



## COLLECTION OF GOOD PRACTICES - SUSTAINABILITY OF SPORT CLUBS AND COPING WITH COVID-19 CRISIS



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## INTRODUCTION

2020 has been an unprecedented year in the world that will be remembered by the pandemic of COVID-19. At the beginning of 2020 the coronavirus started to spread from China to all over the world, including Europe. Successful coping with the above mentioned situations goes beyond the management capacities of small local clubs itself.

It requires joint cooperation and consideration of stakeholders in various sports and management fields. *Erasmus+ Sport programme*, which supports the mobility of volunteers, coaches, managers and staff of non-profit sport organisations, is an ideal match to receive and exchange the knowledge and brainstorm ideas about know-how during these very specific and difficult situation, with collaboration with a number of different local sport clubs and management experts from the renowned educational institutions. It is important to find the tools and best practice for making the right steps and find an opportunity during the RESTART of sport clubs that happens right now.

The Report of the Activities of Good Practice is one of the activities of Erasmus+ SSCP called **RESTART - In the midst of every crisis, lies a great opportunity**, conducted from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2022.

***The goal of this Report is to show how local sport clubs across the EU coped with the crisis in these unprecedented years - 2020., 2021. and 2022.***

Each partner collected data of good practices from their sport clubs, and described in which way they managed to carry out with sustainability in these years, which can help other sport clubs in managing and overcoming this crisis, and possibly some next ones.

The criteria for selecting best practices were: innovation, inclusion, interculturality, and the possibility of transfer (to other participants, into other contexts).

Creating this Report of good practices was done by collecting data from each partner, selecting and describing best practices. Good practice in sport management refers to the way of work, type or form of work that represents a benefit for the sport clubs and improved their work through these difficult times.

Sport is an important economic sector in the EU, with a share in the national economies, which is comparable to agriculture, forestry and fisheries combined. The sport industry's economic and social strengths, as a tool to tackle the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, should not be underestimated.

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Research results 1 indicated that sport-related GDP was 279.7 billion euro. This equals 2.12% of total GDP in the EU. Every 47th euro is generated by the sport sector. Sport is employment intensive, meaning that it generates more employment than its share in GDP.

Sport-related employment in the EU was 5.67 million persons. That equals 2.72% of total EU employment. Every 37th employee works in the sport sector. Sport uses more intermediate goods than an average sector, and thus generates important revenues in other industries. Therefore, governments should have a special interest in protecting jobs in sport as an industry with a strong economic impact in terms of employment and its share of GDP. The associated social benefits of sport will contribute to the rebuilding of European societies during and after the crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak has affected the EU and its Member States in a sudden and dramatic manner with an unprecedented impact on the health and daily life of European citizens. The sport sector, including those who have dedicated their lives and often businesses to promoting health through physical activity, is profoundly worried about the wellbeing of people affected by the pandemic outbreak.

The sport sector is eager to make its contribution to the revival of what was once considered a normal way of life. Sport can help individuals and societies to soften the negative effects of the crisis on their lives through mechanisms that can contribute to people's health, socialisation, education and a general sense of wellbeing.

## Croatia

<sup>1</sup>Sport has been an extremely important segment of social life in Croatia for decades, but a segment that is very rarely strategically and comprehensively considered. Sport inspires individuals, influences community creation and touches the entire nation (we feel collective pride in the achievements of our individual athletes and teams), has been and remains the best media of promotion, which continuously ensures the recognition of the whole country.

Pursuant to Article 1, paragraph 2 of the Sports Act (Official Gazette 71/06, 124/10, 124/11, 86/12, 94/13, 85/15 and 19 / 16. –correction) sports activities are activities of **special interest to the Republic of Croatia**.

During COVID-19 crisis the Ministry of sport and tourism has helped sport clubs in a way of financial support up to 4.000 HRK per employed trainer. Unfortunately, many sport trainers aren't employed full time in their sport clubs. For months march and april of 2020. only 500 sport clubs with an average of 2 sport trainers per club have applied for financial support for that reason. Statistics show that in 2016. Croatia had 5100 registered trainers.

That is one more reason why the sports sector in Croatia is especially damaged. Through 2020. DSR SUPERKID also had to hand over the dismissal to one trainer due to reduced workload.

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<sup>1</sup> Republic of Croatia, Central State Office for Sport. *National Sports Program 2019-2026*

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In the Table below we can see how many sport clubs are registered in Croatia.

*Table 1. Number of sport clubs and sports persons in 2017*

		Nº of clubs	Nº of sportspersons	Nº of top athletes
Croatian Olympic Committee	<i>Olympic</i>	4.131	249.694	2.601
	<i>Non-Olympic</i>	2.840	36.038	443
Croatian Paralympic Committee		152	1.305	98
Croatian Sports Association of the Deaf		62	296	43

*Table 2. Number of school sports associations, student sports associations and the number of included pupils and students in 2017*

	Nº of federations	Nº of students
Croatian School Sports Federation	1.299	120.000
Croatian Academic Sports Federation	242	4.665

Minimum share of coaches, 11.1% is employed under an employment contract of indefinite duration. On the other hand, most coaches, 72.6% of them, are not professional coaches, but are hired as part-time employees or are volunteers in sports. This means that a very small number of coaches can realistically achieve employment and materially ensure their existence in the coaching profession. Persons who have acquired higher education in the field of kinesiology, ie. the coaching profession, faced with the above fact, will prefer to seek material support for their existence and employment in other areas where they can be employed in accordance with the acquired education.

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Observing the data on the allocation of state budget funds for financing public needs in sports defined by Article 75 of the Sports Act, for the period from 2012 to 2017, the average investment in sports is about **0.14% of the state budget**, which is significantly lower than the share of comparable European countries. For example, Hungary and Slovenia are at the level of 0.60%, Denmark 0.56%, while the largest share in the observed period was Switzerland 3.47%. Guided by the shortcomings, but also by the opportunities of Croatian sport established in the Analysis of the situation, as well as the SWOT matrix, general development goals in the period 2019-2026 are as follows:

- 1. Provide preconditions for the development of sports;**
- 2. Improve health-enhanced physical activity and increase the promotional values of sports;**
- 3. Improve care for athletes;**
- 4. Establish a systematic and rational approach to the management of sustainable sports infrastructure;**
- 5. Improve the care of professional staff in sports;**
- 6. Improve the management system in sport.**

In order to minimize all the shortcomings related to the sports management system, three specific objectives have been defined:

- *more clearly define the roles and tasks of individual stakeholders in the sports system;*
- *harmonize and link public registers in sport;*
- *strengthen the management and administrative capacity of stakeholders in the sports system.*

For the development of sports in the Republic of Croatia, it is necessary to create, among other things, organizational and administrative preconditions and remove barriers.

The foundations for a rational and quality sports management system are certainly the registers and records (prescribed by law), which will become the base of the National Information System in Sports. It is necessary to carry out activities that will regulate the work of sports associations and harmonize them with sports activities from the Sports Act, then regulate the registration of sports associations in the Register of Associations and carry out a number of activities that require harmonization, all with the aim of creating a National Information System in Sports.

In addition to improving administrative measures, as well as reducing administrative barriers, it is necessary to educate stakeholders in the sports system by implementing a series of educational programs aimed at legislative-legal and financial-accounting affairs in sports. Furthermore, it is necessary to educate stakeholders in the sports system with the aim of better and more efficient maintenance of sports facilities, their management and maximum engagement. Also, encouragement in develop of strategic documentation and use o EU funds and their application (education and assistance in preparing applications of potential stakeholders in the implementation itself). Following modern marketing trends, special attention should be paid to education in order to promote sports as a socially desirable lifestyle.

**SWOT analysis of the sport system in Croatia**  
*(Source: Croatia National sport program 2019.)*

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The tradition of developing numerous sports</li> <li>• Continuous achievement of top sports results</li> <li>• Top athletes as promoters of the Republic of Croatia</li> <li>• A system of competition for all ages in a large number of sports in the education system</li> <li>• Financing of umbrella sports associations through the state budget of the Republic of Croatia</li> <li>• Basic financing of a large number of sports through the state budget of the Republic of Croatia</li> <li>• Financing a large number of associations through the budgets of local and regional self-government units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficiently clearly defined roles and tasks of individual stakeholders in the sports system</li> <li>• Lack of National Information System in Sports with associated registers and network of sports facilities</li> <li>• Lack of legal obligation and standardized form of planning, monitoring and reporting of public needs in sports</li> <li>• The trend of increasing administration in the sports system</li> <li>• Underdeveloped culture of volunteering</li> <li>• Non-enforceability of certain provisions of the existing Law on Sports</li> <li>• Insufficient involvement of women at all levels</li> <li>• Lack of categorization and funding of sports based on clear and quantified criteria</li> <li>• Insufficiently defined purpose of public needs in sports</li> <li>• Insufficient control over the use of budget funds for financing sports and inconsistency of the financing system</li> <li>• Lack of coordination of allocations for sports between different</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A shift in the construction of school sports halls in the past period</li> <li>• The trend of increasing the education of professional staff in the field of health-oriented physical exercise</li> <li>• Athlete categorization system and state-level scholarships</li> <li>• System of state awards and permanent cash benefits</li> <li>• Established independent state administration body responsible for the care of sports and the development of the sports system in the Republic of Croatia - Central State Office for Sports</li> <li>• Quality coaching staff for top sports</li> <li>• Scientific research and professional work in the field of sports</li> </ul>	<p>departments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uneven allocation of funds by local and regional self-government units</li> <li>• Insufficient incentive tax incentives for the economy to invest in sports and the existence of various parafiscal levies that discourage investment in sports</li> <li>• Lack of legal possibility to perform sports activities through crafts</li> <li>• Insufficient and / or uneven construction of sports infrastructure</li> <li>• Uneven equipment of school sports halls and other sports halls</li> <li>• Insufficient adaptation of facilities for people with disabilities</li> <li>• Inconsistency of the education and sports system</li> <li>• Insufficient care for dual career athletes</li> <li>• Insufficiently effective health care system for athletes</li> <li>• Undefined employment status of professional athletes and coaches</li> <li>• The disparity between existing educational programs and the actual staffing needs in sport</li> <li>• Insufficient number of hours of physical education and health in the education system</li> <li>• Lack of investment in utilitarian activities</li> <li>• Insufficient promotion of health-oriented physical exercise</li> <li>• Insufficient financial investments in health-oriented physical exercise</li> <li>• Insufficient number of planning documents at the local level</li> <li>• Selection system in sports as a limiting factor for keeping more children in sports</li> <li>• Insufficiently developed absorption capacities (human</li> </ul>
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	<p>resources, projects) to attract funds from EU funds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient awareness of the problem of violence in sports</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financing of sports through EU funds</li> <li>• Attracting potential investors in sports with tax breaks</li> <li>• Allocation of financial resources of public companies and other departments for sports</li> <li>• Better use of school sports infrastructure for extracurricular sports activities</li> <li>• Professional training system</li> <li>• System of teaching physical education and health and extracurricular school sports activities</li> <li>• Positive impact of health-oriented physical exercise on health</li> <li>• Connecting tourist and sports facilities</li> <li>• Recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) on the importance of sports and physical activity</li> <li>• Favorable geostrategic location and climatic conditions for year-round outdoor sports activities</li> <li>• Marketing utilization of rich sports heritage and athletes who continuously achieve top sports results</li> <li>• Informatization of sports systems</li> <li>• Cooperation with the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequacy of the legislative framework (sports, tax, labor, school, economic, etc.) for the needs of sports development</li> <li>• Poor economic situation</li> <li>• Non-recognition of sport as an important social phenomenon and its economic, social, educational and health role</li> <li>• Insufficient awareness of the importance of playing sports and maintaining health</li> <li>• Stakeholder resistance to the reform of the sports and exercise system</li> <li>• Disregard for the competencies and opinions of experts in the field of sports</li> <li>• Poor demographic trends</li> </ul>

Considering mentioned before, sport in Croatia is in an unenviable position. No matter what, we have plenty of sport clubs with sustainable financial construction and great sport results. Above we will mention some of good practices from project consortium organizations.

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## **COLLECTION OF GOOD PRACTICE IN 2020.**

### **DSR SUPERKID**

The SUPERKID™ sports school was established so the youngest ones would have the opportunity to take the first sports steps as early as possible and in the best possible way with trainers specialized in working with children. We are guided by the idea that children from an early age need a quality stimulus in order to primarily love sports and encourage cognitive growth and development through motor development. The goal of our programs is not to create top athletes, but to introduce children to the world of sports and to get acquainted with many different movement structures.

In addition to mastering all the contents through play and fun, the safety of children and the quality of training are in the first place. For these reasons, our training is done in small groups in order to make the program as individual as possible for each child.

Sport programs are verified by the Ministry of Science and Education and the Agency for Education.

This crisis had a great impact on the financing of the organization. Revenues suddenly fell down for 80% and we needed to act fast.

We chose 3 good practices which are shown as good moves in 2020:

- 1. Applying of E+ project - RESTART**
- 2. Family Day**
- 3. Applying for projects from European Social fund**

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## Applying of E+ project - RESTART



# Erasmus+

## Enriching lives, opening minds.

In march 2020. SUPERKID was considering the option of applying on E+ proposal, but after lockdown in March, we definitely decided to apply on proposal. Which project to apply? Regarding the new situation, we decided to gather a project consortium about RESTART.

We will gather experience, new knowledge, strengthen international networks between project partners and create project handbook with good practices in sport management in these critical times. This has shown as a great move - SUPERKID had a chance to increase finances of the organization, trainers had the opportunity to stay on their jobs and managers and staff will learn a lot about sport management.

During the project they will carry out five mobility visits, develop a book of good practices and promote the results during the European Week of Sport.

For each, all together will identify good practices but also problems, and draft possible solutions to help them overcome the crisis. Project team will exchange practical skills and knowledge in the terms of managing the sport club during crisis but also about different kind of sport programmes for children.

In this way, Erasmus programme is a great opportunity for all sport clubs to enhance their capacities and work transnational. Also, in this period of time, we applied to be partners on Erasmus+ projects, and from this year, SUPERKID will be partners on one project for the first time.

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## Family Day



In autumn of 2020., when we saw that we wouldn't start with our regular programs, we decided to start something new for our members - Family Day. What is Family Day?

It is a one day excursion to some of the locations around Zagreb like: Jarun lake, Sljeme mountain, Maksimir forest etc. Plan is that children with their parents spend some quality time together and learn something new. During Family Day trainers will prepare some tasks which children with parents have to solve.

All activities are conducted outside which have multiple benefits on their health.

We plan to continue with that program every year and we will try to find one more way of financial support except parents, so we can bring closer this Healthy-enhanced physical activity to more parents and promote recreational activities, which is one of key missions of our organization.

### Applying for projects from European Social fund

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Projekt je sufinancirala Europska unija sredstvima Europskog socijalnog fonda.

Through 2020. we have learned some new ways of financing sport organizations. One of them is European Social fund. Last year SUPERKID has applied on one proposal, and in 2021. on one more. Project which we applied for in 2020. is named Promotion of health and disease prevention, and through this project we plan to organize workshops, trainings and seminars to promote HEPA as a one effective way of disease prevention. As we learned, ESF( European social fund) can be a great way to start some new activities and increase the capacities of organizations.

For this project we hired outside consultants to help us in preparing project documentation, but through this crisis we have learned to prepare project applications ourself so we definitely plan to continue with proposals by ESF. For this project we are still waiting for results but we hope for a positive reply.

## SD OLYMPIC

Sportsko društvo Olympic (SD OLYMPIC) is a non-profit local sport club from Zagreb which is primarily specialized in the implementation of sports programs for preschool and (early) school age children. Through cooperation with kindergartens in the City of Zagreb, SD OLYMPIC offers programs for the universal school of sports, baby gym, martial arts, tennis and sports and rhythmic gymnastics throughout the whole pedagogical year.

The programs have been verified and approved by the Croatian Ministry of Science and Education, the Croatian Education and Teacher Training Agency and the City of Zagreb Sports Office. In addition to the regular program, which is held throughout the whole year, SD OLYMPIC carries out seasonal sports such as skating, rollerblading and swimming school where they have experience working with children and professional athletes for over 20 years.

SD OLYMPIC expert team is made up of kinesiology professors, professional sports coaches

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and dance educators. They also have a child psychologist and speech therapist in their team. Main aim of the club is to involve as many children as possible in sport activities in kindergartens where they will adopt first sport steps in a fun way through play and fun, so they implement a healthy way of life from early childhood.

SD OLYMPIC has around 300 members every year, age 2-6 years old. Till this moment, over 4,000 children have been involved in sport programs organized by the club. Club has 15 trainers connected with the club in some form of collaboration (full-time, part-time, service contract, etc.)

We believe that while providing our services we build relationships/partnerships with both children and their immediate environment (parents, educational institutions, neighbourhoods where our activities take place). As a non-profit local sport club primarily specialized in the implementation of sport programmes for preschool and (early) school age children, Covid-19 pandemic, particularly the lockdown and the new precaution measurements that ensued impacted us, and through us the local community. During the lockdown, since we were looking forward to getting back to "normal" we made plans ahead on how to proceed considering the very variable year ahead of us.

We researched new technologies in order to help us in adapting our programme offers and updating both our equipment and skills. As a sports club primarily specialized in the implementation of sports programmes for children of preschool age we offer a variety of programmes that can be divided into two basic groups: seasonal and all year round.

While in our all year round programmes we cover age groups 2 to 7 years of age, our seasonal programmes are primarily focused from age of 4 with the exception of swimming which accepts children as young as 3 years of age. Throughout the school year, on occasions pre Covid-19, it has been brought to our attention that there is interest from our clients and partners (early childhood educational institutions) to include younger children to seasonal activities such as ice-skating, inline skating (rollerblading) and tennis.

The interest was derived not from the need to create professional athletes but to enable younger children early immersion in order to gain experiences and build positive impressions. The immersion would also enable and promote inclusion, socialisation, interpersonal skills while cooperating and teaming up with older children, developing positive self image, not forgetting trying out specific gross and fine motor movements specific to the field of action.

Since, due to lockdown, we were unable to perform our usual activities we decided to explore deeper into the possibilities to provide those kinds of changes. First we explored what our

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options were in discovering reliable sources. Due to general lockdown we were able to focus primarily on online sources and as the measures relaxed we were able to proceed with cooperation with both individuals and institutions.

We focused on researching what kind of changes and/or novelties have been introduced in both teaching/training methods as well as equipment and accessories development. We also explored what kind of preparatory activities we would need to provide our staff with in the form of training, which upgrades and/or adjustments would be needed in regards to equipment for us to run and offer such activities. Our main guideline and aim was to discover that it was possible to provide the services on the topics so they would enable younger children to participate.

As a result of time and effort invested, we were able to offer additional activities once the precaution measures have been loosened. We tried our best to maintain contacts with the early childhood educational institutions promoting healthier habits as well as nurturing the connections and relationships we built so far with children.

Although in our line of work we primarily operate through means of direct interaction, the lockdown prevented it thus presenting itself as an obstacle of major magnitude, not just an inconvenience. While it might stand to reason, since many would say it is what it is, there's nothing we can do, we thought otherwise.

Physical activity and with its health are closely related to emotional and social development as well as mental health of children. Since the majority of city children were limited to their apartments we felt the need to help them, as well as their parents who had to juggle work from home, children and homeschooling. An opportunity arose when some of our partnering early educational institutions decided to use some forms of interactive approach in working with children.

Although Zoom and other platforms weren't exactly our usual or ideal tools of work, on occasion we joined some of the classes teachers held. When possible, at least once a week, we held some stretch-ups, simple exercises that didn't require a lot of help or assistance from adults, games with movement sound and associations. On occasions we simply provided a space for children to communicate and interact, showing off their own skills and ideas. What we discovered to be the best combination of activities was having a combination of a class led by trainers and having children take turns showing and leading exercises for others to repeat.

One of the greatest challenges was breaking the stereotype that exercises and fun can be had only in the gym. But one of the greatest rewards, although not financial, was maintaining

connections with children and their positive approach to physical activity. As a, somewhat delayed result, becoming active online with even a reduced specter of activities, reflected itself on a number of children joining our class once we were able to offer our services in early educational institutions.

One of the additional things we realized was that we need a broader picture, fresh eyes and perspective on what the future will hold, not just for us but all in this line of work.

As we followed some of our partnering educational institutions through their journey with Erasmus+ we had a first hand opportunity to see how it impacts the institutions themselves and individuals working in them. With extra time on our hands and unpredictable outcomes for the future of our work we realised that, on our own, our chances of understanding, perceiving and reaching the point of change might be impaired and even challenged by the remnants of the financial and business crisis caused by Covid-19. Hence, we started exploring which are our options, what we could do and how to about it. We soon realised we were not alone in this.

There are others like us who found themselves in similar, some better and some even more dire situations than us. It was also brought to our attention that we were not the only ones thinking EU co-funded programmes might hold the key to our questions.

In our research we came upon SUPERKID™ sports school's idea about forming a consortium for project "Restart" which was to focus on gathering experiences, new knowledge, strengthening international networks and creating project handbooks with good practices in sport management in these critical times. Since we cooperated with SuperKid sports school on some of our seasonal programme activities we decided to join them in the consortium thus beginning first, of what we hope many more, Erasmus activities.

As the "Novo Normalno" ("New Normal") ensued post lockdown with, now well known, guidelines and restrictions regarding distancing and prevention of spreading Covid-19 we began implementing our plan and putting it in motion. First, we relocated our programme of "Little Sport School" levels 1 and 2 outdoors.



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Once the lockdown ended and the majority of early childhood educational institutions returned to their almost usual way of working while abiding the guidelines and regulations to prevent spreading Covid-19 we decided to see where exactly we are at. What are our options, if there are any, to return our coaches back to active work and to reunite children with their favourite activities.

Having all requirements in mind we decided to try with our “Little Sports School” programme and hold it outdoors as opposed to it being held in gyms like prior to Covid-19. At every early educational institution that had enough outdoor space we started/continued holding our “Little Sports School” programmes. While we encountered challenges weather wise, not all outdoor spaces had covered areas to use during rain, feedback from children, educational institutions and parents has been very positive. Hence, we decided to continue holding our “Little Sports School” programmes out in the open air whenever weather permits it.



Secondly, we updated our policy on the age limit for one of the seasonal activities we offer thus expanding and enriching our offered seasonal programmes.

Since we spent quite a bit of time during lockdown researching what kind of changes and/or novelties have been introduced in both teaching/training methods as well as equipment and accessories development, once we were able to start working actively and offering our programmes, we started implementing what we discovered.

One of the discoveries we made was a change in inline skating equipment for children. There were now three wheel inline skates in which, middle and last wheel could be switched parallel to each other on the last axel thus providing added stability for children. It is referred in stores as a "balance kit", and achieved with a longer screw at the back of the skate that's used to align the wheels parallel like a tricycle. With this equipment we offered Inline skating (rollerblading) for children aged 3 and up, unlike the age of 4 years like before.

Even though there were opposing opinions between trainers, what with the equipment being called “cheating” for learning inline skating it proved itself to be quite useful. Not only did it help the trainers, but also with children finding themselves easier to stay in balance and helping them bridge the gap between very young beginners and those with a bit more motorical skill or some previous experience with inline skating. An added bonus on how the

upgrade in the equipment proved to be useful for all participants was in it enabling children to be more independent, supporting their positive attitude and will to participate thus making work for coaches easier.

In addition, the feedback from children, partnering early educational institutions that agreed to try the programme and parents has been positive towards the change in the offered seasonal sports programme activity of inline skating.

Third, we made new arrangements when outsourcing due to specific requirements of seasonal sport activities. Since due to specific requirements of certain sport activities such as ice skating, swimming, skiing we needed to outsource either specialised trainers and/or training facilities we were now also faced with rather strict Covid-19 measures that restricted contact with children in early childhood education institutions. For those reasons we had to make new arrangements in transportation and with training facilities as such. In this period we cooperated with a swimming pool facility, ice rinks and skiing facilities.

Our primary objective and with that our action was to: enable smaller groups for each early education institution that wouldn't mix with other groups during a fixed appointment of one week duration; and to adapt our transportation services to those requirements. We also relocated, when able, all indoor held activities out in the open. An example was ice skating where it proved to be more prudent to go for smaller open ice rinks since they enabled previously mentioned requirements to be met.

Another activity we were able to organise under such terms was "Ski School" in cooperation with SuperKid; and swimming in cooperation with "Aquaeduca" that operates a smaller scale facility specialized for working with smaller groups. If we hadn't done such changes we wouldn't have been able to hold any of our programme activities until this September 2021 when the Covid-19 restrictions have been softened toward "outside" associates of early childhood education institutions, allowing them to continue in direct contact with children.

Although the transportation requirements were the trickiest to meet, since not even groups or classes from same early childhood education institution were not allowed to mix with each other, we had to provide more than one week of the programme activity per early childhood educational institution and with it transportation, it proved itself to be useful both for working environment, it was easier to provide more quality service to smaller group; and for our business in general because our final users, in this instance parents, recognised us as providers of service and are gladly continuing our cooperation in this new school year 21/22.

Forthly, although, when cooperating with kindergartens, we're usually focused on the school year activities that would cease with the end of June but we extended our cooperation throughout July.

In Particular, we joined their summer camp/school scheme offering "Little Sports School" levels 1 and 2. We chose July because the majority of children were still present and regularly attending their early childhood educational programmes while in August the majority was announced to be absent due to family summer vacation plans.



Our activity plan within "Little Sports School" has not changed other than to adapt to the number and skill of participants - in addition to children who participated in the all year programme there were also children who joined only for the summer as a part or summer working schedule of the institutions or simply an extended and open for public "Summer School/Camp" programme of the institution.

Like before, we held our activities out in the open, making the most of the great weather. One of the most accepted, by children, adaptation to summer were the water games and sport we decided to implement (e.g. dodgeball with water balloons and similar).

Since the extension of our programme overlapped with the Olympic games we decided to join in, in celebrating the Olympic games within the early childhood educational institutions that celebrated it and/or were willing to organise some activities to mark the event. We organized mini olympics that consisted of individual and group sports activities for children. Since we coordinated our activities with Olympic Games exploration organised by the institutions who marked the event of the Olympic games, we chose sports activities that promoted our standardised message of sports being for everyone, strengthening self image, boosting confidence in one's skills as well as nurturing team spirit and values.



We also coordinated our activities with the exploration agenda of the early education institution (e.g. when they were exploring athletics and relay races, we organised follow up

activities in that area; when they were exploring the olympic flag and the meaning of circles we also organised ring toss game).

As a conclusion we can only share what we re-learned as a business in this Corona crisis. It was a not so gentle reminder that the client is everything. Sometimes a small amount of good will, will go a long way in building relationships that will last at least throughout a child's education - a period where we can be partners in nurturing a healthy individual in both body and mind.

After the initial feedback from all the stakeholders significant to our line of daily operation and work, to the changes and ideas we implemented we plan on continuing working in this direction. We also plan on further exploring what Erasmus+ programmes can bring us as well as continue developing and enriching our day to day practice.

## **DRUŠTVO PARTIZAN VIČ**

Partizan Vič Sports Club is an organisation with more than 110-year-long tradition. The main goal of club's activity is to socialize and to raise awareness about healthy lifestyle through realisation of sports recreation programmes. We run various professionally guided sports and recreational programmes for all age categories. The youngest members are less than 2 years old, the oldest have more than 90 years. Programmes are carried out mostly in three indoor sports halls.

The club is mainly financed through membership and training fees, with some donations and to a lesser extent with local community sports funds.

We have two training periods that run from mid-September to the end of January and from February to mid-June. We do not conduct instructed exercises in summer months as most of the members are on vacation and do not show any interest for participation in this period.

Enrolments for the spring semester were carried out in February 2020. In the middle of the enrolment period, the events in neighbouring Italy as reported by the media resulted in a downfall in our enrolment numbers. In order to curb the spread of COVID-19 and following the government declared measures, the classes were stopped on March 13 and the halls were closed for the first time. In the year 2020, the club was out of operation for almost half of the training period, which caused a large decrease in revenue.

The government offered financial support to fulltime employees and self-employed persons, whereas the fixed costs for running the facility were not subsidized. Regular work in sports halls as practiced in the past was no longer possible. Changes were needed to maintain the

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membership numbers in difficult times and to mitigate the damage to the organisation.

In order to ensure a continuous contact with the members and to reduce the financial damage, we have adapted our activities and continued with the following programmes:

- ❖ ***Distance challenges for children***
- ❖ ***Exercising in »bubbles« for families, households and individuals***
- ❖ ***ERASMUS + project - RESTART***

## **DISTANCE CHALLENGES FOR CHILDREN**

First, we tried to introduced live trainings for children with the use of IT tools (ZOOM, MS Teams). As we were not satisfied with the response (clashing schedules, low attention of children, involvement of family members etc.), we began to motivate children by setting them various motor challenges, which in the end proved to be a more appropriate solution.



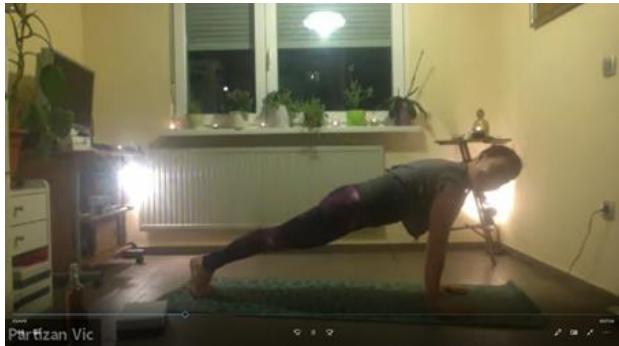
We set challenges at the beginning of each week and we tried to involve as many children as possible, thus giving everyone an opportunity to show the work done (to record kilometres travelled, to take a photo of nature when hiking, to build a snowman, to clear snow, to walk on their hands etc.).

Children and their parents sent the proof of realisation of challenges via email and Viber. The response was quite solid and helped with the improved general gloomy mood of the time. The most widely fulfilled task was a handstand challenge, which was also reported on our national TV channel.

## **EXERCISES IN "BUBBLES" FOR FAMILIES, HOUSEHOLDS AND INDIVIDUALS**

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We offered the adults an option to continue with trainings on-line (Zoom), namely for programmes Pilates, Aerobics and Zumba. Only Pilates lessons continued as members were convinced that the situation would be soon back to normal. As a result, we stopped all on-line exercising apart from Pilates, which was carried out with a smaller number of participants.

Given that all three sports halls were empty and the government measures allowed individual recreation or recreation in “bubbles” (for members from same families / household), we prepared the training schedules and offered them space for rent. Practice was not led by a coach due to the above mentioned government measures. Schedules were designed with half-hour breaks in between the two groups, so that they did not meet and allowing sufficient time to ventilate the room and disinfect the equipment. The halls were used mainly by families with younger children.

#### **ERASMUS + PROJECT - RESTART**

From the very beginning of declared epidemic situation, we also started talks with the SUPERKID sports club about preparing a joint project for the ERASMUS + tender. We were all in similar trouble and the title of the topic was ideal in order to exchange ideas on coping with the situation.

#### **ASD OVERBUGLINE**



#### **CHALLENGE #OBL**

There was a moment of bewilderment during the first look down, and no one could know when the training would start again. The news did not leave room for optimism because the season would not start again at this point. Schools, work, and personal

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relationships began again through the web.

So, creating a network to keep alive the relationship between the children and the Sports Association. Together with the mini rugby educators, we tried to consolidate the value of belonging to our club. We wanted the children to stay in touch even if they did not attend the camp. All four rugby categories, including children from 4 to 13 years old and nine educators, were involved in this initiative.

During the forced closure, we activated four opportunities to keep in touch through different challenges. All the children participated very willingly, showing that they wanted to get together again. It was nice to see how, when in June we were finally able to reopen the sports field in Goricizza, they laughed and commented on the videos made months before.

The first video was about passing the rugby ball, even if you are not far away, with the help of technology, of course! This recreated an exercise usually done during training.

In the second video, the aim was to hit a plastic bottle from a distance of about 5 meters with a rugby ball. This challenge was to improve passing skills.

The third video was related to Mother's Day to underline the importance of family, one of the main values of this sport. Each child repeated his mother's name, what he liked most about her, and finally wished her a happy birthday.

It was a very nice and exciting moment to edit the videos. Some kids were a bit embarrassed, and others were just very excited. The message we wanted to pass on was that showing their feelings in front of their friends is not for everyone, nor is it obvious.

In the last one, we gave space to the athletes of our team, "OBL Special Rugby FVG", a group composed of athletes with intellectual disabilities belonging to the Association La Pannocchia of Codroipo. They also make up our Special Olympics team with whom we participated in two Special Olympics, Biella, and Salsomaggiore. It was also a moment of participation and connection with the group, the coach, and the club. In general, all the videos were a great success, given the interactions on social media (an average of 134) and the consensus generated. All the children accepted the challenge and got involved.

In conclusion, it was gratifying for us to see a team effort generate so many smiles.

We noticed how a simple virtual game could keep people together: a mix of rugby passion, shared thinking, and above all, the oval ball were the keys.

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Therefore, the videos were doubly successful: they launched a new way of experiencing sport, even when closed at home, and kept the relationship between the children and the team alive. They also generated a series of video calls between the boys themselves, without us, to keep in touch and cancel the distance.

Video links:

- *Ball*

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=269921084183653>

*Views of the 15-second video - 466 and 137 interactions*

- *Challenge launch*

<https://www.facebook.com/overbugline/videos/3259907037362066/>

*Challenge accepted*

<https://www.facebook.com/overbugline/videos/743768922819991>

- *Mum's message*

<https://www.facebook.com/overbugline/videos/547665912801949>

- *Special Olympics*

<https://www.facebook.com/overbugline/videos/2839627849447763>

## MEMBERSHIP CARD

In June 2020, the OverBugLine company gave its members a card, which discounts if shown in some local shops. The initiative stems from the desire to involve local businesses, given the difficult times. In this way, the parents of the members were allowed to know the local businesses and get a discount. Members immediately appreciated its simplicity of application.

In the beginning, only commercial companies were involved. To date, some 25 shops have joined the initiative. We also find service businesses, such as a travel agency, a poly medical centre, a massage and physiotherapy centre and a gardening service. One of the positive aspects of the initiative is that most of the participating traders were parents of our members, which attracted other traders in the area.

Given the great success, we have been contacted by "Codroipo c'è", an association of the territory which aims at making the centre of Codroipo alive. OBL has its operative seat in this town. Thanks to the newborn collaboration, some companies now have higher visibility and economic return. In particular, the shops outside the city centre, that aren't part of the commercial hub. This also has a positive effect on our sports club.

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### **How does it work?**

We have provided all the parents of our children and athletes with an easily identifiable membership card. We have given loyal traders a poster to hang in their shops to indicate their participation in the initiative. Each company has a different discount, chosen by them.

At the rugby field, home of the association, you receive a poster with all the related activities. Where are described clearly all the various types of discounts and benefits.

In conclusion, a difficult situation in the economic sphere has led us to think outside the box. Indeed, due to the social and economic crisis caused by the pandemic, many companies contributing to sports clubs for years were unable to renew their sponsorships. Thanks to the loyalty card's success, some have partly decided to sponsor the 2021/22 season.

Association president's words:

*"After the lockdown period from February until June 2020, our club experienced difficult economic times, so we had to find a simple and inexpensive way to increase our revenue. In our opinion, a great way to recover after the lockdown period is to do some "word-of-mouth advertising", thus introducing many of the local companies and implementing their sales. Each card is nominative and only reports the name of the member."*

Sample of Membership card:



Example of a sign displayed in shops

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## TWINNING

### **Rojo Amarillo y Negro with Overbugline Rugby**

The idea of twinning with the "Rojo Amarillo y negro" Foundation was born during the pandemic, at a time when we were all shut in our homes, and the only way to communicate with others was through electronic devices and the Internet. We believe that dialogue and confrontation are two moments of growth.

The essential aspect that drove us to create this twinning was the inclusive aspect, the idea that all children CAN play. It doesn't matter what you can afford, where you come from, the important thing is to give the boys and girls the chance to try a sport that keeps them from ending up on the streets.

Pancrazio Auteri, author and journalist, rugby enthusiast, through his facebook channel, during the lockdown, has created virtual lounges between the clubs of minirugby of the Italian peninsula under the name of MINI POP RUGBYJLA. Each week, there are guests, such as coaches or managers of sports clubs, that focus their attention mainly on the "propaganda sector" or rugby played by children aged 4 to 12 years of age.

Our sports director Riccardo Sironi was invited to participate in one of these episodes, along with two other guests. During the interview with Riccardo, Mr Edward Yanez, founder and president of the Rojo Amarillo y Negro Foundation based in Bogotà (Colombia), message us. Listening to Riccardo's words, he found many common points between his and our approach to work.

Between our company and Rojo Amarillo y Negro Foundation, there is a sharing of the fundamental principles of rugby, such as support, loyalty and respect. So a strong synergy

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was born right away. After that episode, there has been a special one with Riccardo Sironi, Susana Greggio (president of Overbugline) and Edwards Yanez. And from that meeting emerged the desire to organise exchanges, both virtual and in presence, to strengthen and learn different methods of doing rugby in its immense range of nuances.

The Rojo y Amarillo Foundation has been supported thanks to the generosity of local traders and entrepreneurs and substantially by state institutions.

In particular, they focus on recovering young people from the streets, allowing them to learn about clean sport and in some way making them better people. Their commitment to social work made us fall in love with their mission. In turn, they fell in love with our way of working with people with cognitive disabilities, a task that Overbugline has been carrying out for more than three years with non-profit associations in the Codroipo area.

Our collaboration/twinning is based on the mutual exchange of ideas and different ways to ensure that the less fortunate have a sporting path that guarantees a chance in life.

When the pandemic improves, and we can make intercontinental trips, we intend to visit our Colombian friends.

The aim is to learn their way of teaching rugby. We also expect to host them in Italy for a genuine exchange of knowledge and experience.

We believe that for a child, having the opportunity to dream, cross the ocean and discover a different culture is one of the most important signs of the will to start again.

It is also a powerful message, especially after spending much time at home because of the pandemic.

The video interview link:

<https://www.facebook.com/1564735615/videos/10217318639029035/>

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## **COLLECTION OF GOOD PRACTICES IN 2021.**

### **DSR SUPERKID**

#### **Implementation of educational workshops on ski school**

After hard 2020 we started with some of our programs, mostly outdoor activities. Most popular of them is ski school and it is currently about 40% of our income. Since indoor activities are basically closed, we decided to improve the quality of outdoor programs. One of the most recognized matters is educational workshops. Parents are very happy about them, kids love them and we had the opportunity to connect with some of the most established institutions in Croatia.

#### *What are educational workshops?*

Every day after lunch, we set aside half an hour for education about relevant subjects with our partners. Workshops were about Nature Park where ski school is conducted, rules of conduct in nature, Bonton in sport, vitamins and healthy nutrition, Healthy-enhanced physical activity ect.

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### Implementation of individual ski lessons during ski school

As we mentioned, we searched for opportunities to expand and continue to work in areas which are open, and as ski school was allowed we decided to expand the offer in ski school with individual lessons. In that way we could hire one more trainer and attract more members in that program. One trainer was engaged only for individual lessons and for the first year we were very pleased.

Members were satisfied because some of them could learn how to ski while their child is also in ski school, a win-win situation for them. :)

### ERASMUS+ PARTNERSHIP

During 2021, SuperKid was for the first time a partner in an Erasmus + project called Rugby for Children. It is a valuable experience for our entire organization and we have thus managed to expand the international network of stakeholders in sports, increase the experience of SuperKid members and provide another source of funding for full-time staff salaries, which was very important during unstable times.

Overall objective of the „Rugby for Children“ project is to strengthen the international network of local rugby clubs. The project consortium is made of four rugby clubs (RFC Dubrovnik – Croatia, RC Zagreb – Croatia, RC Ljubljana - Slovenia and RC Dragon Brno - Czech Republic) and a universal school of sport (DSR Superkid, Zagreb - Croatia) will exchange good practices through 5 mobility visits and assess their organisational capacities with SWOT analysis in order to improve international cooperation, raise capacities for work in an international environment and most importantly, to promote rugby for children.

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In the end, they will organise a rugby event for children from partner countries during the European Week of Sport in Dubrovnik (coastal side of Croatia) and provide children a unique international experience of playing rugby and experiencing Dubrovnik as a historical and touristic flagship destination.



## **DRUŠTVO PARTIZAN VIČ**

The COVID-19 pandemic and related prevention measures continued also into 2021. In the first three months of the year, group exercises were not allowed, and later under certain conditions only to some extent. As our sports association is mainly funded through membership and training fees, we had to adapt as much as possible. The number of adult members has in that year decreased by about 60%. Some have stopped attending as a result of stricter conditions for accessing exercises (PCT), and most because of safety, because exercising is carried out indoors. In the autumn period of 2021, we even increased the number of enrolled children, as the conditions for practice were not so strict; furthermore, the parents' interest for training of their children has obviously increased during the lockdown.

### **ZOOM PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS**

At the time of first lockdown in March 2020, adult training groups did not express any interest to continue with distance or online training. The general opinion was that the virus would disappear quickly and life would return to normal.

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During lockdown, social gatherings were banned in order to reduce the spread of the virus. Throughout this long period, we stayed in touch with members via email. People felt lonely and eventually found that they needed some activity in order to brighten their days. They were ready for a change, to get together and to exercise over a distance. We improvised a studio in the office and carried out some experimental sessions. The response was above expectations, not numerically the same as in some normal times, but still above expectations.

We expected to continue with only the Pilates group, due to a calmer way of exercising. Pupils also showed interest in aerobics and Zumba groups; some new members have joined the club. The hours were carried out live via online applications. At the end, members also chatted, joked and had fun. After each hour, we sent them recordings of the exercises.

### GROUP OUTDOOR EXERCISES FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN

In March 2021, measures against the spread of the virus began to gradually loosen and outdoor exercises were allowed first. We rearranged the surroundings of the club and prepared "outdoor gyms" for both adult and children's groups.

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### **DIVISION OF HALLS AND "RVT (recovered-vaccinated-tested)"**

In April 2021, we were able to move some of our workouts into gym halls. As the indoor exercises were still limited in number, we divided the large hall into two parts. Each part had its own entrance and wardrobe.

The groups were divided numerically so that the exercises were safer and in line with current measures. Nevertheless, we performed exercises mostly outside and moved into halls only in case of bad weather or due to the specifics of individual exercises, and even in smaller numbers.

At the time of enrollment in the fall season, adult members had to fulfill one of the RVT conditions in order to continue with training. We mostly enrolled members who had passed the RV and because we enroll for a six-month period, our instructors didn't waste too much time checking.

### **SD OLYMPIC**

As we continued with our project into the new school year 2021/2022 we found ourselves at a new beginning and with some choices to make. As we mentioned earlier in our examples of practice for the year 2020., apart from expanding our programmes and implementing changes in



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both our program and policy updates we started a closer cooperation with certain educational institutions.

The decisions we had to make were to follow through and expand the foundations of cooperation we already built during the lockdown and the "New Normal" that preceded all this and in the end was the reason for starting this consortium; or to turn the fresh leaf and restart our approach, redefining our activities.

After a great deal of thought we decided that the best decision was to combine the two. As firm advocates that sports and health of both children and adults is not an "either/or" situation but should present a lifestyle and a conscious choice based on educated decisions and implementation of good habits starting from the earliest age we turned our focus that way. Since we already had the groundwork and the base for the cooperation set up, as we mentioned before, we decided to see how far it could take us and what we could bring to each other through that cooperation.

- ***There's no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate equipment.***

Since the survey we held among both the staff and children/educational institutions revealed that taking our "Little Sports School" levels 1 and 2 outdoors was well liked and accepted we wanted to continue with the practice. Beginning of the new school year meant new challenges thrown our way. Mainly the challenges autumn and winter weather might bring but above all one very popular belief characteristic to our area. That is the stereotype of cold and bad weather necessitating the need that one should stay inside.

To be able to turn this idea into reality and somewhat turn our Balkan views to be more Scandinavian in nature we turned to educational institutions and their staff.

First we worked out the contingencies and protocols on how to act and proceed in case of really bad weather. Then we had to make those protocols and plans known to concerned parents. Next task was to establish simple rules on appropriate sportswear and accessories. A significant role in placating the parents and helping change their views on the whole approach was in the hands of the educational institutions staff who were in daily contact with the parents. They helped us in educating/in reminding them that physical activity generates body heat and to have some spare clothes ready to change after; as well as stressing the importance of wearing season appropriate clothing.

The rest was on our staff to create an atmosphere where weather and weather conditions are irrelevant and being together and having fun while exercising was significant. The exception to that approach was when it snowed – we enjoyed our snowball activities greatly; and it was

impossible to miss out on what we could do with ice.



As it turned out to be the weather itself only encouraged children to participate; and teachers noticed how children who were out in the programme of “Little Sports School” levels 1 and 2 were in general more resilient and had less respiratory issues in the sense of colds, runny noses and similar that are characteristic to that time of year.

This practice also had a very significant impact on our business. It helped strengthen our credibility and branded us as reliable partners for parents to trust their children with.

- ***Natural Movement Forms in Nature***

In this example we decided to start a miniature project in which we went back to the nature in every sense of the word and observed how it impacted the children. It is no secret that gross motor skills of children are underdeveloped, their balance is more often impaired not to mention their general attitude towards being outdoor is overshadowed by the learned behavior of screen time on the phone or tablet.

We wanted to see if the reality is as dire; and is it truly as hard as parents often comment to get the children outside and busy on their own. We focused on natural movement forms and we decided to take them out of the gyms and sports halls and put them back into nature. The objective was to follow up and see how children's motor skills and general attitude towards being in nature will develop and change throughout the school year. We also wanted to use this activity as a base-ground to see how we could expand our offered programmes outside the school year period (winter breaks and summer holidays) and to prepare a base of

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potential clients as well as start the talking necessary for the instant feedback in our little marketplace research.

In order to achieve this plan and put this activity into motion we first had to go through the portfolio of our partners and educational institutions we cooperate with. We wanted and needed to find a suitable partner who has experience and the ability to spend time in nature and not man constructed play areas.

Once we had our partner we started negotiations on selecting the group within the institution, based on their size as well as willingness of the teacher to participate in such project since they would present one of the key communication bridges between all participants and would carry out the significant aspect of the program and that is preparing the group and supporting the project directly with their own personal involvement – we found that crucial because of the special relationship they have with children in the group that contributed to the general atmosphere.



Our discoveries were quite revealing. Since we approached the educational institution in early September and began implementing the outdoor activity plan before the end of September

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we were able to get a very rounded and detailed feedback from teachers.

What we observed was that there is, as expected, a significant difference between youngest and older children; but also the level of gross motor skills from the beginning of the year to the end of it. While older children were better skilled to start with, compared to younger ones, that was not always the rule.

What was observed in addition to the improvement of children's motor skills was that the motor skill improvement was shadowed with general boost in children's self confidence; dearring; resourcefulness; team spirit and the sense of belonging to a group; willingness to try out new things and help each other; as well as imagination and ability to entertain themselves as opposed to depend on others to keep them busy.

- ***Old Games***

We always do our best to give the best service we can offer and that often entails refreshing our lesson plans and bringing new things to the table. From equipment to themes/sports we're covering in addition to general physical development and development of healthy habits.

In the year 2022 we decided to go back in time a bit for inspiration on how to offer more. Although we more than well understand the necessity for an early start and that majority of population is professional athletes oriented we realized that there are some games that do a lot of prep work in the area of child's physical development but they got neglected or labeled as "old" in the need to appear more professional and more up to date. For those reasons we decided to try and give them back their old shine by introducing them to our everyday work.

Maybe not as old, we first started introducing DodgeBall – a game that incorporates movement, sudden changes in movement, throwing and receiving the ball, avoiding moving objects as well as following the rules and strengthening team spirit.

Next, with the positive reactions to dodge ball, we decided to use some of the traditional games that are slowly being forgotten like: "*Care, care govedare koliko je sati?*", "*Crna Kraljica*" and "*Ledene Babe*".

While the first two are based on a precise numbered amount of movement appear to be less active, the effect was just as intense due to different types of movement that were involved and the need to control the movement based on the arranged stop and go sign. The third game is based on intensive movement: running, freezing and crawling, thus being classified as more active.

### "Emperor, Emperor what is the time?" ("Care, care govedare koliko je sati?")

**Number of participants** - unlimited

**Rules:** Among children, one is selected to be the emperor and he/she stand across the group.

The group, as one, asks: "Emperor, emperor. What is the time?".

The emperor replies with a number and a type of movement (e.g. Three opened umbrellas, four leaping frogs, one grumpy bear ...).

The members of the group, each for him/her self does the designated movement the number of time it was stated. after each movement the question is repeated and the answer is given. the game is finished when the first member of the group reaches the emperor thus taking his/her place.



### "The Darkness Queen" ("Crna Kraljica")

**Number of participants** - unlimited

**Rules:** Among participants, one is selected to be the black queen. He or she then stands separate from the group (greater the distance, the more fun you'll have). The queen faces away from the group and says "Black Queen 1, 2, 3.". While the phrase is being said, the group is allowed to move closer towards the queen (they choose which type of movement they will use. On "3" the queen turns towards the group and everyone needs to freeze. In case someone doesn't stop their progress on time they are returned to the beginning.

The first member of the group that reaches the queen wins and takes his or her place.



### "Ice Granny" ("Ledene Babe")

**Number of participants** - unlimited

**Rules:** Among the participants two are singled out from the rest. One is the Ice Granny who chases the other participants in order to freeze them; and the other one is immune to ice granny's power and has the ability to unfreeze the frozen ones. Once a participant is frozen he or she stands with their legs spread and arms stretched out like a star so the person who has the ability to unfreeze can spot them. The frozen participant is unfrozen only after the unfreezing participant has crawled through their legs.

Another variation of this game is to play it without the participant immune to the ice granny. In that case the game is played until only one person has remained unfrozen - that participant is the winner and may become the next ice granny.

**Note:** Higher chance of falling.



In addition to those games becoming very popular among children who now always want to play them, children often commented how their parents know and played those games too, thus giving our effort an added value by helping bridge the communication gap and by building stronger relationships with us as providers of our service and parents as clients but not the direct users.

## KARATE CLUB KAPTO

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As many other sport clubs in the March of 2020. We also had to close our doors for indoor training due to a Corona virus pandemic. We looked for different options how to keep our members engaged and provide a quality training for our top athletes during the quarantine time also keep our business alive and continuing to provide jobs for our trainers.

Soon we came up with "**Karate online school**". Where our trainers and top athletes made short videos of karate tehnic and posted it on our YouTube channel so our members would have materials to practice at home. Of course, all of the material was adapted consider in situations that our members need to practice at home. This idea showed to be really useful. Thus, we wanted to be more creative and tried to involve parents and the rest of the households so children would be even more motivated we came up with an idea of **Karate for the family**. Where we encourage parents to join their children in everyday exercise, and our members loved it.

Also, we felt that in these specific time the promotion of our sport, not just spatially our club, can make a great difference and benefit karate itself in the future. After the first relaxation of epidemiological measures started in summer 2020. We held an outdoor presentation of karate tehnic, as a part of EU project **ZGodionica**, to bring our sport and our club closer to the public.

This manifestation was part of the EU project subsidized from the European Social Fund. In April 2022., considering slightly downfall financially, due to two years of the pandemic, KK Kaptol brought new senior competitors Jakov Bunjevac in order to promote our club even more.

## COLLECTION OF GOOD PRACTICES IN 2022.

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## DSR SUPERKID

### Application of new Erasmus+ proposal and three partnerships

During 2022, SuperKid decided to become more actively involved in the Erasmus + program. So we have announced a new project - NextGen, which deals with digitalization in sports with partners from Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia, and we will be partners in as many as three projects. Although we have participated in Erasmus + projects before, this is a new experience for us due to the new E + program, which differs in many ways from the previous period. Over the next two years, SuperKid will gain valuable experience through cooperation with various organizations from Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Hungary, Turkey, Serbia, Poland, France and the Czech Republic.



### Starting children sport camps

In June 2022 we plan to organize the first SUPERKID kids sport camps. Why? During summer holidays children don't have school anymore and then parents don't know where with them while they're at work. That is the reason why children camps are so popular. They are organized from 8-16 every work day from monday till friday and during that time children have organized morning activities, lunch and afternoon activities.

We decided to start with camps because of more reasons. We have a large number of children who go through our programs, we can shorten the summer break and thus provide a salary for coaches during the summer months and "keep" parents to continue enrolling children in our programs.

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## **Hiring marketing experts**

In order to return to "normal" as soon as possible, we have decided to hire external marketing experts from this winter season, who will take care of the entire marketing plan for our organization during the winter season, when we have the most work and responsibilities. Through this move, we plan to stand out from the competition and secure an additional number of members in our programs, especially in skating and skiing. As the name of the project says, it is time for Restart, and despite all the difficulties, we must all try to recover as soon as possible.



## **DRUŠTVO PARTIZAN VIČ**

Given the situation and past experience with the implementation of indoor programs in virulent times, we focused our "forces" to outside workouts. We could have actually done the same earlier, but did not due to idleness. The club has three tennis courts that were managed

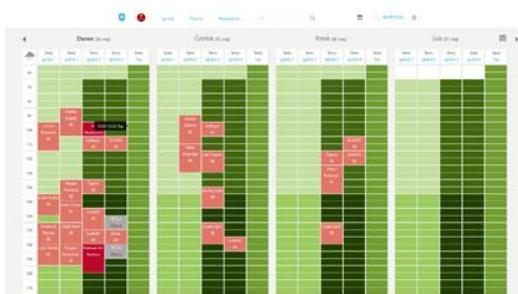
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by some members according to the past agreements. Due to the inactivity of these individuals, the decline in tennis membership has been huge in recent years.

The courts were in poor condition, with no youngsters, no system of reservations. Whenever we offered them help in the past, it was turned down and there was a fight. We left things as they are and waited for a more appropriate time, which finally came in 2021, when we finally managed to join forces through talks and make some changes for the upcoming 2022 season.

## MODERN METHOD OF TENNIS COURT RESERVATIONS AND PAYMENT METHODS



The previous court reservation system was very poor. The members signed themselves on a sheet of paper that could be only seen next to the tennis courts. Only at the location could people check if the courts were free.

This has also led to a decline in the number of players in recent years, especially the younger ones, who did not have time to sit and wait for the court to be vacated while working and having children.

That's why we hired and introduced an online booking system. Courts can now be booked via the online app. The schedule of court occupancy is published online and is updated in real time. Players do not waste time arriving at the location, checking-in and possibly waiting for a free court. You look online, book, come and play.

The application is used almost for all tennis courts in Ljubljana and thus we have become "even more visible" and already at the beginning of the season increased the number of members by a third and have at least doubled the number of out-of-club players. By increasing the number of these non-members, we should have provided an additional person to count on these players. Therefore, we have added the option of already leased packages in the application, where the player transfers a certain amount to the club, which is assigned to him in the application and is automatically deducted when booking. At the same time, we offered benefits to members who attend other exercises in the club and introduced family cards.



## REFLECTORS ON TENNIS COURTS

To extend the playing time, we have invested in new LED spotlights on two tennis courts. Extended playing time will come in handy in the autumn, when we previously had to close the courts in the afternoon due to bad lighting. As well as in the summer on hot days, when the evening cools down pleasantly.

## TENNIS COURSES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS



We have not run tennis courses for at least 20 years, which was a reason that there was no new or young tennis members in the club. As a result, we have decided to restart tennis courses for beginners. We were a little skeptical about the response, as there are at least three tennis clubs in the vicinity, which are known in this area for organizing courses. The desire was to fill at least one group, or maybe even two.

We have already filled two groups before the start, the third is filling up. At the same time, there was interest in organizing similar beginner courses for adults. And at this moment we are just coordinating the dates for the first group.

## SD OLYMPIC

Since we received an unexpected bonus from kindergarten staff who continued and incorporated our previously suggested traditional games more often in children's routine, if not even preparing the children in advance in some instances. We realized that it is an opportunity for us to strengthen those ties and at the same time gain some insights into the interests of our clients/final users of our services and thus turning their experiences more holistic in approach instead of separated by area of action.

- *Cooperating with kindergarten teachers in incorporating children's current*

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### ***interests in the topic of our work***

For those reasons we decided to reach out and find out more about what exactly is happening when children are not attending “Little Sports School” levels 1 and 2.

The first thing we discovered is that educational institutions often employ projects with specific themes through which they guide their work, exploration activities, games and provision of materials - both for exploration and working - for children. That, to us, seemed as a perfect opportunity to bridge the gap that always leaves us appearing as an outsider in the educational process while in fact physical health and fitness plays just as significant a role as socialization and literacy; it even supports it as the foundation of all development.

For those reasons we found ourselves incorporating new games and activities on the topics of: space, bugs, travel and others. In one instance children were participating in the topic “Getting to know me” where we added our input to their teachers in how far they can jump, how fast they can run as well as other metric activities so they could try them with children who are not attending “Little Sports School” levels 1 and 2 with us.

With one international educational institution who has their own callendar of international events we joined in on marking the events by trying out some games specific to the other new culture or simply using props to make the already familiar activity more special for that day.

We also found ourselves having to improve the communication among our own staff. Due to sometimes unexpected situations when a staff member would be absent and a substitute one sent in its place, due to differences in the area of research among the educational institutions, we discovered it is necessary to have a short information card prepared that would tell them what topic is being approached and which games were used. In the last mentioned, children also proved to be great helpers.

With this decision we only strengthen our ties within the institutions which we are providing with our services thus growing our reputation, expanding our opus of operation and most of all, building and expanding our client list through good quality and all encompassing service. There was also a lesson learned among the coaches. Children are not easy to trick. You can't just change the names in the old game and say it's a new one. Some other additional changes are needed too, like for instance in rules.

### **YOGA**

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We are never as fit and at the height of our abilities as when we're toddlers. As we grow and our responsibilities, ways of life and in general society norms, time and context get in the way we start losing those instinctual skills. They get replaced by sedentary needs of socialization which impacts a child's physical development and level of physical skillfulness. In this age of electrical gadgets and the need to be "on-line", always available and in front of the screen, physical development and well-being of not only children but adults too is under strain and in danger of rapid deterioration.

For those reasons we're always happy to use any chance we can get to promote healthy habits and lifestyle among the youngest members of our society. One of the reasons we focused on the youngest members is because they are the driving force of adults, the world will be left in their legacy and they are open to change. The idea to expand our programme by starting this pilot class came from a comment we heard from a girl (five years of age) during one of our "Little Sports School" class who commented how her mother does some of the exercises they are doing, while she's doing her yoga; and how they now do them together at home.

Since yoga is considered "serious" among children our first action was to think of ways to make it more fun and children friendly. We started out with using animal poses to adding animal sound to help children get a better sense of their breathing (e.g. In the cow pose while breathing out children would moo, in the snake pose on the exhale they would hiss, in the downward dog pose on the exhale they would bark...).

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As children's balance and general level of skill increased we started using yoga poses to tell stories or better say we told stories that had yoga poses in them thus incorporating other aspects of children's development. We also initiated a "funny places" yoga classes in order to help children understand their activity doesn't have to be limited to indoor spaces but can be taken and enjoyed outside too.

The feedback we received from teachers working with children who participated in the yoga "class" revealed that those children were in a better mood, had more focus and patience and had better attention in early reading and literacy activities. Children also enjoyed it and parents were happy.

- ***Starting our own (hand)book of practical games that encourage children to use natural movement***

Turning back on the events and activities we had in both year 2021. and in 2022 we realized that there were a lot of practical hands-on experiences and changes integrated in our work. A lot of new practices, a lot of examples of activities in the direct work with our final users, significant steps forward in the area of communication and cooperation were used and implemented.

What also came to our attention is that businesses of our kind, although employ a core of reliable staff, also have a part of what we call orbiting staff – staff that works for a season or for some other reason chooses to leave, leaving us with new personnel on hand. We realized that with the change of staff, these examples and ideas wouldn't remain accessible to new members of the staff unless something is done in that regard.

Knowing that no one's memory is infallible, people's lives change and the passage of time can be an enemy due to the speedy pace of our lives both professionally and privately, we decided to somehow leave a formal trace on all we achieved and did. We needed a trace, a place where what we did and achieved so far will be visible and remain accessible to us, our staff and anyone who might find it useful.

After great consideration on what is the best course of action for us, we opted for starting a book or we could dare say handbook on practical games that encourage the use, and strengthens the ability of individuals to use natural movement. With these two years offering us with a good starting ground and a general direction on how to obtain such examples, where to try them out and test them, we believe great things are still ahead of us.

We are also researching and exploring our further options within Erasmus+ both for this topic and as possibilities to join in on other projects that would be of interest to us and align with

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our core business and educational values.

In conclusion we can proudly say that children were more eager to participate in the programmes. The feedback from the parents has been positive, often emphasizing how children have built strong and healthy relationships with their coaches whom they often mention and like a lot, how they are “making” others in the household exercise with them and how they often show off their new skills.

The feedback from the teaching staff who work daily with children in the educational institutions have observed that the level of physical activity greatly affects the dynamics in the group; it helped with focus and attention in more taxing tasks and in general contributed to better mood and easier inclusion of some children with special needs.

Among the partners with whom we work together in providing the children with specialized seasonal programs e.g. Skiing, ice skating, swimming, rollerblading also observed how children are better coordinated, independent and generally skilled compared to their peers where the program of cooperation was not held. All of these facts amounted in a very significant way to our business. The number of children enrolling in our “Little Sports School” levels 1 and 2 has increased without members (children) dropping out/giving up – they continuously participated through the whole school year.

The reason behind was hiding in the “word of mouth” principle of sharing impressions and experiences both among children and parents. Teachers also had a key role by advising parents for their children to try out the activity. Wanting to know what brought the turn about we discovered that the relationship between SD Olympic and the educational institutions shifted to true partnership based on supporting each other instead of being perceived as outsiders who just “show up” and “mess” with the daily plan and routine.

## BENEFICIARIES

- DSR SUPERKID (CROATIA)
- Društvo Partizan Vič (SLOVENIA)
- SD Olympic (CROATIA)
- ASD Overbugline (ITALY)
- Karate klub Kaptol (CROATIA)



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# RESTART

*In the midst of every crisis, lies a great opportunity*

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Erasmus+ Sport Small Collaborative Partnerships



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