



Project Paper

Views of different stakeholders on the topic
volunteering in sport activities and skills development
through volunteering in sport

Project “Go4Sport Volunteering”



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Introduction

Within the project "Go4Sport Volunteering" we aimed to explore the perspectives of various stakeholders regarding volunteering in sport activities and its impact on skills development. To accomplish this better, project team have organized a series of round tables across three partner countries: North Macedonia, Turkey, and Croatia. Each round table gathered a diverse group of participants, totaling 54 individuals in Macedonia; 45 individuals in Turkey, and 43 in Croatia, representing different profiles within their respective communities (representatives from NGOs, local sport clubs and sport associations, students of sport management, volunteers in sport clubs, students interested in volunteering in sport activities etc.).

The main objectives of these round tables were threefold. Firstly, they aimed to facilitate discussions and promote education through sport activities, emphasizing skills development across various disciplines. Secondly, they aimed to raise awareness about the significance of volunteering in sport activities, highlighting its role in community engagement and personal growth. Lastly, the round tables provided a platform to introduce and promote the toolkit developed within the project, intended to provide support and guidance to individuals engaged in volunteering in sport activities.

Implemented locally in each country, these round tables served as dynamic forums for dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge exchange. The insights resulting from these discussions lay the groundwork for this report/paper, which aims to capture the diverse viewpoints and experiences of stakeholders involved in volunteering in sport activities and skills development.

This report presents a synthesized overview of the discussions held during the round tables, offering a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and best practices surrounding volunteering in sport activities. By reporting on the perspectives of stakeholders, we aim to foster greater awareness, collaboration, and actionable insights to leverage the transformative potential of sport and volunteering for individual and community advancement.



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Methodology

Round tables organized in North Macedonia

With the aim to achieve its objectives for the round tables activity, the project team implemented a comprehensive methodology in Kumanovo, North Macedonia. The approach encompassed a series of events/round tables strategically designed to inspire youth participation in sports volunteering and to collect insights into their perspectives on this practice on local and national level.

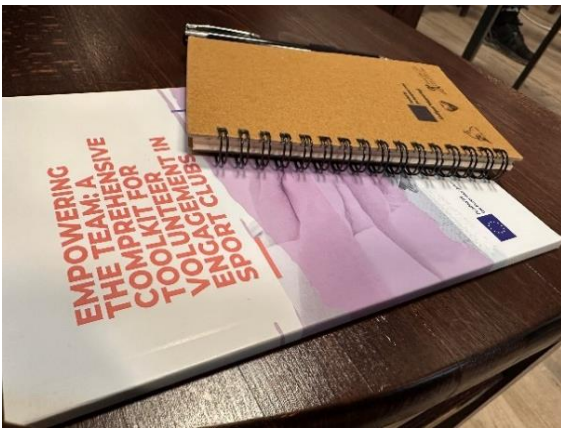
Firstly, a round table discussion gathered 17 young students actively involved in sports, covering disciplines such as basketball, handball, dancing, and athletics. Held on March 20, 2024, the session aimed to encourage enthusiasm for sports volunteering among the participants. Discussions revolved around the essential role of volunteers in sports events, the spectrum of volunteer tasks, on which positions volunteers can be found, what can be their roles and responsibilities and how to attract them to get engaged. Participants also learned and discuss the Macedonian volunteering legislation, and the rights and responsibilities associated with sports volunteering. Additionally, participants received an overview of the project's objectives and the toolkit developed to support sports volunteers.



Subsequently, on March 27, 2024, a round table event brought together 15 educators from primary and secondary schools in Kumanovo, trainers and coaches, and representatives from different sports clubs in Kumanovo. This event was a platform for different stakeholders to debate on different approaches for expanding youth engagement in sports volunteering. Discussions centered on legal details relevant to volunteering, characteristics defining effective volunteer programs, methodologies for volunteer recruitment, and checkup of the challenges and opportunities integral in sports volunteering.



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The third round table discussion, scheduled with students learning sport management in local schools in Kumanovo, including students from DCU-RCSC "Kiro Burnaz" and SOU "Pero Nakov," aimed to investigate deeper into the thematic aspects of sports volunteering. Organized on 03 April 2024, this session allowed 21 participants the opportunity to explore legal frameworks, volunteer rights and obligations, and opportunities for youth participation in sports volunteering. Participants learned on how to organize a sport event, where they can participate as volunteers on sport events, what kind of volunteers can be found in different positions and what kind of skills they need for different skills. They have also tested some of the methods indicated in the tool kit to see how they work in practice.





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In total number 54 participants took place in these events organized in Kumanovo.

When asked what kind of skills can be developed through volunteering in sport activities, participants at the round tables discussed and recognized:

- Communication skills – participants discussed that volunteers often interact with athletes, coaches, parents, and other volunteers. This provides plenty opportunities to improve communication skills, including listening, speaking, and taking information effectively;
- Teamwork skills – It was concluded that sports volunteering involves cooperating with others to achieve common goals. Volunteers learn to work as part of a team, delegate tasks, and support each other to ensure the success of events and activities;
- Time management skills - Balancing volunteering commitments with other responsibilities teaches individuals how to manage their time efficiently;
- Problem-Solving - Sports events and activities can present unexpected challenges. Volunteers learn to think on their feet, adapt to changing situations, and find creative solutions to problems as they arise;
- Organization - Planning and coordinating sports events require strong organizational skills. Volunteers develop the ability to manage resources, create schedules, and ensure that everything runs smoothly.

The conclusions from the events can be summarized as following:

- young students from various sports backgrounds are interested and motivated to explore volunteering opportunities in sports. Their active involvement in discussions reflects a potential enthusiasm and energy that can be tapped into for community engagement initiatives;
- the round tables and discussions served as effective platforms for disseminating information about sports volunteering, including legal frameworks, rights, and responsibilities. It became evident that raising awareness and providing educational resources are essential for fostering a culture of volunteering among youth;



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- the presence of educators, coaches, and sports club members in the workshops underscored the significance of mentorship and guidance in facilitating youth engagement in sports volunteering. Collaborative efforts between schools, sports clubs, and community organizations can play a crucial role in development and sustaining youth involvement in sport volunteering;
- participants identified various challenges, such as logistical barriers and legal complexities, associated with sports volunteering. However, they also recognized numerous opportunities, including personal development, community impact, and skill enhancement, that arise from engaging in volunteer activities;
- the positive feedback and expressed interest from participants underlined the importance of ongoing engagement and follow-up initiatives. Sustained efforts to provide support, resources, and networking opportunities for ambitious sports volunteers are crucial for maintaining energy and fostering long-term commitment;
- the collaborative nature of the round tables highlighted the importance of partnerships between different stakeholders, including schools, sports clubs, NGOs, and government agencies. By working together, these entities can influence their respective strengths and resources to create a more conducive environment for sports volunteering;
- participants showed a sense of empowerment and ownership in discussing and advocating for sports volunteering initiatives. Encouraging active participation and involvement in decision-making processes can further strengthen community bonds and foster a sense of ownership among stakeholders.

Participant feedback shown to the efficacy and relevance of these events, with many expressing a keen interest in further exploring sports volunteering opportunities. A common feeling appeared among participants regarding the necessity for continued educational initiatives aimed at explaining the benefits of volunteering and the opportunities available to youth.

In summary, the round tables provided invaluable insights regarding how sports volunteering is seen in the public. These initiatives underlined the crucial contribution of volunteers to sports events while clarifying the complex benefits accruable to both individuals and communities. As the project progresses, sustained engagement with youth and concerted efforts to spread sports volunteering opportunities will be crucial in fostering a culture of civic engagement and community participation.

Round tables organized in Turkey

The first round table in Turkey was organized with 15 participants who were mainly Assistant trainers from different sports clubs. The round table was organized on 21 March 2024.

In this round table activity with the participation of assistant trainers from different clubs, the importance of volunteering in sports for sports clubs and coaches was emphasized. Information was given about the concept of volunteering in sport for sports clubs. The toolkit which was produced within the scope of the project were introduced to the participants and the official infrastructure of sports volunteering in Turkey was mentioned. After this process, the participants were divided into 5 groups and experienced a simulation in which they worked as a volunteer coordinator in a sport event. The simulation was narrated by the moderator in the form of a story and at certain times in the story,



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the participants intervened in the story as volunteer coordinators. At the end of the activity, the participants, who portrayed themselves as volunteer coordinators, prepared a poster of all the skills and thoughts they realized, developed and felt, and shared them with the other participants. At the end of the round table activity, assistant trainers from different clubs opinions were taken and the activity was finalized.



The second round table was organized on 23 March 2024, and 15 participants – students of sport science faculty took part in it. In this round table activity with the participation of students of sport science faculty, the importance of volunteering in sport was emphasised for the students who are studying at the sport science faculty and will continue their careers in the field of sport. The structure of the round table was the same as in the first organized.





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The third round table also allowed 15 participants who are athletes at the moment, to take part in it. It was organized on the 26 March 2024. We had the chance to discuss the legal framework of volunteering in Turkey, do practical activities and try to organize a competition so that we conclude where we need volunteers, on what kind of roles and what will be their tasks. Participants also took the opportunity to explore the methods indicated in the tool kit and discuss the recruitment and managing of volunteers in the clubs they are engaged as well as to share their experience in volunteering in sport activities.





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On all 3 round tables organized participants underlined the skills you gain through volunteering in sport activities such as:

- teamwork – working with different people allows you to understand how one team functions and cooperating within a team teaches you team work skills;
- communication skills – through volunteering in sport activities you learn to communicate with different profile of people from small kids to trainers, to athletes and parents, to authorities etc.;
- organization skills – when you are a volunteer different tasks are requested from you and in order to do them as planned you must have or you will improve your organization skills. Organization skills are something that is very important for future career;
- networking – while volunteering in sport activities you build a network of contacts that can help you in your future work and life;
- self-esteem – volunteering can boost your self-esteem, you feel as part of a sport club, part of community.

As conclusions different stakeholder express their opinion on how they preserve volunteering in sport activities and mentioned some areas where improvement is needed:

- lack of understanding of volunteer activities among local sport clubs managers but also among young people who should the opportunity to volunteer;
- lack of legal legislative that covers volunteering in sport activities;
- a need for more educational programmes to promote volunteering among young people, with the focus on skills development through volunteering positions;
- young people show interest in volunteering in sport activities, however they are not aware of all opportunities that exist;
- the importance of partnerships between different stakeholders, schools, sports clubs, NGOs, and government agencies. Their cooperation is crucial in creating more encouraging environment for sports volunteering;
- participants showed a sense of empowerment and ownership in discussing and advocating for sports volunteering initiatives. Active youth participation is a must in this field.

Overall, the round tables involved 45 participants in Turkey. Discussion were very motivational, and knowledge gained in volunteering was marked as very useful in evaluation forms submitted by participants at the end of each round table.



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Round tables in Croatia

As part of the work package 2 Volunteering in sports, the Okit Vodice Athletic Club held 3 round tables with stakeholders. The first round table was held on February 28 in Vodice, where representatives of sports associations gathered. At the beginning of the round table, the Go4sportVolunteering project, its goals and implemented activities were presented. Representatives of the associations were partly involved in the implementation of the activities, given that they gave their input through survey questionnaires during the national survey. The representatives discussed what problems they face when organizing a sports competition and what they lack in volunteers. They agreed that volunteers need to be additionally engaged and motivated, but they also highlighted the problem of engaging club members themselves, who are also volunteers, but due to their business obligations, are often not able to engage in additional volunteering. Presenting the handbook that was distributed to those present, the templates and instructions listed in the handbook were discussed, and it was concluded that volunteers should be managed, and it is also necessary to plan in time and have an elaborate volunteer program.



The second round table was held at Ivan Meštrović Secondary School in Drniš, where students participated. The project was also presented to the students, and at the same time the opportunity was used to briefly present the Erasmus + program and the opportunities offered to them by participating in different projects. The students discussed in general about volunteering and what volunteering means to them, and they said that their first association is helping others and cleaning up the environment. After that, we talked about volunteering at sports events, about the possibilities of how to get involved in volunteering, what motivates them and how they should be encouraged. Likewise, the students answered that they would participate in volunteering if they were contacted directly and that they do not pay attention to notifications about it via social networks. We concluded that there is a need for volunteering and that young people should be additionally informed and motivated, and the benefits of volunteering should be pointed out to them. After the discussion, the students were given the task of designing a sports competition and thinking about what would be needed from volunteer positions at a particular competition. When they finished their work, they presented their works to each other.



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The third round table was held at the School of Economics in Šibenik, also with students, because we believe that the work and motivation of young people begins in their younger days. 17 students participated and were presented with the project with its goals and activities. They were also presented with the opportunities offered to them through the Erasmus + program. In the same way as the previous round table, volunteering was discussed and they said that for them volunteering is connected with humanitarian actions, helping the elderly and cleaning the environment. They said that they do not think that it is necessary to volunteer in sports. When it was explained to them what volunteering in sports would mean, and that various clubs depend precisely on the volunteer engagement of members and others involved, it became clearer to them. Since there were more students and they had different ideas, they were divided into 3 groups and they designed different activities and thought about volunteer positions, after which they presented their works to each other.



Conclusion of the round table:

- volunteers are an important part of the community who contribute by investing their time and knowledge realization of an event,
- they create a positive image of the local community and contribute to its betterment;
- It is necessary to know how to manage volunteers and clubs should do additional work on their own education and way of managing volunteers, and volunteers involved in activities should further develop their skills.



Total number of participants in the round tables in Croatia was 43.



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Recommendations

Based on the insights gathered from the round tables conducted as part of the "Go4SportVolunteering" project in North Macedonia, Turkey and Croatia, the following recommendations can be proposed by the partner organizations:

- Youth-Centric Approach needs to be used when targeting young people to promote volunteering in sport activities. Grass-root sport clubs must use tailor engagement strategies to resonate with the interests and preferences of young individuals in their own communities. It is important to develop targeted outreach campaigns targeting their preferable target group, promote some social media initiatives, and organize interactive workshops with the aim to capture the attention of youth and effectively communicate the benefits of sports volunteering;
- Education and awareness plays crucial role in understanding and promoting volunteering in sport activities. Grass root sport clubs must prioritize education and awareness-building efforts to ensure that youth and relevant stakeholders are well-informed about the opportunities and responsibilities associated with sports volunteering. Grass-root sport clubs should develop educational materials, workshops, and online resources to disseminate information on legal frameworks, rights, and duties of volunteers;
- Grass root sport clubs should establish mentorship programs and support networks to provide guidance and assistance to aspiring sports volunteers. Cooperation with schools, sports clubs, and community organizations to offer mentorship opportunities, training sessions, and ongoing support to youth volunteers;
- Recruitment process should be simplified and more accessible and inclusive for youth. It's very important to have develop clear and transparent procedures for volunteer registration, screening, and placement, leveraging digital platforms and online tools to facilitate the process;
- Strengthen partnerships and collaboration between schools, sports clubs, NGOs, and government agencies to create a coordinated and cohesive approach to sports volunteering is crucial. Pool resources, share best practices, and coordinate efforts to maximize impact and reach across the community;
- Volunteers' recognition is very important for motivation of volunteers. Grass root sport clubs should implement recognition programs to acknowledge the contributions of sports volunteers and encourage continued engagement. Different options should become practice such as volunteer awards, certificates of appreciation, and opportunities for skills development and personal growth to motivate and reward volunteers;
- Sustainability and long-term planning is part of development of sport clubs and especially important for volunteers' activities. Grass root sport clubs should have develop sustainable and long-term strategies for promoting sports volunteering and youth engagement. Invest in capacity-building initiatives, infrastructure development, and strategic planning to ensure the



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longevity and resilience of sports volunteering programs in the community.

Partner organizations trust that by implementing these recommendations gathered through the round tables implemented in all 3 countries, stakeholders can foster a culture of sports volunteering that is inclusive, empowering, and impactful.

Appendices

Agenda from round tables with students and students of sport

XX:00 Welcome / Coffee refreshments

Project presentation

XX:15 Participants introduction

XX:25 Legal framework of volunteering in Macedonia / Croatia / Turkey (depending on the country)

Rights and responsibilities of volunteers / Role of organizations and sport clubs

XX:00 Working in teams / Organization of events, volunteers needed and volunteer roles and responsibilities on different positions (basketball, athletic and dancing competitions)

XX:30 Presentation of where we can find volunteers and what is their role / By groups

XX:45 Conclusions and recommendations for sport clubs

Agenda from round tables with sport representatives, athletes, representatives from schools

XX:00 Welcome words

XX:05 Presentation of participants

XX:10 Presentation of the project and the Tool kit developed as part of the project

Volunteering in Macedonia / Croatia / Turkey (depending on the country)

Rights and responsibilities of volunteers



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The role of the grass root sport clubs

XX:55 Coffee break

XX:10 Working in groups – Testing methods from the tool kit

Call for volunteers, creating application form, recruitment of volunteers

XX:40 Presentations from group work

XX:55 Conclusions and recommendations for future

Participants lists

List of participants can be found on the following link:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/12En4FlujvuOhfMZRg2uMtIY-_46iebUw?usp=sharing

Tool kit references

The toolkit developed within the project is available online for downloading on project website www.go4sportvolunteering.org on the following links:

English: <https://go4sportvolunteering.org/2023/11/01/empowering-the-team-a-comprehensive-toolkit-for-volunteer-engagement-in-sport-clubs/>

Macedonian language:

<https://go4sportvolunteering.org/2023/12/08/%d0%b7%d0%b0%d1%98%d0%b0%d0%ba%d0%bd%d1%83%d0%b2%d0%b0%d1%9a%d0%b5-%d0%bd%d0%b0-%d1%82%d0%b8%d0%bc%d0%be%d1%82-%d0%b0%d0%bb%d0%b0%d1%82%d0%ba%d0%b8-%d0%b7%d0%b0-%d0%b2%d0%ba%d0%bb%d1%83%d1%87%d1%83/>

Croatian language: <https://go4sportvolunteering.org/2023/12/06/osnazivanje-tima-sveobuhvatan-skup-alata-za-angazman-volontera-u-sportskim-klubovima/>

Turkish language: <https://go4sportvolunteering.org/2023/12/07/takimi-guclendirmek/>



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