

Free of harm and full of **PROMISE**



THE PARTNERSHIP

Coordinated by the National Olympic Committee of Portugal (COP), the 'Safer Grassroots Sport' is a strong and recognised partnership of 7 stakeholders from across the EU which brings together national Olympic committees, a sport governmental organisation and expert organization in the field of safeguarding in sport, and networks with numerous contacts all over the continent and beyond.



'Safer Grassroots Sport' is co-funded under the Erasmus+ Sport programme and runs from January 2024 to December 2025.

For further information, please contact safegrassport@comiteolimpicoportugal.pt or visit the project website www.safegrassport.eu.

A resource produced under the "Safer Grassroots Sport" programme, co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



A EUROPEAN PROJECT to safeguard sport within communities

RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND

In every corner of Europe, grassroots sport ignites passion, forges connections, and nurtures talent; acting as a vital conduit for social interaction, physical and mental well-being, and personal growth. Yet, within these vibrant gatherings lies a pressing challenge - ensuring the safety and well-being of every participant.

This challenge, if unaddressed, could undermine the integrity and inclusive-nature of sport, and that's the impetus behind the 'Safer Grassroots Sport' project — contribute to a comprehensive response to the universal need for 'safeguarding' within sport at a community level.

The genesis of this project lies in a simple truth: while sport offers immense benefits, from physical and mental health to social cohesion, it also presents risks - incidents of violence and abuse in sport can not only harm individuals, but also tarnish the true spirit of communities.

BENEFITS

The 'Safer Grassroots Sport' project was envisioned to contribute to transform the landscape of sports at a community level, into a safer, more inclusive space for everyone, especially the young and the most vulnerable.

At the heart of the project is a commitment to pro-active safeguarding—an approach that goes beyond 'reactive measures' in order to build a safer and respectful sport culture. This involves not just addressing risks as they arise, but preventing them through awareness education, and community engagement.

The project is structured around the following key pillars designed to tackle the multifaceted nature of safeguarding:

- ✓ **Establishing Robust Safeguarding Policies**, that create a solid foundation for activations, with clear guidelines that underscore the importance of safe sport and set standards for behaviour and practices.
- ✓ **Empowering with Education and Resources**, which provide comprehensive training and support for coaches, volunteers, managers and staff, ensuring they are equipped to recognize and respond to safeguarding issues.
- ✓ **Engaging in Active Risk Management**, through implementing strategies that identify potential risks and vulnerabilities within sports settings, and then taking pre-emptive actions to mitigate them.
- ✓ **Promoting Inclusivity and Respect**, by developing codes of conduct that emphasize the values of respect, fairness, and equality, ensuring that sports remain accessible and enjoyable for all.

GOALS

To bring these principles to life, the 'Safer Grassroots Sport' project will introduce a suite of tools and resources that include:

- ✓ A **Mapping of Best Practice**, drawing from a wide array of successful models to offer practical, proven strategies for safeguarding within sports at a grassroots level.
- ✓ An **Online Self-Assessment Tool**, enabling organizations to evaluate their own safeguarding measures, identifying gaps, and prioritising improvements.
- ✓ and a **Digital Toolkit**, providing ready-to-use resources, from policy templates to educational materials, tailored to the needs and realities of sports organizations at grassroots level.

These elements are not just components of a project, but tools for transformation, designed to empower leaders, coaches, educators and participants at all levels, while making safe sport a cornerstone of grassroots sport.

So as the project evolves, a movement can be ignited that promises to redefine sports within communities, encouraging a united front in the pursuit of safe sport, inclusion, and empowerment, and where every individual can pursue their passion for sport, free from harm and full of promise.