

Evaluation Study Together in Sport project

by HIGGS

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Contents

Limitations.....	3
Executive Summary.....	4
The project	5
The methodology.....	6
TiS in Kavala.....	7
Findings of Impact Assessment.....	8
Beneficiaries	9
Partners.....	9
Team member	12
Recommendations & Take-aways.....	14

Limitations

The purpose of this evaluation study is to provide information with regard to the implementation of the “Together in Sport” (TiS) project funded by the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. The project is implemented by the German Olympic Sports Confederation (Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund, DOSB) in cooperation with the Hellenic Olympic Committee (HOC) and METAdrasi with the collaboration of local municipalities in Greece.

The evaluation study was prepared and conducted by the team of the HIGGS Social Impact Assessment Unit to measure and depict the social impact of the “Together in Sport” project. It was based on information and data provided by METAdrasi as well as primary data collected through semi-structured questionnaires targeting beneficiaries, project teams and various stakeholders.

The information provided by METAdrasi has not been independently confirmed by HIGGS team in any way. HIGGS team treats the data, assumptions or estimates provided by METAdrasi as accurate. It is clarified that HIGGS team proceeded to an independent primary research. This study is not or should not be considered as a promise or binding provision for the future impact of the “Together in Sport” project.

The exploitation of this study by any party and any decisions based thereon are the sole responsibility of those who will use this study. Each recipient should make their own estimates about the “Together in Sport” project and its future course. HIGGS team bears no liability or responsibility of any kind with regard to this study and cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions that may result from the use of the analysis presented herein.

Executive Summary

The present Evaluation Study was developed in order to assess the impact of the “Together in Sport” project in the area of Kavala, explore the successes and challenges experienced and evaluate the results achieved during its 21 - month duration.

The initial section of the study lays emphasis on the methodology and tools used for the evaluation process. The evaluation was based on a mixed-methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data and methods to inform the evidence-based conclusions, inferences and recommendations. The second section of the assessment focuses on the main findings emerged via the Social Impact Assessment.

It is reckoned that the “Together in Sport” project in the specific area has achieved its objectives to a large extent although some minor challenges occurred. Some of the main findings are presented below:

- ❖ The project’s dissemination activities were impressive in terms of numbers and outreach as they exceeded the initial target set.
- ❖ The outbreak of the pandemic Covid- 19 has definitely impacted the project activities, as some activities were postponed.
- ❖ The coordination among municipality, the Open Facility of Temporary Reception and the other two NPOs (IMO, Solidarity Now) hosted in the Open Facility was in a good level.
- ❖ Project’s impact proved positive for asylum seeking children in terms of developing strong relationships with peers and the feeling that they belong somewhere.
- ❖ All partners agreed that the collaboration among the partnership was very good.

The project

The project's aim is to enable participation in sporting and other recreational activities for asylum seeking children in every stage of the asylum procedure in order to promote meaningful recreational activities and to strengthen reception structures in the participating municipalities.

Using sports as the core component of the project, the project initial goal is to give the chance to asylum seeking children and youngsters to get in touch and learn more about organized sports and to develop relationships through sports with their peers from the local communities. The project is offered free of charge and is addressed to asylum seeking children and youngsters aged 7-17 and their peers from local communities. In addition, the support of the cooperating municipalities was important for the project to succeed its goals.

Specifically, the project "Together in Sport" aims to:

- ❖ Cultivate and promote values like mutual respect, team spirit and intercultural tolerance.
- ❖ Familiarize the participants with the values of Olympic education.
- ❖ Improve the everyday life of asylum seeking children/youngsters and to enhance their sense of belonging.
- ❖ Strengthen the existing structures and the initiatives regarding the reception and the care especially of unaccompanied minors at local level.
- ❖ Promote new communication channels through sports, in order to enable the peaceful coexistence among children and youngsters coming from different cultural backgrounds.
- ❖ Reduce the reservations of local communities towards asylum seekers and improve and strengthen social cohesion.

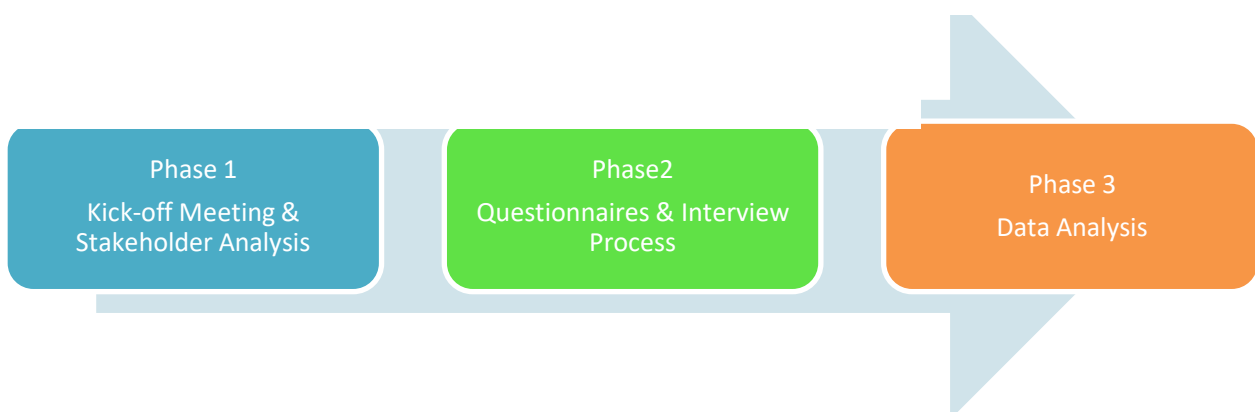
The methodology

The Social Impact Assessment (SIA) study of the “Together in Sport” captures qualitative and quantitative data. The methodology consisted of three key phases. In the first stage of the study, a kick-off meeting with the core team of METAdrasi and an interview with the Project Manager (PM) of the organization was conducted in order to gather initial opinions and feedback about the scope and the aims of the project. During this phase a stakeholder analysis was prepared and discussed with METAdrasi team in order to determine the interested parties which were to be involved in the process. Specifically, the research focused on the following stakeholders:

- **Beneficiaries of the project**
- **Project partners** (coaches, representatives of municipalities, representatives of sports facilities)
- **Team members of METAdrasi**



In the second phase, satisfaction questionnaires were created for each stakeholder group and interviews were conducted with stakeholders who directly or indirectly were impacted from the implementation of the project in order to collect their views, opinions and experiences gained through their participation. In particular, HIGGS, with the support of the leader partner, organized interviews either in person or via video/tele conference in order to assess the involvement of the stakeholders and enlighten aspects of the project.



TiS in Kavala

Kavala was one of the three cities in Greece in which Together in Sports was implemented. One full time employee and various sports coaches supported by the coordination team based in Athens led to a very successful project implementation.

During the project implementation the following outputs were achieved:

- ✓ Number of beneficiaries: 1.197
- ✓ Number of participants in regular training activities (sports): 182
- ✓ Number of participants in recreational activities: 1.089
- ✓ Number of recreational activities and events organized: 20
- ✓ Number of partners (Municipalities, Coaches, Sports Clubs): 24

In total the targeted beneficiaries participated in **3** sports (football, swimming and running track), in 47 different groups. Furthermore, most children participated in a total of **20** events throughout the project's implementation.

These were as follows (highlighted in green the sports related events):

National team game in Xanthi

Blue City Multisports

Handball Event

Joint Football Practice Sport Club Kavala

Joint Volley Practice Sport Club Kavala

Street Handball

Sporting Action In Kalamitsa

Sports Event

Swimming

Basketball Game Attendance

Football

Basketball Training

Running Track

Basketball Tournament

Friendly Football Game

Angioplasty Course

Action in the camp (Nea Peramos)

Ancient theatre of philippon

Nestos, Riverland

Wax Museum

Findings of Impact Assessment

During the interview process, HIGGS used semi-structured online questionnaires for each stakeholder element and the key findings are presented below. The representative of the HIGGS team visited the region of Kavala on the 15th and 16th of September in order to meet the interested parties involved in the project. The site visit included interviews and questionnaire-based research aimed at:

1. METAdrasi local coordinator
2. Representative of the Municipality of Kavala
3. Representative of a basketball association
4. The football coach
5. The head of the Open Facility of Temporary Reception
6. The head of the Summer School
7. Refugee children from the Open Facility (7 persons) with the following characteristics: 6 out of 7 were boys and the other was girl. 5 children were below the age of 8, while the other two were 15 years old.

Regarding the interviews with the children, prior consent from their guardians was provided while the interviews were facilitated by interpreters provided by either the Open Facility management team or METAdrasi.

The Social Impact Assessment focused on the following key aspects of the project:

In order to assess the impact of the project for the beneficiaries, a semi-structured questionnaire was developed as a guide for the interview process. The main findings are presented below.

- ❖ All beneficiaries participated both in regular training activities and in recreational events during the project implementation
- ❖ All of them stated that they liked mostly football and swimming.
- ❖ All participants admitted that during the games with other peers, **there were no disagreements or other negative issues as they prioritized the fact that they had the chance to meet and discuss** with them during the various activities.
- ❖ Four out to seven children (58%) stated that the worst thing that happened during the implementation of the project was the non-continuation of the swimming courses as a regular sport activity due to the fact that the swimming pool was closed.
- ❖ All beneficiaries strongly agreed that through the project **they had the chance to meet other peers, develop relationships and make new friends.**
- ❖ Moreover, all revealed that the project **offered them the opportunity to learn and participate in sport activities that they did not have knowledge of in the past.**
- ❖ Through their participation in some activities such as swimming, they **managed to overcome fears** that they had developed from previous, negative, experiences.
- ❖ All of them confessed that through their participation in the “Together in Sport” project they came to **feel happier as they learn new things.** They all emphatically requested the project to be continued for the next year.

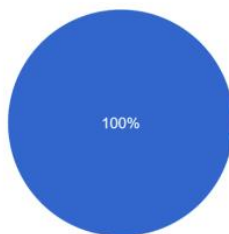
In general, the feedback received by all participants (100%) was extremely positive as the “Together in Sport” project acted as a driving force in order to enable them being integrated in the local community.

Partners

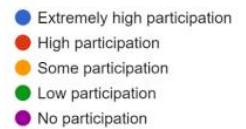
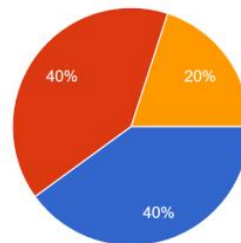
HIGGS representative visited 5 partners (coaches, representatives from the municipality, external collaborators and the Head of the Open Facility of Temporary Reception) in order to assess the impact of the project from their perspective.

All responders (100%) agreed that their tasks were completely clarified by the lead partner. During the interview process, all partners revealed that their tasks and their role regarding the implementation of the project had been discussed and agreed from the launch of the project. In addition, 40% of the partners pointed out that they intensively participated in the project; the same percentage (40%) stated that they were highly involved and a small percentage (20%) had a limited participation in the project.

How clearly were your tasks clarified by the lead partner?
5 responses



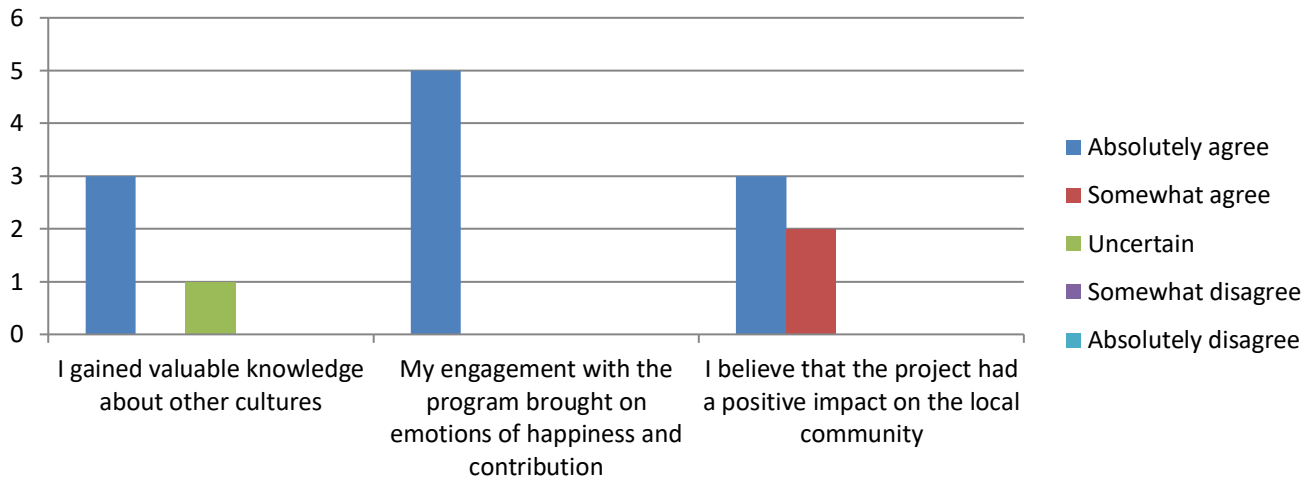
How much participative was your role?
5 responses



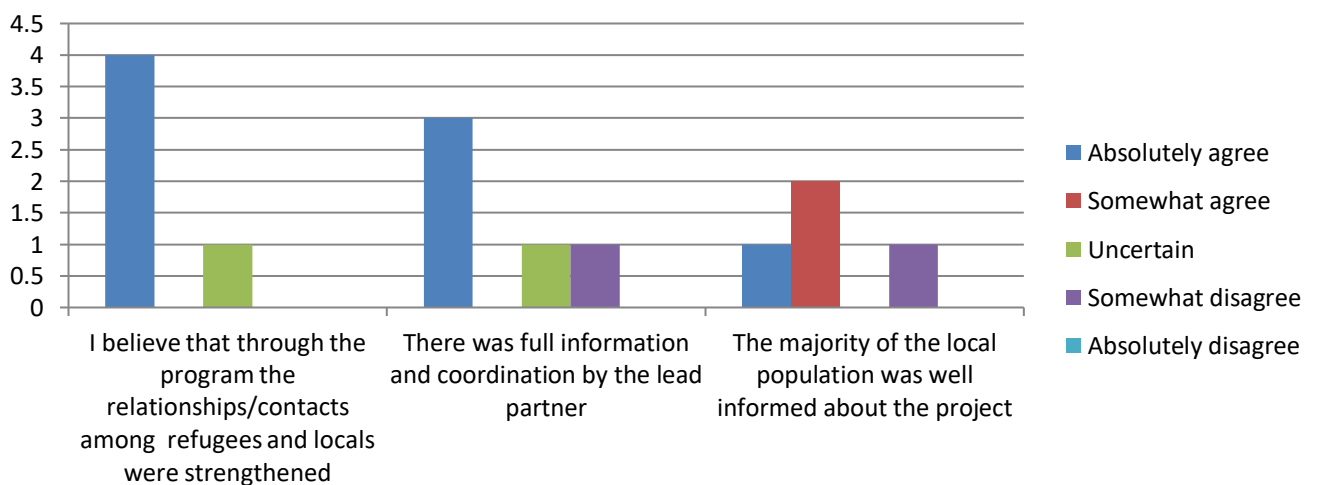
Regarding their satisfaction level, 40% felt completely satisfied by their role in the project and the other 60% were mostly satisfied with their role. Additionally, partners were asked to evaluate some statements regarding the level of organisation received by the lead partner.

Some of the main findings are:

- ❖ Three (3) of the partners (60%) absolutely agreed that from their participation in the project, **they gained valuable knowledge about other cultures**. One partner felt uncertain about this statement as he/she did not have a direct connection with the target group while the last one stated that he/she already had knowledge with other cultures because of his/her previous working experience.
- ❖ One partner also revealed that from his/her participation, he/ she can **better understand the needs of asylum seeking children**.
- ❖ **All partners stated that their engagement with the project brought on emotions of happiness and contribution**. All of them felt happy with their participation in the project as they recognise that the needs for asylum seeking children are significant and they can offer something from their side.
- ❖ Three of them also strongly agreed that the **project had a positive impact on the local community** and the other two somewhat agreed.



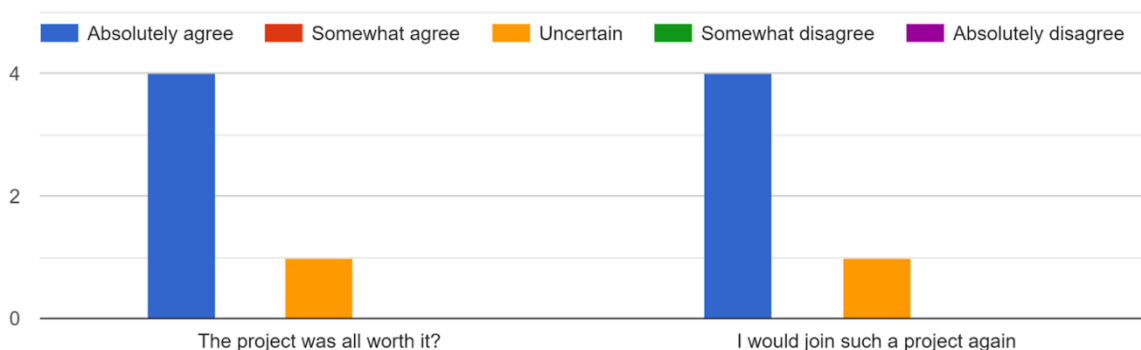
- ❖ Regarding the relationships and contacts developed among refugees and locals, four of the partners agreed that the **relationships among them were strengthened** by their participation in the project.
- ❖ In relation to the information and coordination received by the lead partner, **three partners strongly agreed that there was full information and coordination**, one partner neither agreed nor disagreed with the above statement and one partner somewhat disagreed as he/she referred that in the beginning of the project the information received was limited due to Covid-19 situation, following the series of delays and cancellations.
- ❖ According to partners, **the majority of the local population was well informed** about the project as three partners stated that the information to the local population was in a good level and the other partner agreed that the information received was not adequate and a more organised and intensive information could have been developed, especially in the beginning of the project.



As for the quality of the communication with the lead partners, **80% of the partners characterized the quality as strongly effective and the other 20% as very effective**. Moreover, four out to five partners are thinking of some type of continuation of the cooperation with the project after its completion. The other partner who is not thinking of continuation of the cooperation was due to heavy workload and his/her opinion has no relationship with the quality of the cooperation among partnership.

The majority of the partners (4 out to 5) also strongly agreed that the project was all worth it and that they would join such a project again. It is worth mentioning that for the three partners of the project it was their first time they participated in projects in similar thematic area while the other two partners have participated in similar projects in the past.

Please, rate your level of agreement with the following areas:



Team member

The local coordinator from Kavala is working in METAdrasi from the beginning of the “Together in Sport” project. It was his first time working in the civil society sector. As he stated, his experience as a basketball coach helped him respond quickly to participants’ needs and to easily understand the concept of the “Together in Sport” project in general.

The interview with the local coordinator held in Kavala on 16th of September and the main findings are presented below.

- ❖ The local coordinator stated that **the tasks were clarified in a very good level** by the Project Manager (PM) of the project and he was also completely satisfied with the tasks, responsibilities and his role in general.

- ❖ He absolute agreed that **the information received about the project was clear and complete** and there was full coordination by the PM.
- ❖ He revealed that from his participation in the project, **he gained valuable knowledge about other cultures** and that the project helped him to change his mentality and attitude vis-a-vis stereotypes and discriminations.
- ❖ He also highlighted that the **quality of the communication among the team is very effective** and that he feels extremely comfortable with the way decisions are made for the project.
- ❖ Moreover, he strongly believes that the project **is extremely beneficial for the target population** as the project allows these children being supported to spend time in an environment out of the Hospitality Structure and being socialised.

Recommendations & Take-aways

It could be said that the “Together in Sport” project in Kavala was developed in a very smooth way. Below, there are some thoughts derived from the interviews made by the interested parties of the region.

- ❖ The coordination with the core team in Athens can be characterized as very good as the whole team has developed a continuous contact and mutual trust, sharing new ideas to face any challenges may occur during the project implementation.
- ❖ The fact that METAdrasi has chosen a person from the local community as the local coordinator of the project, helped both the project to become more trustful and recognisable to the local community and the organisation to develop further contacts with various stakeholders in the area.
- ❖ In the beginning of the project, some actions among the organisations hosted in the Open Facility of Temporary Reception overlapped, creating a little confusion to the population. However, in a very short period of time, the timetable of all actions was updated thanks to the willingness for cooperation and mutual support to the needs of the target group and the relationships have been significantly improved.
- ❖ The services offered by the Open Facility of Temporary Reception in Kavala, and in particular the creation of a gym on site, may act as a deterrent to the participation in the “Together in Sport” project. However, the fact that children are given the opportunity to get out of the structure is what mainly encourages them to apply for the project.
- ❖ In reference to the events developed in the region of Kavala, the project included more sporting activities than recreational ones; although both activities had equally high participation, indicating the children's strong interest participating in activities outside the structure.
- ❖ A more strategic communication plan could be developed, including on-site visits and outreach within the schools in the region, ideally during the first month of schools' operation in order to disseminate further the project.