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”Integration through sports or just sports”

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Background of the project

Finnish Table Tennis Association and Estonian Table Tennis Association were working together in EU-Erasmus project called “ Integration of immigrants and gender equality in table tennis through comprehensive inclusion”. Finnish TTA was responsible of part “Integration of immigrants”. Table tennis club from Vantaa, TIP-70, has long tradition having immigrant players in club and they have also been working with different projects and groups involved with immigrants in sport. TIP-70 was working in co-operation and as partner in this project.

In the first part after some meetings and planning, the voice of immigrant youth was sought. This was done by meeting the young people in the table tennis hall in Hakunila, which is neighborhood in Vantaa. The second part of project was implemented by working on the obtained results with representatives of the school and the city of Vantaa in a webinar on December 1. The third part was a webinar held in the end of February with some professional speeches and our immigrant players together with actors from the Estonian Association.

Part one: Hobby of immigrant children

-Case investigation children's hobbies in Hakunila in Vantaa

The day was implemented together with the City of Vantaa, Lehtikuusi School and Table Tennis Club TIP-70. Lehtikuusi school is located in one of Vantaa's more multicultural districts, Hakunila. In Hakunila, more than 40% of the population speaks a foreign language as their mother tongue. Among pupils, this proportion is even higher. From the school's side, the assistant principal Tuija Jordan was involved in the project. The day was organized in such a way that four groups of students joined the event for about an hour. The classes were 5th and 6th graders, so the participants were 11-12 years old.

The event was divided into three sections:

- We learned about table tennis and played small competitions
- We discussed about hobbies together. The voices were largely the students, but the voices of the teachers and the club members were also heard. The discussion went over why we are involved in a hobby and what benefits it has for everyone.
- Each student answered a written survey



The questions and answers of the questionnaire filled out by each student

A total of 56 answers

Do you have a hobby now and if yes, what?

32 of the respondents, or 57%, stated that they have a hobby. Of these persons, 26 were involved in sports, i.e. 46% were sports enthusiasts. It was not clear from the answers how many people exercised in the club.

What is important when choosing a new hobby (scale 1-5, 1 not important and 5 very important)

A:Also friends there

Answer 1 / 2 pcs 4%

Answer 2 / 1 pc 2%



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Answer 3 /9 pcs 16%

Answer 4 /12 pcs 21%

Answer 5 / 21 pcs 37%

Can't answer 11 items 20%.

B. The hobby place is located nearby

Answer 1 / 0 pcs 0%

Answer 2 / 6 pcs 11%

Answer 3 /17 pcs 30%

Answer 4 / 5 pcs 9%

Answer 5 / 19 pcs 34%

Can't answer 9 pcs 16%

C. How much can a hobby cost at most per month? (open question the respondent could answer himself)

The answers are classified into four groups

Free 7 pcs 13%

Monthly fee less than 50e 27 pcs 48%

The monthly fee can be more than 50e 3 pcs 5%

Can't answer 19 34%

What things do you expect from your hobby? This was asked with an open question.

The two most important things came up here, which were friends and that the hobby would be fun. The third thing that came up was development and learning in the hobby. This development came up more often in answers where the hobby was sports.

To the question “What do you expect from the hobby?” we received the following answers, for example:

“develops and becomes a better player”

“learn something new and it would be nice”

“to develop and become the best”

“good new friends and good time”

“to spend time with friends”

“fitness increases”



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It was a bit worrying that the most common answer was "nothing". However, this probably says more about language skills than real expectations

We also asked what you thought of table tennis? What was the most fun?

Here are some answers:

"it was nice to win a point "

"playing with friends"

"the game where points were collected was nice"

"the funnest was when you succeeded"

"competing was fun"

There were also those who didn't like it:

"it wasn't fun, the ball went anywhere"

"I did not like"

Kysymyksiä harrastamisesta

Harrastatko jotain tällä hetkellä ja jos niin mitä?
taekwondo

Uuden harrastuksen valinnassa tärkeitä ovat:

a. myös kavereita siellä (asteikko 1-5) 5

b. harrastuspaikka on lähellä (asteikko 1-5) 3

c. kuinka paljon harrastus saa kuukaudessa maksimissaan maksaa? 20€

Mitä asioita odotat harrastukseltasi?
uusia asioita ja
että opin jotain

Mitä pidit pöytätenniksestä? Mikä oli hausointa?
että voidaan tehdä
kilpailuja

Questionnaire form



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Summary of responses

The conversation with the students was very lively. The problem was answering the written survey. Each question was also discussed beforehand. Despite this, it turned out that the key barrier to answering was language skills. This linguistic problem explains why there were so many blank answers.

According to the Finnish Olympic Committee, 90% of schoolchildren answer the question "do you have any hobbies" in the affirmative. In this light, the difference in hobbies between immigrant groups and the rest of the population is very significant. According to the survey, only 46% had sport as a hobby..

The importance of friends was clearly emphasized in both the targeted question and the open question.

Perhaps a little surprisingly, the respondents thought that hobby could pay, as long as the payments were less than 50e per month.

Ethnicity or the importance of language in the hobby group were not specifically asked. It was noteworthy that the matter did not come up in the discussions or in the students' answers. An explanatory factor may be that multiculturalism is a natural self-evident thing for children of this age in Hakunila, in which case it also does not come up.

Part two: Implementation of a Teams meeting and discussing about results received from survey

Participants

Mika Räsänen Finnish Table Tennis Association

Jarmo Siekkinen TIP-70

Luo Yumo TIP-70

Taneli Keinonen Finnish Table Tennis Association /TIP-70

Margit Tamm Estonia Table Tennis Association

Tuija Jordan school, assistant principal of Lehtikuusi school

Päivi Sillanpää City of Vantaa

Jaakko Tuominen City of Vantaa

Marina Robush Sporttia Sport for all association

Emmi Saarikoski Sport for all association



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The sports associations involved in the project and the TIP-70 club in the integration part participated in the webinar. Vantaa residents who do integration work were also present, listening and commenting on the results. Their role was also to give instructions on how, from their point of view, sports clubs could do successful work among immigrants.

The webinar was started with an overview of the project and its progress by Mika Räsänen (FTTA). The speech discussed how the project is divided into women's and girls' table tennis and the repatriation work of immigrants.

Jarmo Siekkinen (TIP-70) reviewed what measures the club has taken in this project and what different actions the club has taken over the years. The speech emphasized the successful cooperation between Sport for all and the association.

Taneli Keinonen (TIP-70/SPTL) went through the day of 21.11. The 5th and 6th graders of the immigrant-dominated school visited the sport in four groups. The event also discussed hobbies in general and the participants answered a survey.

The main withdrawals were:

- immigrant youth have fewer hobbies than the rest of the population
- the importance of friends in choosing a hobby is very important
- the hobby place should be located nearby (however, not as crucial as the importance of friends)
- the hobby can be paid for (monthly fee less than 50e)
- participants had great difficulty understanding written questions and producing written answers themselves.

There was a discussion about the results, where it was stated that the answers followed the observations of the different actors, even though the sample (56 students) was quite small. In addition, it was found that linguistic challenges bring their own problems to surveys like this. In the discussion, it was estimated that in regular hobby activities there would be even less than the 57% presented here.

Next, Luo Yumo shared his own experiences about how important social activities were to him in settling down. Now 25-year-old Luo Yumo said that he was 15 years old when he came to Finland. He said that winning and succeeding in table tennis helped him to believe that he can succeed in school as well, for example. The hobby therefore gave him self-confidence in other areas of life as well. Being involved in club activities was also more than just playing sports. It was easy to get to know other people in the club, and while getting to know each other, I also learned the language

and Finnish culture. In particular, he mentioned how, in addition to the guided exercises, participating in the shifts where people of all ages and abilities could play together in the club was fulfilling in this sense. Everyone welcomed him into the activity. The contribution of the leader of the club was crucial that he settled into the activity so well.



Luo Yumo was crowned as Finnish Champion 2020

In the discussion about Luo Yumo's experiences, it was brought up that clubs should have someone who gives special attention to immigrants. Another thing that came up was finding the right hobby. In this case, the person from China found a table tennis club, so it could be good to offer activities that are already familiar.

After these introductions and discussions, different parties told what actions they are taking, what kind of things should be taken into account in the work of the clubs' repatriation and concrete advice for the club field.

Tuija Jordan Lehtikuusi school, assistant principal

The school is a community of more than 900 students, most of whom do not speak Finnish as their mother tongue. In their school, two people work as sports friends (adult city workers) for young people. These people look for hobbies for young people together with them and guide them "holding hands" on how to get involved in the activities. The school also runs clubs organized by these sports friends. Among their activities, for example, Muslim girls have their own clubs according to their special wishes. There are six sports clubs operating in the entire area of Vantaa municipality.

Marina Robush and Emmi Saarikoski Sport for all association

They brought up the following issues:



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- Individual events are not necessarily enough to get immigrants involved, rather the familiarization periods should be longer
- Simply reaching children and young people is not necessarily enough, but it is worth being a target group should be whole family.
- It would be good if the directors also had actors of different gender, age and ethnic background.
- Clubs should cooperate with various non-governmental organizations.
- Sports for everyone became a small seasonal participation fee, which resulted in especially immigrants being left out of the activity.
- Registering for a hobby should be technically easy, on-the-spot workable

Jaakko Tuominen and Päivi Sillanpää Vantaa city's sports department

They brought up the following issues:

- Girls should be offered exercise where their wishes should be heard.
- the opportunity to practice on your own
- cooperation between clubs is an opportunity to make activities more efficient

Margit Tamm Estonia Table Tennis Association

There have been quite a few immigrants in Estonia so far. This situation has changed with the war in Ukraine. Ukrainian refugees have been offered the opportunity to participate in club activities for free.

Part three: Webinar

Finnish TTA organized as part of project webinar 23.2.2023 in Helsinki. Webinar was open for everyone. Webinar was held via Teams and link was shared in both associations website. Also personal invitations were shared to both table tennis communities.



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Invitation

Sport and integration webinar

23.2.2023

Finnish and Estonian Table Tennis Associations are working together in an EU-Erasmus project and one theme of project is the integration of immigrants through exercise.

As part of project, we are organizing a webinar, which is open to everyone.

Time: 23.2.2023 from 18:00 to 21:00

Teams-meeting

The webinar will be held in English.

Contents of webinar:

1. Presentation of the project

2. Experts speeches

Eva Rönkkö

A recent dissertation at the University of Jyväskylä, "Being Along but Excluded – an Ethnographic Study of Supervised Group Exercise with Foreign Born Women."

Eva Rönkkö works at Kisakeskus sports institution.

Jasmiina Gharieb

Executive Director of Sporttia Kaikille - association.

3. Speeches by immigrant athletes

4. Open discussion



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In beginning of webinar Executive Director of Finnish TTA, Mika Räsänen, made presentation of project, which includes two parts:

Integration of immigrants and gender equality in table tennis through comprehensive inclusion

Taneli Keinonen, Field Manager of Finnish TTA, presented results of workshop that was done in Autumn in Vantaa. Results of the survey are also reported in our EU-Erasmus project. In workshop the voice of immigrant youth was sought. This was done by meeting the young people in the table tennis hall in Hakunila, which is neighborhood in Vantaa. The day was implemented together with the City of Vantaa, Lehtikuusi School and Table Tennis Club TIP-70. From survey were found that participants with immigrant background had significantly less hobbies than rest of population. Only 46 % had hobbies, rest of population according to Finnish Olympic committee about 90 %. This difference means, that there is a really big possibility for sports clubs or different organizations to have new members in action. The importance of having friends in hobbies was clearly emphasized. Importance of language was the matter that did not come up in the discussions or answers. Cost of hobby is always big question but as long as cost is less than 50 €/month, it was seen somehow reasonable price.

After presentation, webinar continued with expert speeches. First speaker was Eva Rönkkö, who works in Kisakeskus Sports institute and has made recent dissertation at the University of Jyväskylä:

"Being Along but Excluded – an Ethnographic Study of Supervised Group Exercise with Foreign Born Women."

Rönkkö agreed that survey that was made by Finnish TTA had many similarities as what she has received during her project.

Presentation of Eva Rönkkö: As a exerciser in new country



Eva Rönkkö is Physical education teacher from Tallinn University. She has also been orienteering coach in club called Eurajoki Veikot. Rönkkö is Physical education instructor in City of Helsinki and diversity work planner in Pensioners' Association. Her educational background is PhD, Social Sciences of Physical Education, University of Jyväskylä

Eva Rönkkö has made research of "Women of foreign background coming Finnish to sports culture in particular".



The study looked into some main points:

- *women's perspective*
- *the organization's perspective*
- *leisure time exercises in public service*

There are some things we need to understand, when we talk about sports and integration. For example, there are some myths when we discuss about sports and immigrants:

- *"Sports is common language":*
When we say that sports is a common language, is this speech only ideological or political speech or do we really mean it. We have to take in consider also participants background and different habits in sports and different interpretation of sport.
- *"Sports is universal":*
When we say that sports is universal, we must understand, that national framework makes it distinctive. Invisible rules and cultural expectations what we have in society affects also in sports club.

- *"Sports unites":*

When we say that sports unites, we must always remember that people and participants determine their own and each other's social space – instructors and sports clubs must understand where goes the line between drawing boundaries and dissolution.

- *"Cultural differences prevents participation"*

When we say that cultural differences prevents participation, we must also see other point of view, this is health paradox also among immigrants. If there is no sport and movement, health status decreases as the length of time in residence increases. There are also structural problems and into sports comes mostly those, who are in average the healthiest ones.



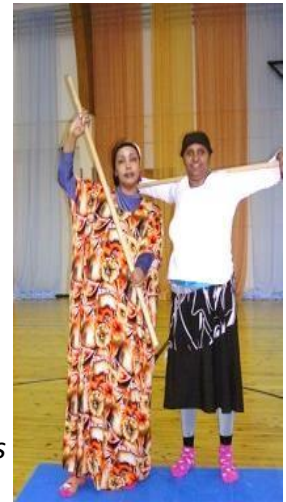
How do immigrants come to different sports:

- *It's good to understand, that Information spreads best within one's own community. People from own community are believed and this role is bigger than opinion that comes from outside. There is big role of the instructor, how reputations spreads within community.*
- *When there is little to do in new country, something new is taken up. Here are some big possibilities for sports clubs.*
- *Previous experience is not necessarily realized, mental resources are scarce*
- *The "culture" of the country of departure does not always determine which sports people are interested of, though it may help people to come in familiar sports. But also something new may be interesting.*
- *The nature of first experience and ease are decisive, when people consider if they want to continue within sports.*

Why did participants stay or came again to sports?

The instructor has big influence and big factor on staying:

- *if he/she can brake the norm*
- *can meet women and immigrant participant as people, not immigrants*
- *has the ability to guide exercisers of very different levels*
- *creates an atmosphere of togetherness with his/her actions*



There is always better possibilities for staying if participation does not require commitment, is close and the children can be included. People come for the sport - they stay for the social reasons

Why is the activity organized and what is function of exercise?

Self-esteem - because of pleasure and competition:

Other values:

- *Value of public health is same for native population and people from immigrant background.*
- *educational value and identity/community building*
- *maintenance of population relations and integration... Focusing on integration maintains differences of WE and THEM thinking*

Not all experiences are positive, inequality arises from actions:

- *Is participant treated as own or is he/she foreigner? Definition affects encounters*
- *Repetition between individuals - the instructor's professionalism is lost when the other person is thought of as different and habits or ways to inform change from normal.*

- *Institutional repetition – If the developed activity offered to immigrants is not thought as part of the basic offer but is made as project, we rely on project grants and the activity does not necessarily have continuity.*

A socially safe space:



- *Socially safe are the spaces where social relations are built on the common characteristics of those who came to move instead of differences.*
- *The importance of exercise for immigrant women is same as for all: fitness, health, pleasure – specific character is being similar and belonging to a group*

Language separates and unites – the roles of language:

- *The ways of using language are chosen according to the role that language is seen to play in that context. Integration puts the national language first and others subordinate to it:*
- *Language is conveyor of information. All possible customs and languages are good to learn. It's also important to understand the expressions of the main language*
- *Language is also indicator of identity, precise use of language.*

But it's really important to understand that language is also community creator. If sports is doing well, it's free of hierakia and everyone's own language is equally valuable, even "bad Finnish".

Power - the asymmetry of the encounter:

It's relatively normal that the other one in new environment has more knowledge or physical skills. Also native population has more knowledge of the language and are familiar with the system. Also

they may have already some position in the club and position in society. The new participant, especially from different culture, has to build these things from zero.

There is are always different ways and goals of sports activities defined by different service providers:

- *If we are talking about clubs, their goals come from the organization*
- *public service gets their goals from sports policy*
- *private sports – goal comes from the owner*

But does the goals of service provider match the goals of the exerciser? For example if we talk about disabled persons, rehabilitation is often the goal set by the organization. For the overweight people the goal to guide them to a normal weight and for immigrants, the goal to integrate. Power used by the organization becomes a natural and routine activity for users, the consequences of which are not recognized, but which gives rise to unfavorable experiences.

It's also recognized that those with a foreign background are valued on the competitive sports but in hobby sports the target is different, it's integration. Competence of participant is not seen and this causes repetition.



Biggest points from survey are, that immigrants come in to hobby or in this case in sports for same reasons as everybody: Self-esteem - because of pleasure and competition. There is no need to act or work differently to make integration, just treat people as they are and make them feel comfortable. The importance of the first meeting and the instructor are important in this.





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Second speaker was Jasmiina Gharieb, Executive Director of "Sports for everyone" - association. Jasmiina Gharieb made presentation of association. "Sports for everyone" was in beginning project that started from needs of city of Vantaa. Our table tennis club TIP-70 has been involved with this project from beginning. "Sports for everyone" is helping clubs to organize low threshold sports in Vantaa and gives small financial support for instructors/coaches of clubs or small help in the costs of sports facilities. This way participants can come in to sports even in situation where their financial situation is difficult. Association has big influence in city of Vantaa as contact and in moving people of immigrant background. In Vantaa city – approx. 250 000 inhabitants – the share of people speaking Finnish as a second language, is specially high, in some areas even over 40%.

Presentation of Sport for all / Sporttia kaikille

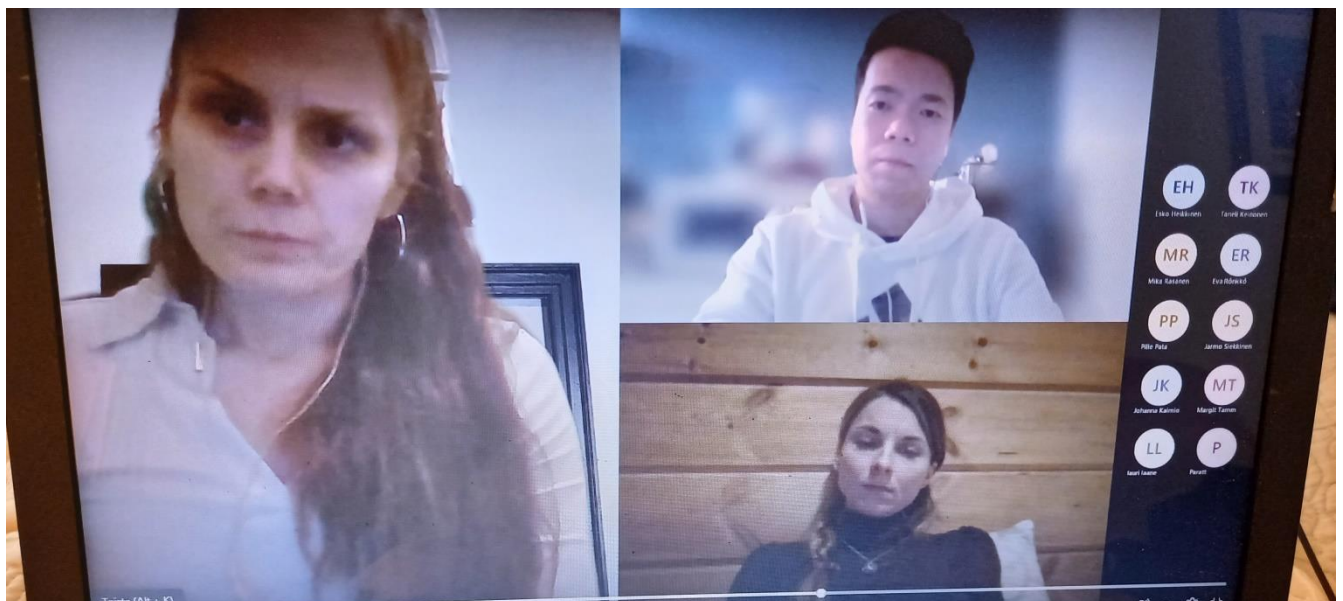
Jasmiina Gharieb

-Executive Director in Sporttia kaikille (Sport for all)

-Finnish –Palestinian roots

-Social worker (University of Applied Sciences) and candidate for Adult Education (Open University of Helsinki)

Jasmiina Gharieb made presentation how "Sporttia kaikille" (Sport for all) was born and on what principles it works.





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Sport for all was the name of a project where the funding was applied from the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2010. The Ministry had an integration targeted fund. The points was to to greate integration using sport as a tool.

The one applying the funding was The Sport Services of City of Vantaa. The project had some main ideas, which changed little bit every year, but the main point remaind:

-To get in Vantaa the immigrants to participate in sports. So, create free and low treshold classes for them.

-The special case was with women and girls

-Offer swim classes for the immigrants, women separately from men.

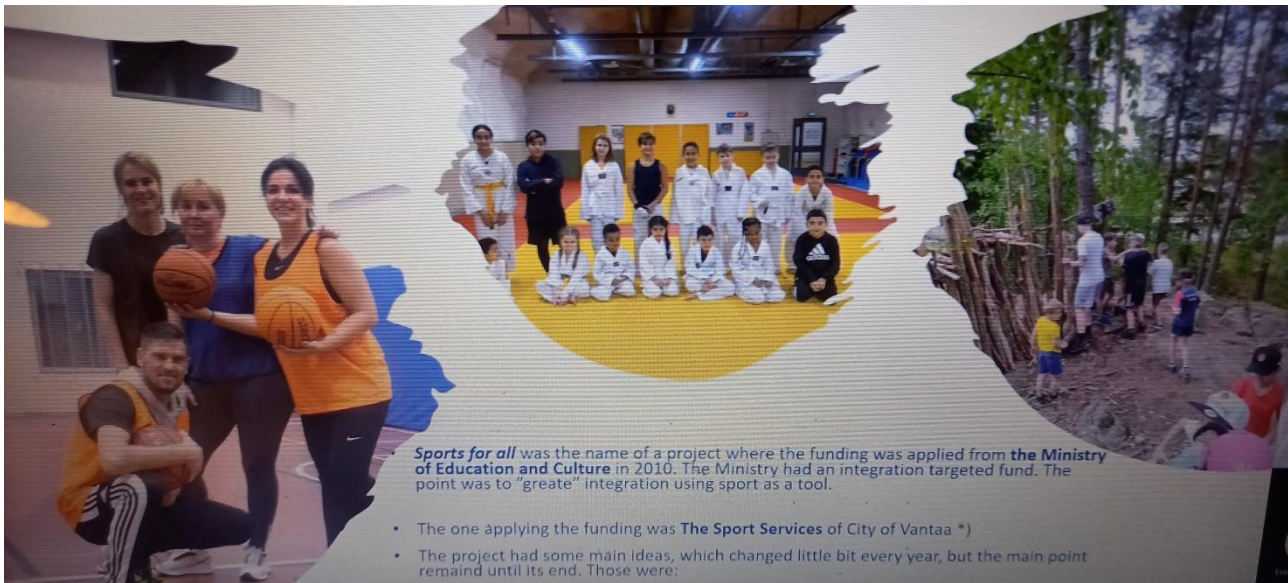
-Get young people to do sports

The project worked on the following principles.

From a project to an association

In 2016 there was already 80-90 classes weekly organized bt project. The Sport Director of Vantaa suggested to create an association, so in 2017 was formed Sporttia kaikille ry (Sport for all). The first financial year was 2018.

At the moment, the association's support has decreased, which has resulted in participation fees. The fee is 45e per season at the moment. This temporarily caused a decrease in the number of participants.



The core idea of Sport for all

The general basic idea in Sport for all is: NO INTEGRATION, JUST OFFER SPORTS

The basic principles of the association are the following:

Remove obstacles

The purpose is to remove all kinds of things that prevent exercise. These include, for example, barrier-free access to sports facilities, for example for wheelchair users. A key and common obstacle for immigrant families and others is the price of hobbies. 50e euros per month and even 5e can prevent participation. Sport venues should be close to home. Not all families have the opportunity to drive to hobbies.

The possibility to join a new sport without experience

Of course, in this regard, the association works appropriately. An example was a football team that was already operating at a fairly high level. A person who has never played football before is not meaningful to participate in this group and participation can even be dangerous. However, the main thing is to accept enthusiasts without expecting them to know the sport.

Hobby teams



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Exercising once a week is not enough for everyone. "Hobby teams" was created for this need. In these, there was training several times a week and "Hobby teams" participated in real matches. This also created a path from a free hobby to an activity that costs a little. With this payment, you got insurance, the right to participate in matches and official team shirt. The most important thing was that participants were "real players".

Action with cooperation

Sport for all operation is based on a model where cooperation is done with clubs and associations. They don't have their own paid instructors that is, the activity is carried out together with other actors. In this way, several different sports can be offered.

Included sports

- Gymnastic
- Fitness
- Dance
- Zumba
- Parkour
- Family groups
- Catch ball
- Badminton
- Table Tennis
- Football
- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Taekwondo
- Floorball
- Athletics
- Finnish baseball
- Indoor football

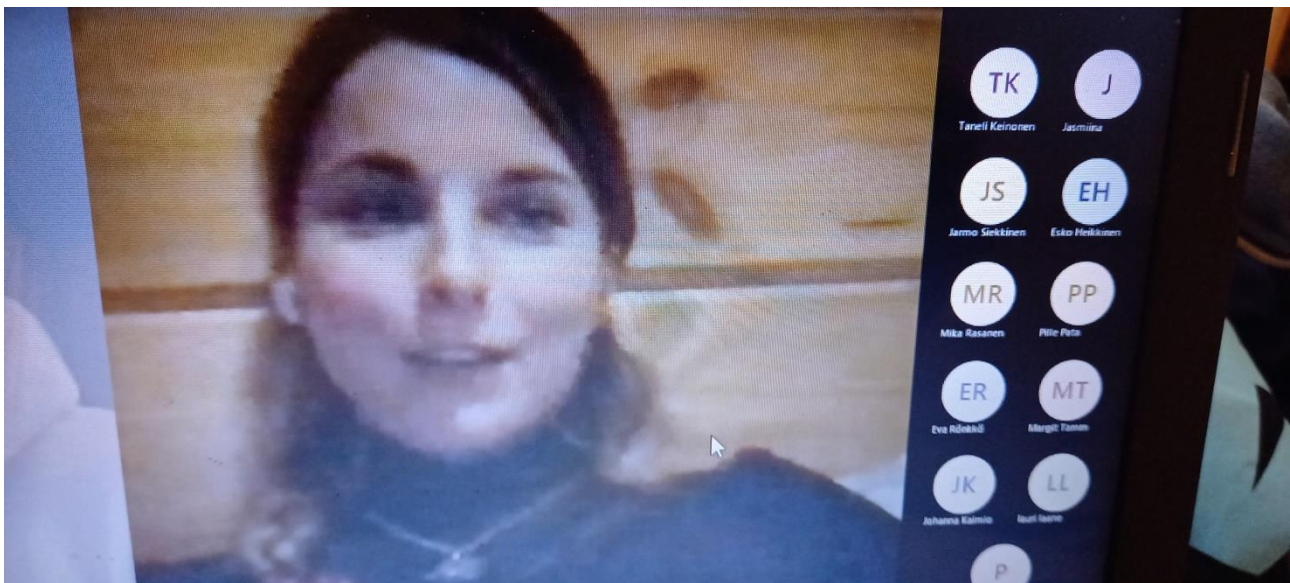
The association wants to create paths from hobby clubs to sport club activities. The purpose is to offer exercise suitable for everyone. Other than low-threshold exercise is also offered. However, the association especially wants to move people, who does little exercise, such as adult immigrants. The organization also helps people with an immigrant background who are interested in coaching to find clubs where they can coach

The experiences of table tennis players with an immigrant background

In end of webinar we had three speeches of our immigrant athletes:

Ildiko Kadar came to Finland from Romania in 2007. Huy Chau came to Finland beginning of 2000 from Vietnam and Lauri Laane 2009 from Estonia. All athletes told importance of sports, how they have met new people and how important it was for them to become members of Finnish table tennis community. All three had small difficulties in beginning to find proper club, where they can play and develop their playing. Clubs work in different levels and all clubs are not able to take new members. All speakers told how important it was for them to have positive first meeting with the clubmembers and feeling that they really are welcome. They also agreed that their background didn't mean anything in this matter. All speakers felt, that sport is "universal language" which helps people to communicate and to become members of the community.

Ildiko Kadar



Ildiko Kadar is from Romania and belongs to the Hungarian minority. He started the sport at the age of 5, inspired by his father. However, school was always the most important thing, so her enthusiasm for the sport ended at the age of 15.

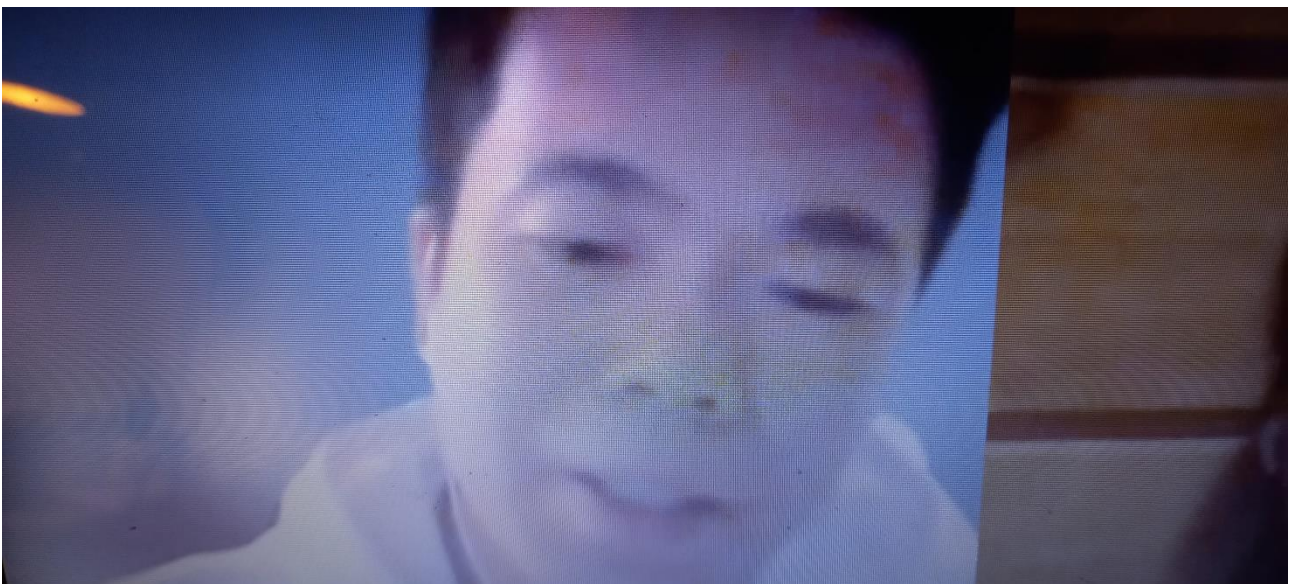
Ildiko Kadar moved to Finland in 2008 at the age of 25. She moved to the country without really knowing anything about Finland. The first place was Vaasa, where she lived in Finland. Adapting to Finnish society was easy. Learning the language quickly helped here. She also graduated from the University of Vaasa.

She also found a table tennis club in the city. The club welcomed a new player. However, the hobby was not what she was used to. The social side was completely missing. The club also didn't really get any information about the different options for playing. For these reasons, the enthusiasm for playing stopped.

After Vaasa, Ildiko Kadar moved to Helsinki. She found MBF as a new club. The reception in the club was immediately very good. All information about training, competitions and league matches was immediately available. Now the sport is a hobby for the whole family, the child and husband also play. Helsinki's table tennis hall has become a second home.

In summary, Ildiko states that the most important thing on the part of the clubs is the attitude of accepting new players. Information about the operation must be clearly available. The important thing is to be met on a personal level. This is especially important for immigrants. On the other hand, Ildiko also emphasizes the immigrants' desire to understand Finnish culture and customs.

Huy Chau



Huy Chau is from Vietnam. He started playing table tennis at the age of 7, inspired by his father, who was a national team level player. The training in Vietnam was high-quality and goal-oriented.

He received a study scholarship to Finland and city of Hämeenlinna at the age of 15. There was no information about table tennis in Finland, and he also couldn't find a club where he could continue playing.



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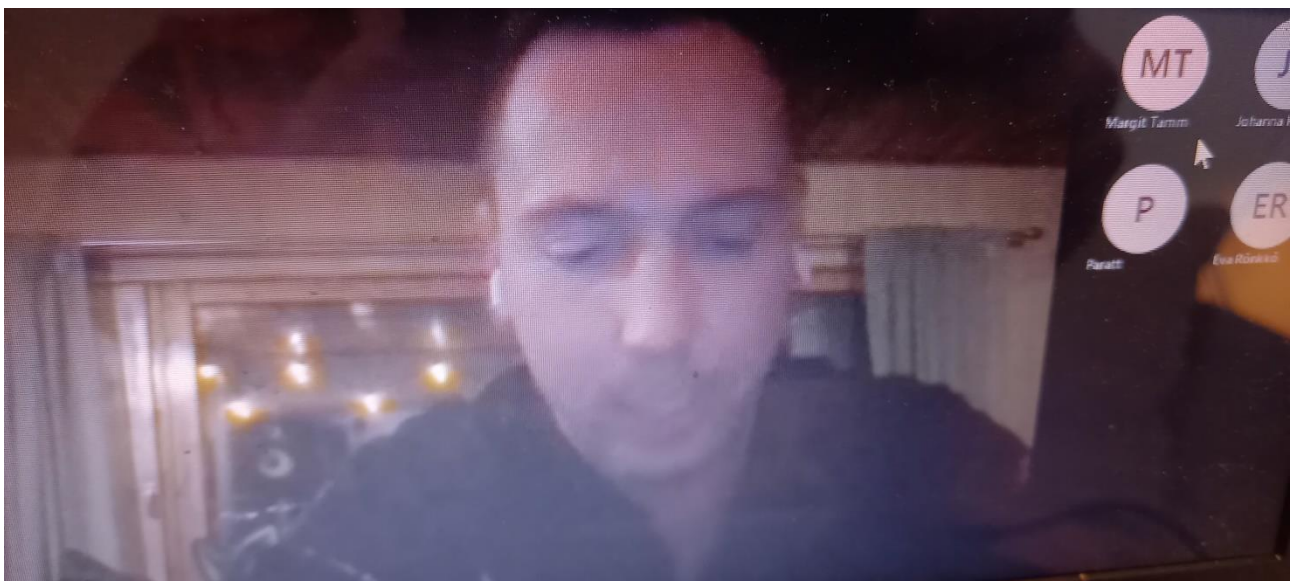
In 2006, he moved to Espoo to study. Here, too, it was the same problem to find a Table Tennis club. For this reason, the enthusiasm for the table tennis also waned. However, by chance, through a friend, he found a club in Espoo. The reception was very friendly and helpful right from the start. The desire to train and compete also returned and motivation was very high. Huy Chau didn't experience a language barrier either. People speak English so there were no problems.

He noticed that the clubs in Vietnam were more professional with their coaches. However, he soon adapted to this separation. In Finland, training is more on your own responsibility. Participating in the camps of the Finnish national team was also a great opportunity.

Huy also emphasized participation and active participation in the club's activities. An immigrant can be an active actor and not just a participant. An immigrant can be an active actor and not just a participant. He has also actively marketed the club, for example bringing colleagues to try table tennis.

When discussing whether it is easier for someone who plays in higher level to join a club than someone who doesn't know much. Huy Chau stated that skills definitely makes things easier. However, it is important to accept everyone.

Lauri Laane



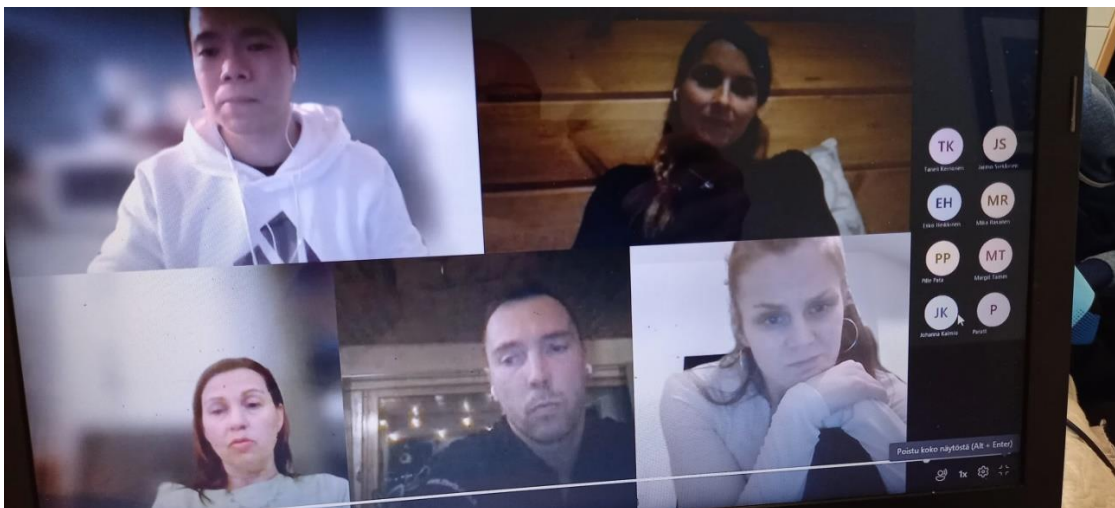
Lauri Laane is from Estonia and started playing table tennis at the age of 6. He lived in several different countries before moving to Finland, where it was easy to settle in.

It was also a bit difficult for Lauri Laane to find a club, but he found a club in Vantaa after being recommended by the Estonian coach.

The treatment in the club was immediately very warm and positive. Maybe the first week he was spoken to in English, but after that Finnish. This was really good because that's how I learned the language.

Lauri Laane also said that he received help, for example, in looking for an apartment, rather than in filling out official papers. In addition, help with small things, such as borrowing a winter hat when it's freezing.

Discussion about the experiences of immigrants



In the discussion, it emerged that those involved were skilled players. Competence in sports and social activities gives social status. The question is how to treat those who are not so skilled.

We also discussed what Finnish culture or, for example, Asian culture is like. More important than this difference, however, is that there is so much separation into us and them. If you treat an immigrant and see them as an immigrant, you also learn to be an immigrant. So often a well-intentioned thing can even turn on its head and cause differentiation.

In a way, you could say in summary. It is good to recognize the special needs of immigrants, but treat them as individuals and as enthusiasts of the sport.



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Webinar got positive feedback and participants agreed that it was eye-opening and we received good new information. The goals of people with a foreign background are the same as the native population, the joy of exercise and working with nice people in a positive environment. Integration happens best when you focus on these things and don't try to invent something new or different.

Conclusion:

- NO INTEGRATION, JUST SPORT.

The central point of the conclusions is to look at the matter through table tennis clubs. How could the clubs participate in repatriation, how should it be approached and what would be the benefits for the clubs. Although the point of view is in the clubs, this does not exclude the consideration of the needs of immigrants. Success requires consideration of the wishes and needs of all parties.

Table tennis has several advantages when considering its possibility to serve as a means of repatriation. The first thing is that table tennis is one of the most popular sports in the world and is played everywhere. This means that among the immigrants there is a lot of people who have played the table tennis and people who are already familiar with the sport. Immigrants have less hobbies than the rest of the population. This naturally means that this group has really big potential to be new members in hobby. The fees of sport's hobby are reasonably affordable in table tennis compared to many other sports. From the point of view of the clubs, it is also positive that it is possible to receive public support for the hobby activities of immigrants.

How should the hobby activities of immigrants then be organized? This question was discussed a lot during the project in different contexts. Should immigrants have their own activities and groups or should they participate in the normal activities of clubs. For some immigrant groups, in some cases their own groups are justified and a good solution. In general, a good solution is to include immigrants in the club's normal activities. Immigrants' own groups create and strengthen immigrant identity and creates an "us" and "them" setting in the activity. In addition to this, many clubs do not have the resources to organize activities aimed only at immigrants. When immigrants participate in the club's normal activities, integration is easier and natural. In this way, everyone will be met as an individual and not as a representative of a predetermined group.

By offering participation directly in the club's normal activities, you can leave some groups out of the activity. In this way, the participation of girls and women is problematic in some cases. Clubs could consider offering their own activities to these parties.



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Is the immigrants playing table tennis and integrating then just a completely normal club activity? Of course, this is largely the case, but you should pay special attention to some things. The importance of the first and personal meeting is always important, but with immigrants this situation is emphasized. The answers "it's online, look there" never gives a good picture of the club's activities. If you add to this a possibly deficient language skills, then the interest in the hobby will perhaps end at the beginning. In addition, the clubs could invest in clarity and possibly use the English language as well. At the first meeting, the atmosphere should encourage participation, and not emphasize complicated registrations.

Clubs should also not see immigrants only as objects of activity, but also as actors themselves. This aspect was emphasized by the table tennis people with an immigrant background who participated in the project, many of whom are working in different roles in the clubs.

Naturally, learning in encounters is not only one-way, so that immigrants learn and integrate into society. Those in the club other than immigrants also learn and in the future form a community that operates with its own values and customs.

The key to integration is to trust sports, in our case table tennis. In a sports club, everyone should be seen as individuals who enjoy the sport, and not as representatives of groups.

To summarize the end, we could use the expression used by the Sport for all association: NO INTEGRATION, JUST SPORT.

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