools and the local community
- socio-cultural: understanding benefits of sport among family and community; and cultural issues when it comes to participation of girls

3.1.2 Identify factors of vulnerability and resilience

The process of radicalisation is strictly geared to specific **factors of vulnerability** as exemplified by the Centre for the Prevention of Radicalisation leading to Violence:

[19] This takeway is also considered a good practice in programming as indicated by the UNOCT *Guide for Policymakers the use of Sport for PVE*, pag. 28
[20] Commonwealth Secretariat. 2015



As far as **resilience** is concerned, within the prevention framework to violent extremism and radicalisation, the focus is on both individual and community level features.

Academic literature associated resilience to characteristics of social-psychological traits of individuals: empathy, self-regulation and control, self-esteem and assertiveness, intercultural tolerance and diversity. At the European Union level, a more comprehensive definition of individual youth resilience to violent extremism refers to a "synthesized definition of resilience, which include seven elements: (1) self-knowledge, (2) social skills, (3) knowing and understanding others, (4) self-confidence, (5) an open view, (6) making choices and following them, (7) handling diverging situations," as well as aiming to "increase critical thinking, tolerance and empathy" (Grossman 2021).

3.1.3 Identify stakeholders

It is widely recognized that sport-based interventions require a **whole-society approach** to be successful. This imply bringing together government, civil society, and other non-governmental actors to work collaboratively and cohesively in the prevention of radicalisation.

For this to happen, **municipalities** and local authorities can act **as the leaders** in undertaking a stakeholder analysis as a basis for planning projects to identify ad improve their relationships with other key stakeholders: by engaging these stakeholders in an inclusive and collaborative approach, municipalities can leverage critical resources and expertise, for long-term impact of sport values-based activities as a contributor to national prevention objectives.

Stakeholders **mapping** is the process of identifying stakeholders and assessing their relative importance and influence and represents a crucial step as it will guarantee to get onboard those actors that can make a difference. But how does a municipality/local agency identify stakeholders? In the first place, a desk review can spot existing community and sport-based programmes that link up local community groups such as education, coaching and

volunteering. In other sensible settings, the research can look for programmes run within the prison systems and identify those current activities of who's conflicted or at risk of offending.

A **list of potential stakeholders** is clustered according to:

Municipal services	Municipality departments dealing with sport and prevention, community spaces, police (e.g. for statistical evidence)
Sport system	Federations, associations, multi-sport clubs, testimonials, instructors, trainers, coaches
Socio-Health system	Social services, social educators, psychological support organizations, prisons, NGOs
Educational system	Youth, families, professional and educational communities such as school teachers, educators, universities (for training modules)
Community referents	Representative of minority groups (e.g. associations) and migrant communities, social leaders
Worship centers	Churches/parrish, synagogues, mosques, temples
Cyberspace	

3.2. Planning (Theory of Change)

The Theory of Change is a planning and evaluation tool, which involves the various stakeholders in the planning of a social change, represents change processes based on evidence and, finally, measures the effective impact to the intervention carried out: in summary it allows each intervention to respond to the root causes of radicalisation. Part of this process is to examine assumptions against risks, plan and design the prevention strategy accordingly. Within this framework, the type of sport-based intervention and the challenges related to the radicalisation process defined in a specific locality/municipality, imply that different Theories of Change are to be developed according to each context.

To define the guiding framework for the Theory of Change, reference must be made to UNODC Technical and Practical Guides on "Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport", according to which it is necessary to:

a) investigate the root causes of radicalisation (situation analysis, vulnerability and resilience factors, stakeholders identification)

b) address prevention of violent extremism and radicalisation through sport in 5 focus areas[21]:

Zone 1: **Safe spaces and social safety**. This involves providing youth with institutionalized protection and creating safe spaces for meaningful sport interventions.

Zone 2: **Social inclusion**. This is fostered by promoting cultures of unity and safety through sport. Messages of celebrating unity in diversity are important and can be achieved through the aims and objectives of sport and social inclusion.

Zone 3: **Education**. Sport enables education and learning through curricula, focused sports programming and the development of long-lasting relationships with other institutions in professional networks.

Zone 4: **Resilience**. These programmes aim to build the resilience of youth through various skill-building opportunities and, in turn, to increase protection against recruitment and attraction to violent extremism.

Zone 5: **Empowerment**. Empowerment is seen as a crucial outcome of sport prevention of violent extremism programmes by giving a voice to youth who are considered marginalized and at risk of exploitation and recruitment.

→**Key takeway: appoint a facilitator** duly trained on how to target primary prevention to reaching both life-skills and educational outcomes.

3.2.1 Reach your target groups in different settings through sport

Sport represents a hook for youth at risk and an effective tool for engaging this target group. Initially, we need to understand which type of prevention is required in a specific context and identify the correct target group and associated prevention programme to implement in the community according to:

Primary prevention: the target group refers to youth who are not really in danger at this present time and the focus is on preventing any radical idea to form and be interiorized.

Secondary prevention: the target group embraces youth already in danger of being radicalised and who may already have radical ideas. Different approaches are needed: experience from practitioners suggests to approach this target group with actions aimed at fostering self-worth, self-promotion, self-esteem, having a "good life perspective", and "taking control of

[21] UNODC. 2020. Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport - Technical Guide

your life". In this respect, secondary prevention focuses more on the self-esteem and self-worth of the individual, alimenting a great sense of pride in youth. (Focus Group Belgium)

For both target groups, the **principles** to apply are empowerment of the individual, dialogue and activities aimed at triggering social cohesion and identification and nonviolent views of certain extreme ideals: evidence has shown that leisure activities such as sport in a non-competitive environment can significantly improve self-care and social cohesion.

But how to reach our target groups in different settings through sport? And which are the experiences and steps that enable this to happen?

a) Local community

Past projects and experience show that it is first of all necessary to mobilize local associations in order to access local communities. Within a local community, a **positive climate has to be created through local mentoring**, with people in the community who are mentors and champions for the target groups: these "agents" could be coaches or mentors with whom there is a very low social distance from the target group, in other words, they are rooted at the local level and it is very easy to relate to them.

For this to happen, it is not advisable to use high profile mentors to raise awareness: the success of high-profile mentors is very unlikely to be achieved by the ordinary individual and any failure to achieve similar success will be counterproductive. It is rather recommended to use mentors who have had both success and failure at the local level and have still been able to overcome the difficulties society has presented them with: the importance of recognize one's failure and the lessons this teaches the youth in order to succeed in life is essential. Therefore, it is key to **identify a local community champion who can then take on a leadership role.**

It is also important to scrutinize cases when youngsters seem to be turning their back on sport and to understand the barriers to sport, and what ca be done to attract them. Within the context of local sport clubs, the experience in Belgium shows that certain clubs mostly consist of local people (i.e. Belgium ancestry) while others may include predominantly certain ethnic, religious, or migrant groups. For clubs with majority of non-Belgium origin participants, the issue of radicalisation has to be approached very carefully as a certain stigma is associated with the word "Radicalisation" – in Belgium it is often only associated with negative views of Muslims. The terminology itself tends to immediately generate a negative view from individuals and drive the target group further into their radical views. For this reason, it is recommended to **use appropriate language** and choose the word "polarisation" instead.

Importantly, the local community champions, independent of the sport or non-sport environment where his/her action takes place in, has to allow youth to still embrace their heritage and their roots of where they come from. It is important to find the balance between the positive aspects of accepting people's different roots and culture and the negative implication that may emerge from it. Radicalisation reduces a person to one aspect of their **identity**, such as the extreme actions of a certain religious group, but reducing one's identity

to only negative aspects is problematic and it is necessary to focus on the multiple layers of one's identity while encouraging to be proud in one's own ethnic or religious background.

It is crucial to **make clubs more inclusive**: the inclusion of people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds in sporting activities is important to understand the actual mechanisms as to why certain people become radicalised and others not. The role of multi-sport clubs in preventing radicalisation is essential as this provides multiple sporting options which appeal to certain ethnic groups and as a result, a different world's view, therefore more opportunities to "pluralise".

3.2.2 Identify prevention measures in sport for development and peace initiatives

Sport-based programmes aimed at prevention are to rely on **evidence-based results** from previous initiatives using sport to prevent conflict and build peace that include sport as a tool to address the challenges confronting youth at risk and to prevent radicalisation.

A key stakeholder in defining **prevention measures** are those sport organizations that contribute or are willing to contribute to the prevention effort: the involvement of sport organizations is pivotal in attracting the target group, communicating values to the community, and contributing to identifying context-specific prevention measures. Conceptually, these measures fall under the following categories as identified by the Global Sport Programme on Security of Major Sporting Events and Promotion of Sport and its Values to Prevent Violent Extremism:

- Addressing Sport-based Violence: training and awareness-building campaigns.
- Social Responsibility Agendas: promotion of positive action and support to local communities.
- Role Models: collaboration with professional athletes and coaches.
- Leverage Sponsor Resources: campaigns and projects related to prevention of radicalisation

To identify prevention measures, experts from the focus groups have stressed the need to reach a **balance between social and security issues**. Importantly, sport-based programmes need to focus on social issues as a main conducive factor and concentrate on:

- Social inclusion: what youth want is leisure activities and sport activities to spend time with other people, and in sport settings they can meet people from different backgrounds.
- Counternarrative: rather use alternative narratives and make them as close to local level as possible, which are credible and positive.
- Building resilience and offer support for the youth: sport-based programmes need to "work as a team" within the community and sport teams need to show resistance and act against certain types of behaviours, supporting the minorities in the team being targeted.

- Breaking down barriers between organisation and citizens: help embrace the different cultures and activities of those belonging to the minority group and carry out sport practices that break down barriers and bring people together, for example by involving law enforcement personnel.

The section “Implementation of action” will describe the different initiatives that can be implemented to achieve change.

3.2.3 Engage stakeholders

Sport can be used as a vehicle to engage stakeholders coming from a diverse range of institutions , and a virtuous participation of key actors is key for the success of the sport-based programme. There are different **methods** to engage them:

Focus groups among community representatives, including youth, sport and civil society organizations, and municipalities acting as group moderator. Following the focus groups, follow-up activities can include:

- specific questionnaires and letter of intent to define each stakeholder’s specific contribution and role within the initiative.
- targeted interviews with stakeholders to assess the need to further develop the participation in the initiative.

After **cooperation agreements** are defined, a wide array of activities can take place to strengthen the collaboration in sport-based programmes and reach prevention objectives.

3.2.4 Build the Theory of Change

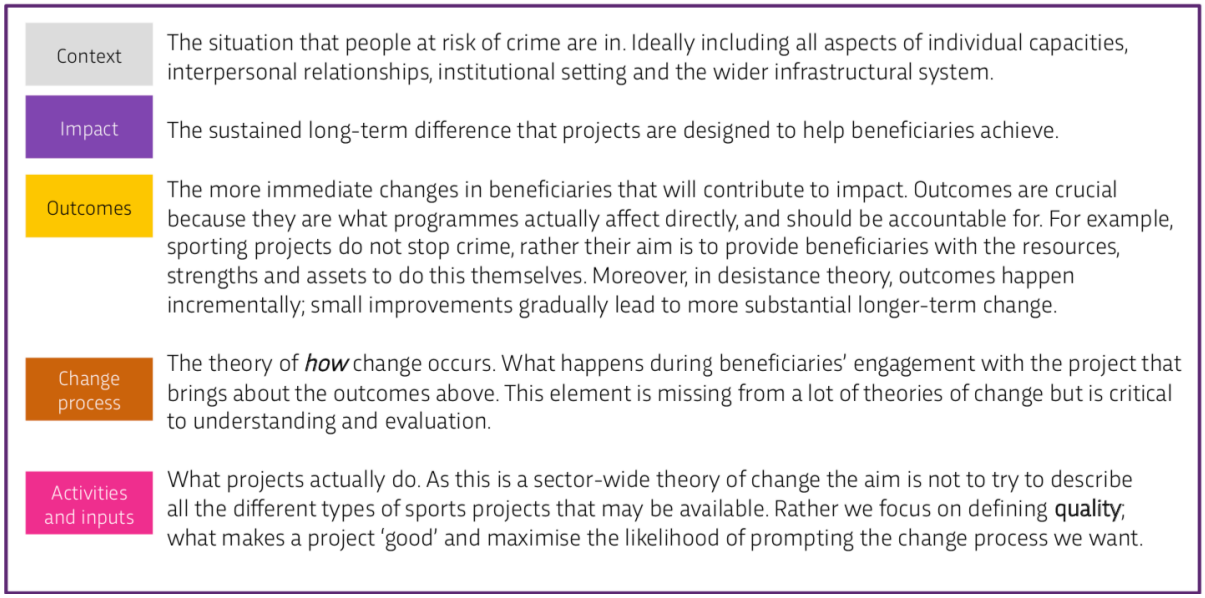
This Handbook is meant to guide municipalities in programming interventions that address vulnerability factors linked to radicalisation through an evidence-informed sports-based programmes revolving around promotion, prevention and leading by example. The premise to conduct a rigorous Theory of Change is to ground it in every context in which these initiatives take place, which means that it has to be flexible ad adaptable in each different setting.

The Theory of Change is a planning tool used to describe programmes or projects that are intended to have a positive impact on society: through a participatory planning process stakeholders envision and elaborate their long-term goals, or impact, and identify the conditions they believe are necessary to achieve impact. These conditions are modeled as desired outcomes, arranged graphically in a causal framework.

The proposed Theory of Change model centres on the assumption that through the selected activities and vulnerability factors addressed, the sport-based programme will lead to short-

and medium-term changes in attitudes and behaviour of young people, enabling youth to stay away from the "radicalisation sphere".

An exemple of the terminology used in the Theory of Change is proposed below (National Alliance of Sport for the Desistance of Crime - NASDC):



→**Key takeway: elaborate a Theory of Change for each context in which a sport-based programme is to be carried out**.

3.2.5 Develop indicators

Indicators are qualitative or quantitative measurements of types and processes of change. In prevention programmes where change is complex, and involves attitudes, behaviours and relationships, the indicators will particularly strive to track qualitative change.

As the causes of radicalisation are complex and diverse, setting up indicators is key. Some of them resides in the following **factors**: psychosocial (lack of social skills, emotional isolation, dropping out of school, social marginalisation, lack of family attachment and role models), economic (precariousness, frustration, apathy), political, religious, ethnic, cultural, repeated situations of inequality; or the existing prejudices that weigh on certain groups (De León & De Miguel ,2021).

The EU project BRaVE – Budling resilience against violent extremism and polarization in Europe, offers a useful list of 20 unique indicators on polarization. This is the result of a process of synthesis of 100 indicators grouped according to macro (state), meso (community) and micro (individual and family) levels of classification.

As suggested by discussions held within the focus groups, one way to approach the issue of radicalisation is through the lenses of polarization. As mentioned beforehand, **polarization** is

to be considered a more adequate term when dealing with sport-based interventions. For this reason, it is assumed that the indicators identified by the BRaVE project are relevant for the purpose of this Handbook.

For the sake of exemplification, different indicators can be defined for each level. For example:

List of potential indicators - individual level

Theme	*Activity*	*Target group*	*Change*	*Indicator*	*Measurement Unit*
	Sport activity 1	Youth at risk/vulnerable youth / migrant youth, etc.	Increase healthy lifestyle	Nº of activities played weekly	Nº of activities
	Sport activity 2	Youth at risk /vulnerable youth	Increased self-confidence	Level of self-confidence	%
	Sport activity 3	Youth at risk/vulnerable youth	Increased competencies for job market	Level of perception of own competencies learned for the job market	%
	Sport activity 4	Youth at risk/vulnerable youth	Increased emotional welfare	Level of capacity to learn something new	%
	Sport activity 5	Youth at risk/vulnerable youth	Reduced isolation	Level of sentiment of belonging (to a community)	%
	Sport activity 6	Youth at risk/vulnerable youth	Increased tolerance	Level of capacity to accept the other/differences	%

3.3. Implementation of action (achieving change)

When planning through the Theory of Change is concluded, it is time to start with the implementation of measures of the initiative whereby municipal/local authorities, in close cooperation with the partners, can lead the programme, which relies on three pillars: Promotion, Prevention and Leading by examples.

3.3.1 Promotion

The promotion pillars focuses on strategic communication, both with stakeholders and public communication, and awareness raising of youth, communities and the general public.

Promotion is about spreading the right messages and countering recurrent negative narratives: the diffusion of the values of sport, and more generally of the culture of respect, tolerance and mutual understanding.

A first aspect of **communication** is represented by the communication among stakeholders: this is critical in order to share a multi-stakeholder's strategy and reach a commitment on it.

The second facet of communication is related to public communication, which involves all kinds of media, including print media, TV, radio, and of course the internet and social media.

Awareness raising can be implemented through campaign, both addressing the most vulnerable groups of youth at risk of radicalisation, and the sport actors such as athletes, teams, fans and spectators; within the organization of a public campaign, one of the principles of programming must be respected: youth leadership and inclusion must be at the core.

Another important element in programme promotion is the role of professional athletes and coaches. Famous and influential individuals can play a fundamental role and be ambassadors for empowering youth and disseminating positive and alternative narratives. Youth around the world look at them, especially if these testimonials speak the same language of the target group. Still, relying on high profile individuals or community champions as youth ambassador is to be evaluated on a case by case.

3.3.2 Prevention

Prevention measures attempt to address the drivers of radicalisation. Sport clubs together with families, educational institutions, and community organizations and services play a central role in generating an effective positive impact.

The Radical (Ex)Change project has permitted the exchange of experiences and practices aimed at preventing radicalisation: the thorough analysis of innumerous past and current sport-based programmes by the focus groups of experts, have contributed to the identification of a compendium of targeted interventions considered as potentially transformative:

Community engagement: involving civil society actors such as grassroot organizations, NGO's, community leaders and religious leaders into programming of sport activities for the prevention of radicalisation is a necessary step to enable local ownership, strengthening commitment and sustainability of the intervention.

Family engagement: parents' knowledge of what it means to play sports is very beneficial for youth. Parents, though, have little relationship with sport organizations and sometimes family and youth's participation in sport activities are distant. Instructors should be tasked with taking this responsibility and engaging families of youth at risk of radicalisation. The exposure of families to positive messages and experiences within a sport context can be very beneficial: relatives' storytelling holds enormous weight within radicalisation and prevention actions as

the absorption of certain values, and adoption of certain attitudes and behaviors begins within the family (Focus Group UK).

Youth empowerment and sport-based activities: Through sport activities, youth can safely communicate and meaningfully engage in contextually appropriate dialogue on attitudes towards radicalisation and extremism. Youth can adopt diverse roles in sport programmes, such as those of coaches, referees, captains, administrators and team managers. And this involvement and responsibility in sports helps fortify decision making and leadership. Finally, sport can establish and support youth mentoring and peer-to-peer learning on the prevention of radicalisation on the sports field.

Co-mentorship of the target youngsters is recommended (same age, similar worries, same or similar language, etc.) (Focus Group Spain)

Sport-based activities make use of social pressure (teammates, peers, etc.) to obtain desired behaviors and avoid the ones not desired (Focus Group Spain)

Training for skills development: sport-based programmes offer a unique opportunity to combine sporting activities with skills developments. The objectives of the skills training aimed at **youth at risk** are[22]:

- Strengthening self-esteem and self-worth
- Strengthening the ability to avoid conflict
- Strengthening resilience
- Creating a sense of belonging
- Conveying practical and vocational skills

It is noteworthy to emphasize the profile, training and set of skills that **coaches and trainers** of community sport must master as they are a key cog in the development of programmes (Van der Veken, Lauwerier and Willems, 2020). Once recognized the centrality of these frontline practitioners it is then required to conduct skills training: the processes to reach an increased self-esteem, self-efficacy and motivation to set and pursue health-related goals and the appropriate contextual factors for these processes to occur are triggered and reinforced (or constrained) primarily by how the coach interacts with the participants and coaches the group.

Training for multipliers: this activity is concerned with equipping with skills those actors that are crucial for the success of the programme. It is recommended that different workshops be organized on: emotional control and knowledge, values education, teamwork, conflict resolution, mentoring, life planning, social skills, self-esteem, self-confidence, cyberspace for different groups: NGOs, social educators, teachers, psychologists, community referents, schools, health centres, municipal services. (Focus Group Spain)

Specific contributions stand out from the following quotes:

[22] Preventing violent extremism through major sporting events - A handbook for organizers (draft)

Training of technical staff who must adopt positive models (vs punishment) and importance of emotional side (Focus Group Spain)

Training of coaches, teachers, promoters. Teaching new training methods, not only on the physical and technical part, but also on anatomy, knowledge of one's body, awareness of one's skills and psychology related to sport" (Focus Group Italy)

Academic institutions and universities in the creation of modules/programmes for training on prevention (Focus Group Spain)

Each group requires training: training of policymakers and educators; a separate training course to coaches and youth leaders. (Focus Group Belgium)

Training frontline practitioners / field stakeholders and people that interact with marginalized and vulnerable groups. (Focus Group Greece)

Actions for online resilience (Esport and virtual countermeasures): The EU Horizon 2020-funded BRaVE project illustrates alternative narratives that "can promote complex cultural identity by providing resources for bonding, bridging and linking capital while blurring black and white friend/enemy binaries, encouraging us to look deeper and appreciate ambiguity so that difference is no longer a threat" [23]. In an environment that is conducive to polarisation, concludes the article, online communications can be mobilised to cultivate pro-social resilience.

→**Key takeaway:** to counter online radicalisation, it is recommended that every intervention has an online presence and promote alternative narratives to harness the use of social media (from poison to cure).

3.3.3 Leading by example

Leading by exemple refers to activities countering and preventing tendencies of radicalisation, which are directed at raising the awareness of those youngsters at risk of radicalisation by someone who has come out of radicalisation and acts as a role model.

According to the experience shared by partners, such approach may result into a more effective change of direction in the process of radicalisation. Often, former radicalized youth have gone through similar paths of those at risk and use their same language, and this simplifies the message. In contrast, testimonials such as professional athletes and stars and famous people are sometimes seen as privileged speakers that know little about the complex personal and social process underneath the radicalisation trajectory. For this reason, the programme needs to ponder carefully who is the "messenger" and promote the right testimonial depending on the type of message and audience it wants to target. Yet, in an era of social media we must pose the question about: how do we make viral a message when

[23] Article "Cultivating pro-social resilience online in an age of polarization": https://www.voxpol.eu/cultivating-pro-social-resilience-online-in-an-age-of-polarisation/

youth share by themselves? The focus on trusted messenger and the work with influencers on messages is recommended as a way forward (Focus Group UK).

3.4 Monitoring and evaluation

The review of the literature through systematic reviews and/or meta-analysis indicates that there is a great need to evaluate the effectiveness, efficacy and duration of prevention programmes (Feddes & Gallucci, 2015). Even more so, when it has been possible to see how some large-scale programme (e.g., "Prevent", from the UK) has had to be suspended and/or totally revised since -anecdotally- some of its results have been counterproductive.

With this in mind, the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework helps support implementation in order to achieve the impact of the sport-based initiative and transfer good practices into new communities.

Focus group discussions raised the issue that, generally, NGO's and clubs working in prevention through sport lack competencies in impact evaluation of their interventions (this requires a specific and preliminary effort in the planning phase when it comes to building the capacities of such stakeholders in, for example, M&E and impact management /Theory of Change).

Expert knowledge suggests that a M&E framework be developed before the Theory of Change, so that the latter methodology can incorporate it and it is then possible to develop a participatory action-based full programming cycle.

It is also suggested that the evaluation be conducted with respect to the two categories of stakeholders who work, either directly or indirectly with the youth (being youth the first group of stakeholders in the impact analysis). Those who have a direct relationship with youth such as pedagogues, coaches; and those who have an indirect relationship such as institutional managers, etc.

3.5 Sustainability (transfer of knowledge, legacy)

3.5.1 Sustaining the impact and ensuring the perdurability of the network

Extremism and radicalisation of youth is a transnational phenomenon that requires solutions that work across multiple countries. For this purpose, a sport-based project needs to promote networking with other organizations and institutions to target radicalisation prevention. For this to happen, it is required to work on a combination of established and far-reaching network structures and smaller networks in which innovative forms of exchange of ideas and vision are developed.

A first recommendation is to share the project results within the European Commission's Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN Practitioners) in order to exchange the project's knowledge and experience among 6,000 practitioners working in the prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism across Europe.

A second recommendation refers to the resources that need to be allocated within the organisations participating in the project; in order to promote the project even after its end, each organisation needs to clearly assign internally specific dissemination and networking tasks in other ongoing and upcoming projects, local governments associations, non-profit organisations and sport organizations: this will guarantee that the methodology is exported to other European countries and promoted in other existing platforms and among stakeholders.

3.5.2 Transferring knowledge from organizations working in the PVE field to sport organizations and vice versa

Transferring the result and knowledge of a sport-based project aimed at preventing radicalization to other stakeholders and European countries working in other fields of social inclusion can bring about positive social changes.

Mutual knowledge transfer can be very effective and more sustainable if it happens through joint collaborative process whereas each cooperation partner recognizes the expertise on local matters of the counterpart: only when both sides work together can an effective work approach be developed for specific local and situational circumstances.

For this reason, it is recommended to share the experience gained through the project and promote it across European countries, learn from other approaches and share ideas across borders through the participation in international and national events, such as conferences, workshops and trainings. It is important to emphasise that this is a two-way knowledge transfer, which is based on open discussions about different methods and approaches with the goal of integrating good practices from one field to another on social inclusion.

4. GOOD PRACTICES

One of the objectives of the **Radical (Ex)Change** project is to collect relevant **good practices** in the field of sport for development and peace, adapt and transfer them to address the issue of radicalisation and violent extremism, giving priority to communities where social inclusion and sport are still treated as separate elements.

The analysis of **best practices within the European Union** pointed to the work undertaken by the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN): this umbrella network, which was created with the intent to share ad exchange best practices in the prevention of violent extremism, provides an overview of lessons, practices and insights, gathered across hundreds of

initiatives, carried out within the EU, during the period 2012-2019. These lessons and practices are divided according to: training of first line practitioners, exit strategy, community engagement and empowerment, educating young people, family support, delivering alternative narratives and multi-agency structures.

Importantly, these seven approaches, empirically selected, have been discussed and approved with the European Commission – DG Home, and received consensus from several Member States as to the practices' effectiveness.

Such contribution provides a significant reference for country level analysis, stakeholders identification and replication of good practices. For examples, Belgium has 29 identified practices spanning the different areas of work, Spain 20, Italy 16, Greece 10, and the UK more than 60.[24]

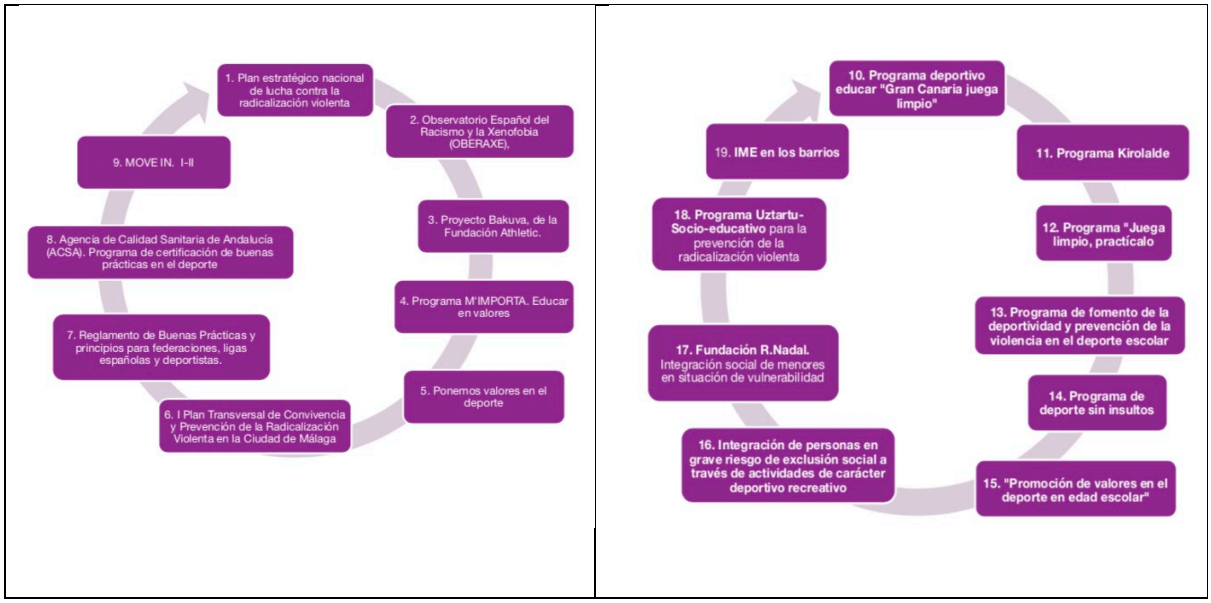
It is noteworthy the innovate step taken with regards to the "peer reviewed practice" that can be included in the RAN Collection. Since 2020, practice owners of this collection have the opportunity to receive an expert review by a member of the RAN expert pool. This review aims at professionalizing the projects, increasing the quality standard and raising the awareness on the need to conduct rigorous evaluation of such projects.

The Radical (Ex)Change was instrumental to conducting a comprehensive **assessment of good practices** drawing from the analysis of the input provided by the national Focus Groups throughout the project.

Using sport activities to bring together members of the host community and migrants/refugees and creation of sport teams that participate in activities have proven very effective (Greek Focus Group)

The Spain Focus Group elaborated the" "Analysis of best practices and identification of relevant entities and stakeholders in Spain" (annex) referring to those institutions that have incorporated good practices in the prevention of violent extremism, radicalisation, discrimination and racism in young people, aged 6 to 16, through sport over a 12-year time span (2009-2022). A total of 27 good practices are identified and classified according to the type and scope of project (some of them are currently being developed): a) projects of national public institutions, including autonomous communities and municipalities, private entities and NGOs; b) European Erasmus + Projects with the participation of Spanish organizations.

[24] RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices. Prevention of Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism. 2019



This analytical endeavor also draws from the evidence gathered from **key references of international, regional and national initiatives** aimed at making use of sport and its values as a tool to prevent violent extremism. The research, identification and selection of good practices, which primarily focused on practical instruments such as guides, reports, manuals, platforms and networks resulted in the following table, which aims to synthetise information on good practices that can be transferred to other countries and/or organizations (both sport and non-sport).

Good Practice	Objetive	Outreach	Result/Legacy
Good practice guide on diversity and anti-discrimination, FIFA (2017) Level: Global	The objective of the FIFA Guide is to encourage member associations to learn both from each other and from their own activities based on the five pillars of diversity and anti-discrimination as it exists in global football today: regulations, control and sanctions, education, networking and cooperation, and communication.	National football associations as members of FIFA	Set of tools comprising strategic advice and practical recommendations on how to integrate diversity and anti-discrimination into the organisational structures and activities
Generation Amazing, Qatar (2010). Level: Global	This FIFA World Cup legacy programme uses football for a development approach both on and off the pitch. It teaches principles like gender equality and	Community development organisations	Generation Amazing uses sport, specifically football, to teach disadvantaged youth life skills such as communication, organisation, teamwork and leadership: Football for

	inclusivity and life skills such as leadership, organisation, communication and leadership		development sessions are led by specially trained coaches and community development facilitators who help these people to gain the skills and confidence to develop their communities from the inside. They're sometimes assisted by young people, programme advocates and community leader. Since 2010, Generation Amazing has reached over 500,000 total beneficiaries and has set up 30 football pitches for underprivileged communities across the Middle East and Asia. Building on this, in 2020, Generation Amazing Community Club (GACC) was created: the GACC are community-powered hubs that support young people and projects that use football to create positive social change. It's mainly young people who lead the clubs, making their voices heard, making decisions and making the agenda for the community.
Line Up Live Up Trainer Manual, Life Skills Training through Sport to Prevent Crime, Violence and Drug Use, UNODC (2017) Level: Global	This Trainer manual is designed with the objective to assist coaches, trainers, youth workers and other professionals working with young people to deliver sports-based training exercises to males and females from 13 to 18 years of age.	Coaches, trainers, youth workers and other professionals working with youth	The training programme, which features 10 sessions targeting a specific set of life skills, is being implemented in a number of countries across the world, including those in Africa, Central Asia, the Middle East and South America. Until 2020 more than 11,000 boys and girls around the world have participated in the Line Up, Live Up programme (of which over 46 per cent were female, with gender parity remaining an ongoing goal), through over 850 qualified coaches and trainers who have undergone the custom training designed by UNODC.
Sport Values in Every Classroom, UNESCO, World Anti-Doping	The objective of this educational toolkit is to guide teachers to instill in	Teachers and educators of	30 Activity Cards constitute complete lesson plans for teachers, which is complemented

Agency, Olympic Foundation for Culture and Heritage, International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education, Agitos Foundation (2019) Level: Global	children the values of respect, equity and inclusion through engaging events in the form of activity cards designed to be used with 8–12-year-old learners.	students aged 8-12 years old	by a Quick Guide and a Teacher's Companion, which provide academic support to those who seek extra guidance or ideas.
Youth Engagement to Counter Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: Report on Findings and Recommendations, OSCE (2012). Level: Regional	In 2012, OSCE held an expert roundtable on Youth Engagement to Counter Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism (VERLT), which brought together over 100 participants with the objective to diffuse knowledge and expertise for ensuring that football is for all.	OSCE participating states, international organizations, civil society and the private sector organizations	The "Working group 3 – Good Practices and Lessons Learnt for Youth Engagement to Counter VERLT through the Arts and Sport" produced a list of recommendations applicable to sport stakeholders
Fútbol con Corazón (Football with Heart) Level: Regional	Fútbol con Corazón (FCC) project's main goal is to strengthen community cohesion in order to decrease violence and improve young people's life prospect. Through play, participants learn life skills such as peaceful conflict resolution, assertive communication, and teamwork.	Youth, coaches, sport organisations	A football for development platform leveraging football as a tool for social change. The fourteen social, emotional and cognitive skills taught are also promoted by the World Health Organisation. Children and youth are taught the core values of respect, solidarity, honesty and tolerance in sport. An online course is available to coaches to empower them to incorporate the vision and methodology of the programme in their everyday training. For over a decade, the programme has had good results across six different countries in South America and Central America.
STRIVE for Development. Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism.	The Project report presents the example of the European Commission's programme "*Strengthening Community Relations*	Conflicting communities	The project created sustainable and professionally supported frameworks for the implementation of cross-community actions such as

European Commission, RUSI (2015). Level: Regional	*through Football*", aimed to provide solutions to the rooted division between Arab and Jewish citizens in Israel and between Israeli and Jordanian society.		sporting activities and equipping communities and their leaders with the tools required to utilise sport as a positive and non-violent mediator for encounters between divided communities.
Youth and Sport Task Force, UNESCO, youthandsport.org and Lee Seung-Yuop Foundation (2017). Level: Regional	This regional task-force was launched to represent individuals working with youth and sport in Asia and the Pacific, and evolved as an outcome of the 2017 UNESCO Sport and the SDGs Funshop, representing Asia-Pacific youth activists, each with their own sports programmes at the local level (60 youth members, representing 28 countries).	Youth and youth-led organisations across the Asia Pacific	Youth-led platform through which youth express their views and ideas, design their own programmes, determine their own priorities and collectively, decide on the strategic direction concerning global issues and engage with policy-makers and the international community. UNESCO supports the Task Force by providing opportunities for the members to promote and enhance their work by connecting with each other and with regional and global opportunities for growth and capacity building.
Open Fun Football Schools, (OFFS), Cross Cultures Project Association, 2011 Level: Regional	The programme uses sport and fun games as a tool for education and prevention with the objective to provide communities with the necessary means and training to promote overarching values of peaceful coexistence, gender equality, tolerance, and social cohesion and takes away the breeding ground for radicalisation. These football matches are organised by adult victims from the War in Former Yugoslavia and are an inspiring way in which countries can include youngsters victim of conflicts.	Conflicting communities	Based on the Danish "fun football" methodology and pedagogy, sport and fun games are used as a tool for education and prevention. Training provided to volunteer coaches includes theoretical and practical sessions and workshops with relevant topics in child psychology, pedagogy and kinesiology. Open Fun Football Schools (OFFS) have brought thousands of children, parents, coaches, teachers and other community members together in an effort to promote peaceful religious and ethnic coexistence, gender equality, tolerance and social cohesion.
https://thebikeproject.co.uk , UK (2013)	The project takes in secondhand bikes, refurbish them and donate them to refugees and asylum	Refugees communities	It can be considered a capacity building initiative for refugees. Its pillars are: a) Pedal Power programme, which teaches

Level: National	seekers. The overall aim of the project is to empower refugees, reduce isolation, improve well-being and encourage social integration and greater independence.		cycling to refugee women in a safe, supportive and empowering environment. With lessons that focus on confidence, road safety and even maintenance, Pedal Power graduates leave with more than just the ability to cycle. b) Bike buddies, which builds confidence and knowledge of cycling. c) Cyber cyclist, which offers free online activities and classes (on Zoom) for bike recipients and volunteers in order to develop skills and provide a platform for sharing talents and social interaction. Since 2013 to 2021, the programme donated 8,842 bikes to refugees from dozens of countries including Syria, Eritrea and Albania.
Club Support for Socially Engaged Sports Organisations, Belgium https://younited.be/home-en Level: National	The project aims to reduce the risk of youngsters who are vulnerable to radicalization through sport, targeting kickboxing and football organisations to provide upward social mobility to young people through teaching social skills, rules and discipline. The programme furthermore aims to assist the capacity-building of different sports organisations in becoming more sustainable and collaborative. One of these clubs is Younited: The Younited teams coaches offer their players a chance to build their confidence, to improve their self-image, to restructure their lives, to feel the support of the group and to feel that all-important sense of belonging. The team helps the players take crucial	Youth, sport and social organisations	Socially committed sports organisations offer a collaborative structure to young people, as these are places where they learn social skills, rules and discipline. These organisations create opportunities that help young people towards personal success experiences within and outside sport. To this end, a sustainable collaboration was set up between various departments of the city of Mechelen and sports organisations in the city, such as *Team Zohair* (kickboxing and Thai boxing), *Royal Gym* (kickboxing, Thai boxing, boxing), *Long Hu Men* (kung fu), *United Mechelen* (futsal), and *Salaam Mechelen* (futsal). The Younited programme organised 14 events (5 national and 9 reginal tournaments), supported 28 Younited Teams (25 football clubs and 75 social organisations), and coached 44 coaches through the training programmes

	initial steps towards a new beginning. Football is a means to achieve this. The network of social organisations, football clubs and municipal services bear witness to the process-driven way the teams work, locally and nationally, always keeping one eye on the social goals and one eye on the (foot)ball.		
Let's START: SporTs Against RadicalisaTion, Greece Level: National	Let's START project formed a network of municipal youth workers, teachers, educators, coaches, sports teachers and young athletes to efficiently explore the concepts of youth radicalization, hate speech and violent extremism.	Youth and local stakeholders in sport and municipal services	The project resulted in a network of local stakeholders that raised awareness about the risk of radicalization, and prominence was given to sports as a tool for preventing the radicalization of young people. Training and the hosting of sports festivals are aimed at promoting human rights education and enhancing values such as solidarity, democracy, tolerance, integration, and intercultural dialogue through sports.
I Sport - Inclusive Sport Project Opposed to Radicalisation Tenets, Italy Level: National	The International Centre for the Promotion of Education and Development (CEIPES) implemented the project with the objective to combat the phenomenon of radicalization in the most difficult contexts of the Palermo society, promoting inclusion and removing the physical and cultural barriers impeding young people in prison and/or reception centres for migrants to participate in sports activities with local peers.	Youth	A target group of 100 young people, between the age of 16 and 25, including young prisoners, refugees and young people with migrant backgrounds, as well as youngsters of the city, participated in athletic, futsal and volleyball sports modules. Through the activities, which consisted of non- formal education meetings and sports training sessions, they have been able to develop and test the values of solidarity and sharing, as well as the importance of belonging to a team, regardless of the cultural, religious or social background of its members. The project also developed a Training Manual, which includes the results of the research conducted by the University of Palermo and the methodologies used for the training of the target groups. It provides a model that can be replicated and adapted by

			practitioners working in disadvantaged contexts to combat radicalization and promote social inclusion.

Guidance note on the use of good practices

The overall aim of this compendium of good practices is to serve as a general guide for municipal authorities and local level organisations' planning and implementation of grassroots sport-based initiatives. These are interventions that have proven successful and thereby have the potential for replicability, scalability and further investments by stakeholders and actors committed to the integration of prevention mechanisms into sport-based interventions and strategies. Some of the above mentioned programmes and practices have an international and regional outreach. As the objective of these guidelines is to provide a methodological framework for local level interventions, it is recommended to analyse the good practices identified and verify if and how they can be used within the local context: from the user's perspective, the analysis of the radicalization problems that are affecting the youth is a necessary first step when looking at specific references; subsequently, it is appropriate to identify the relevant principles underpinning a selected practice; the "adjustment" of such principle and its application at local/municipal level represents a useful contribution to exploring new local solutions for the prevention of radicalization of youth at risk.

Finally, the adaptation and transfer of relevant good practices to other countries is also an action worth pursuing; relevant good practices tested at local level can represent a valuable contribution also at regional and international level: ultimately, they can feed into the EU Project-Based Collaborations (PBCs), which inform the development of an EU Knowledge Hub on Radicalisation, as announced on the 2020 Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bandura A. 1995. *Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies*. Cambridge University Press.

Brouillette-Alarie, Hassan, Varela, et al.:2022. *Systematic Review on the Outcomes of Primary and Secondary Prevention Programs*. Journal for Deradicalisation. No.30.

Campelo, N. et al. 2018. *Who are the European youths willing to engage in radicalisation? A multidisciplinary review of their psychological and social profiles*. European Psychiatry 52 (2018) 1–14

Commonwealth Secretariat. 2015. Sport for Development and Peace Youth Advocacy Toolkit. Commonwealth Youth Sport for Development and Peace Working Group (CYSDP)

Council of Europe. 2016. Prevention of radicalisation and manifestations of hate at grassroots level - Guidelines for local and regional authorities. Text adopted on 20 October 2015 in the framework of the Congress strategy to combat radicalisation

European Commission. Strategic orientations on a coordinated EU approach to prevention of radicalisation for 2022-2023

European Commission. Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. 2020. Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions in the field of sport between 2016 and 2019.

European Commission- Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). 2021. The role of sports in violent right-wing extremist radicalisation and P/CVE.

European Commission -Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). 2021. National hubs supporting local actors in P/CVE – practitioners' insights

European Commission - Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). 2019. *Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism. Approaches and Practices*. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/docs/ran_collection-approaches_and_practices_en.pdf

European Crime Prevention Monitor (EUCPN).2019.Radicalisation and violent extremism. Brussels: European Crime Prevention Network, 2019/1.

Gough, Ian. 2013. *Understanding prevention policy: a theoretical approach*. Prevention papers, nef, London, UK

Grossman, Michele. 2021. *Resilience to Violent Extremism and Terrorism In: Multisystemic Resilience*. Edited by: Michael Ungar, Oxford University Press. Oxford University Press.

Koehler Daniel and Fiebig Verena. 2019. *Knowing What to Do: Academic and Practitioner Understanding of How to Counter Violent Radicalisation*. Perspectives on Terrorism , June 2019, Vol. 13, No. 3. pp. 44-62

Marquez Jean-Raymond. 2020. Sports Identity - Benchmark of best practices in sports in terms of the prevention of radicalisation. Erasmus + project report

Moghaddam. F. 2005. *The Staircase to Terrorism. A Psychological Exploration.* February-March 2005. Georgetown University February

Noble, James and Coleman Justin. 2017. *Our Theory of Change. Exploring the role of Sport for Development in the prevention and desistance from crime*. National Alliance of Sport for the Desistance of Crime (NASDC)

OSCE. 2020. A whole-of-Society Approach to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalisation That Lead to Terrorism - A Guidebook for Central Asia

Right to Play. 2008. Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace: Recommendations to Goverments.

Schlegel, Linda and Baaken Till. 2018. *"Yes, I can": the role of perceived self-efficacy in violent radicalisation processes*: https://www.voxpol.eu/yes-i-can-the-role-of-perceived-self-efficacy-in-violent-radicalisation-processes/

SDGFund 2018. The contribution of sport for the achievement of the SDG: a toolkit for action

Schmid, Alex P. 2013. *Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review*. International Centre on Counter-Terrorism Research Paper

Strittmatter, Anna-Maria Fahlén, Josef Houlihan Barrie. 2021. *Stakeholder Analysis and Sport Organisations*. Taylor and Francis

UN. 2015. Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

UNAOC. 2022 .Preventing violent extremism through major sporting events. a handbook for organizers - deliverable 2 – (draft)

UNCTO. 2022. Guide for Policymakers for the Use of Sport for the Prevention of Violent Extremism

UNCTO. 2021. Compendium of existing policies, projects and initiatives aimed at making use of sport and its values as a tool to prevent violent extremism

UNESCO. 2018. Action: guidelines for prevention of violent extremism

UNDP. 2018. Improving the impact of preventing violent extremism programming: a toolkit for design, monitoring and evaluation

UNICRI.UNAOC. 2022. E-course on the prevention of violent extremism through sport (draft)

UNODC. 2017. Line Up, Live Up. life skills training through sport to prevent crime, violence and drug use trainer manual

UNODC. 2020. Preventing violent Extremism through sport. Practical guide UNODC. 2020. Preventing violent Extremism through sport. Theoretical guide UN Youth Strategy 2030. https://www.unyouth2030.com/about

USAID Albania. 2019. Guide to Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE): Reflections and Recommendations on addressing the root causes of violent extremism and radicalisation - For effective municipalities, active communities, safer citizens

McNeil-Willson Richard, Gerrand Vivian, Scrinzi Francesca, Triandafyllidou Anna. 2019. *Polarisation, Violent Extremism and Resilience in Europe today: An analytical framework*. December 2019, Deliverable D 2.1 Concept paper - BRaVE (Building Resilience against Violent Extremism and Polarisation)