



S.T.A.R. Action Plan



Preface

Context

This document is part of the activities foreseen by the **STAR_Sport and Training Against Radicalization** project, in accordance with the European Commission's call for proposals EAC/s19/2019.

In particular, the Action Plan is included in the work package called "international networking" and is the result of the participation process involving, in addition to CUS Torino, the beneficiary of the project, LINKS Foundation and European sports associations and stakeholders from;

Hungary - **Oltalom Sport Association**,
Portugal - **Associação CHECK-IN**,
Slovenia - **Public institute for sports Nova Gorica**
Belgium - **BXL Europe**.

Subject and purpose of the action plan

A key objective of the action plan is to summarize the results of the STAR project, specifically the international school held in April 2021. This is followed by the pilot actions implemented between 2021 and 2022. It also summarizes the seminars and workshops held on February 1, 11, and 22 and March 23, 2022.

On these occasions, members of the sports associations and stakeholders involved in the project discussed and shared their knowledge on the topic of sports as a preventive tool against radicalization and social exclusion, and questioned the actions that sports associations should take in their educational process.





Guidelines for sports associations

Social role of sport

The practice of sports should not only be considered in its physical and athletic dimensions, but as a means of transmitting social values and acquiring useful skills even outside the sports context. Sport fully enters people's lives, changing their habits and rules and enriching them with relationships.

The sports club is a 360-degree environment and assists the child on a psychological, emotional and relational level, in a path of personal maturation.

Sport organisations can help young people to have personal experiences by designing and implementing programmes that give people from different backgrounds the opportunity to play together, using clear and outlined strategies, with an overarching vision, a common goal to be achieved and rules that are respected by all.

Parents and carers should also be involved in the activities, as families still have the greatest influence on young people and serve as primary places of socialisation.

Creating a safe place where positive dialogue between different groups can take place and the role model function of the coaching staff are extremely important and should be central to a healthy sporting society. The main focus should be on the added value that can come from being different and how these differences can serve the community (in this case the sport organisation, the team) by trying to adapt the concept of acceptance, tolerance to the developmental level of the players, for example, through gamification, games that promote teamwork and cooperation.

It is important for coaches and leaders to be aware that the fight against radicalization is a process of actions and behaviors that must be considered as a whole. It is a path that involves the co-responsibility of many people, who must act on the social context not only of those who marginalize, but also of those who are marginalized.

Marginalisation through uncontrolled aggressive attitudes leads to conflicts which, if

permanent, result in violence. However, it is necessary to overcome the view that aggression is always negative. It is an expression of vitality, of energy, it is a function that protects what is considered fundamental, it is the measure of failure, i.e. frustration at a result not achieved. The sporting gesture makes this channelling possible, but not without the dimension of analysis that is necessary to verbalise the aggressive gesture, i.e. to recognise it, express it, analyse it and understand it, including its consequences for those who have suffered it. In this way, the dimension of failure leads to future improvement and the anger outburst returns, restoring a dimension of balance. Coaches should therefore be proactive in dealing with aggressive gestures and act immediately to prevent them before it degenerates in violence

Training and capacity building

The importance of training sports coaches who accompany children in their activities is noted, especially for those who work with youth and adolescents. Capacity building should not only address the technical-sport aspect, but also the educational and pedagogical dimension. Training is important to identify intervention strategies, but above all to prevent violent attitudes that shape people's lives and affect not only those who suffer them, but also those who accept them.

The trainer must not forget that the group is made up of individuals and is not simply the sum of those individuals. Therefore, he or she must pay attention to the internal dynamics, to the times of each individual, times that can express themselves in a development but also in a regression. It is important to understand when to approach each athlete, paying attention to personal timing; moreover, to avoid the escalation from an aggressive gesture to conflict and violence, each moment of tension must be followed by a moment of de-tension.

It is necessary for the coach to be alert to the formation of subgroups that tend toward exclusion and can result in attitudes of, for example, bullying (which is connoted by the constant repetition of a behavior in an imbalance of forces). Attention should also be paid to those situations where his authority is lacking, such as the locker room.

A coach's training should be multidisciplinary and emphasize skills such as patience, flexibility and pressure management. His work is divided into two inescapable planes: the horizontal level dedicated to relationships and the vertical level dedicated to rules.

Sport has the opportunity to view aggression positively and not as a disorder, so that it does not simply become a reason for punishment or, worse, for exclusion or for an escalation of violence. Instead, it can be seen as an expression of energy that, when channeled, leads to positive results, such as the achievement of a goal set by the team.

In this regard, it is necessary for the team to have a vision, a concrete goal to strive for. It is wiser to "think small" and allow the team to achieve agreed and realistic goals than to strive for unattainable goals that generate frustration (the basis of aggression according to some psychological theories) and do not expect immediate change



When channelled, aggression is an engine that produces both personal and community accomplishments. But the coach must be able to measure it, i.e., recognize and direct it.

To handle aggressive behaviour in the future in a constructive manner without stifling or punishing it, it must be tracked down and explained. It is necessary to analyze where it originated, whether from frustration or from a sense of disrespect or fear, in order to know and recognize it. Also, it is necessary to create a space of understanding for those who have suffered. In fact, conflict arises when the aggressor attacks the aggressor (e.g., after losing a game).

Coaches must remember that they live in conflict because it is part of everyday life and intensifies by the pursuit of results. Since violence is an escalation, sports coaches must be trained to nip it in the bud: they must be able to understand and manage the process. It must not be forgotten that violence can be not only physical but also verbal, and that the opponent is not the enemy, but a human being, a sportsman, who starts from the same point of view and should become the "opponent" only for the time of the sports competition.

All members of the sports organization should be sensitized and aware of radicalizing attitudes that can be attributed to people other than athletes, for example, the coach. Modern sports science should be based on ethical values and a consistent pursuit of the qualities of each athlete. In addition, coaches should emphasize and focus on commonalities that different groups share, e.g., love of sports, soccer, etc.,

It is emphasized that corrective actions towards problematic youth should be indirect in order not to damage the relationship with the youth.

According to the self-determination theory, in order to create a good and healthy sports club culture, it is necessary that:

1. Competence of the sports environment. The athlete must be surrounded by competent people and feel competent
2. Autonomy and freedom: the athlete must feel free to participate in program design, create roles (e.g., mentor, role model, young leader) that can help minority players be seen and experienced in roles different from those conveyed by mainstream media
3. Interaction/Relationship: there needs to be a cohesive society at all levels, from physical therapist to coach, so that athletes feel supported by all to express themselves without fear of others' opinions. The coach must be interested in the development of the athlete as a person and not as an athlete, so that the athlete feels considered and valued first and foremost as a person, even outside the sports environment



Peer-to-Peer Relationships

The importance of peer-to-peer relationships is emphasized, both for the coaches, who can learn new pedagogical techniques through exchanges with other local or European professionals, and for the children, who can benefit from the educational role of a community of peers that enhances their work through group learning.

Peer-to-peer training is a great way to transfer skills from experienced, knowledgeable team members to less experienced ones and promotes motivation.

Information delivered through peer-to-peer training is more likely to be received positively because it is delivered by others who are at the same or similar level. In addition, participants can ask questions without fear of rejection because they know the other participants have been in the same situation and can therefore understand their concerns.

Common goals and declaration of commitment

THE VALUE OF THE RULE: The rule should be understood in its normative value both as a system of social regulation and personal self-regulation, and these two levels should be balanced. The commitment is to involve the sports group in the analysis and definition of the rules, or even to create a time in which both the individual and the group can discuss and express themselves in order to understand their meaning, respect them, but also the emotion of fear or traumatic impulse (as long as it is overcome, the rule is necessary). The rule should always be accompanied by a sanction to be justified and explained.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: Anger should not be stigmatized, but understood, contained and channelled so that it is compensated as an expression of vital energy.

On this basis, the following are some suggestions for the coach

1. Do not ask who triggered the conflict
2. Change the place: the place "connotes" the dispute

3. Wait until the tension subsides: stay in silence
4. Evaluate, depending on the seriousness of the gesture (unless it has escalated into violence) whether it is sufficient to interrupt or whether it is necessary to clarify first separately, later with the team
5. If clarification is needed, clarify it in the movement, while walking, as the movement discharges, vents
6. Apply the sanction, if any, with respect for the recipient
7. Do not impose peace, the important thing is to re-establish a safe ("breathless"), i.e., quiet, environment
8. Never avoid seeing the conflict and pretend that nothing is going on, especially if it is between teenagers. Adults must always intervene and are always responsible for it

THE RULES OF A GOOD COACH: A good trainer must remember that he is first and foremost a point of reference and therefore an example. The coach must first of all start with himself, and then be able to identify, prevent and solve exclusion phenomena.



Here are some useful rules:

Communication: use clear and direct communication

Rules: set some clear and precise rules

Vision: legitimise the sense of the team and identify its mission, the realistic goal

Delegation: organise tasks internally

Acknowledgement: make recognition of positive actions explicit

Conviction: be the first to set an example

Manage conflicts

ACTION STRATEGIES

The intention is expressed to evaluate the identification and regulation of intervention strategies, such as:

1. Interrupt without elaboration
2. Intervene and propose a solution
3. Work separately with the conflicting parties
4. Establish a representation of young athletes, parents and coaches to engage in predefined, planned and regulated spaces
5. Designate a 'third party', a trained 'mediator' who can also be the coach, but better a person who is not involved in the coach-athlete dynamic.

For example, for relations with parents, the club could set up the figure of an accompanying manager who is responsible for managing relations with families.

6. Another method is to create and train a staff to take care of relations with parents, for the most delicate cases, or a contact point for the whole club or for individual sections, led by professionals such as sports psychologists, but also by managers or parents if they are trained.

The important thing is that it is a non-partisan, equidistant, impartial and neutral body that listens to the reasons of both parties and supports them in finding a solution in an impartial way, without making interpretations or judgements, and is able to explain what happened to those directly involved and to the rest of the team and the club.

CREATING A HEALTHY SPORTS CULTURE

To ensure a healthy sport culture, the intention is to:

1. Characterise the sport club as consistent and transparent
2. Create a climate of serenity, identifying personal goals.
3. To promote sports and personal growth
4. To elaborate a technical-sports and social project with clear rules, achievable goals, planned moments of exchange and confrontation

Turin, December 5, 2022

Signatories

CUS Torino
Italy



President: Riccardo D'Elcio

Date 20/12/22

Oltalom Sport Association
Hungary

Pálusz András



[Role of signatory]:[Name]

*ANDRÁS RAKOS
PRESIDENT*

Date:

Oltalom Sportegyesület
1086 Budapest, Dankó u. 15.
Adószám: 10189247-1-42
2.

Public institute for sports Nova Gorica
Slovenia



**Project coordinator
Ines Vidič**


.....



Date: 29.12.2022

Associação Check-IN
Portugal



[Role of signatory]:[Name]



Date:

BXL Europe asbl
Belgium



[Role of signatory]:[Name]

.....President - Roberto GUGLIELMI

Date: 20/12/2022

