

„MigrA tion and SporTs – a CHallenge for Sports Associations and Trainers“

MATCH project next to its last step

On October 1st and 2nd 2013 the participants in the MATCH-project met in Ware, United Kingdom. It was the last meeting before the final conference, planned for May 2014 in Graz, Austria.

The project, which is implemented in the Grundtvig “Life-long Learning” programme and realised with the support of the European Commission, is mainly addressed to people who work in sports clubs or associations and concerns migration in sports.

On the one hand sport is a precious means for social integration, on the other hand in sports clubs this sensitive and complex process can be enhanced if coaches and officials hold specific intercultural competences.

Good practices

In order to use the potentialities of sports for immigration to their full capacity it is very important to exchange good practices. In addition to such information exchanges the project aims at compiling a pragmatic handout on intercultural competences applied to the sports

field, which shall be distributed to coaches and sports officials.

The participants in the meeting in Ware, who came from Austria, Croatia, Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom, concentrated particularly on four good practices. They discussed an intercultural sports festival called “let’s play”, organised once a year in Bressanone, Italy, by the charity OEW. Then they spoke about the “SIQ!” project for integration and qualification of migrants promoted by the Austrian Caritas in Graz. Finally two British initiatives were presented, namely the programme “Show Racism the Red Card” connected to the world of soccer and the exploitation of a big sports event, such as the last Olympic Games in London, to convey a global perspective of sustainability.

Challenges

The meeting in Ware was the fourth of the series, following the ones in Bolzano, Italy, in October 2012, in Lousada, Portugal, in March and in Zagreb, Croatia, in June 2013. During this last meeting two important problematic aspects emerged.



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First of all, the participants pointed out the obstacles people have to overcome in order to access organised sports, taking as an example Italy, a country with particularly strong

speaks about a challenge and two letters of the acronym MATCH recall it), the MATCH-project wants to foster the international exchange of experiences and at the same time to

countries. The results showed that activities to enhance the participation in local sports world and events should be generic, for example open-doors-days to allow all people to get in touch with existing offers, as well as specific for migrants, such as leaflets in their home languages, sports activities that take in account their cultural needs or special language courses for coaches. At first glance language barriers seem to be a huge obstacle, but in a wider sense we can say that the linchpin is given by culture as a whole.

Furthermore, we should try on the one hand to accost migrants with the context they live in and on the other hand to encourage local people to get in touch with the migrants' (sports) worlds. This is the only realistic possibility to achieve a mutual enrichment instead mere inclusion of newcomers in an existing context.



laws on citizenship.

Secondly, many concrete difficulties related to the active participation of migrants in sports activities of the community were exposed, on the example of the general situation in the local district of Broxbourne. The most relevant difficulty there is the lack of sports infrastructures and clubs right in the areas where the concentration of migrants is particularly high.

Aware of the long way still ahead (it is not a coincidence that the title “MigrAtion and SporTs –a CHallenge for Sports Association and Trainers”

give coaches and sports officials a tangible guide to enhance integration in and through sports.

Intercultural competences

This handout on intercultural competences, that are useful if not necessary in sports experienced in a multicultural context, should be as pragmatic as possible. For this reason the project partners began their work asking directly coaches and sports officials what could and should be done in the context they live and operate in.

An ad-hoc questionnaire was submitted to about fifty stakeholders in the project partners’

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The handout the project partners are working on starts exactly from here. The document will be completed during the final conference of the project, to be held in Graz in May 2014.

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