

Good Practice: IE GP2

Nathalie Huegler



"Socio-cultural/Sports-based Informal Education Programme"

Main features of the GP programme:

Type of programme	Type of organisation	Field of practice for organisation	Programme scope	Programme duration	Programme occurrence/frequency	Type of funding for GP
Informal education	Charity	Socio-cultural education (sports), peer support, campaigning and awareness raising	Local, national and international	ongoing	Ongoing (various projects and events)	range of funding sources (some international)

Adult Education as a Means to Active Participatory Citizenship (EduMAP) is a Horizon 2020 research project focusing on adult education among young adults at risk of social exclusion. Particular attention is paid to educational policies and practices needed to foster active citizenship among vulnerable young people.

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1. What – Focus (theme, orientation)

IE_GP2 consists of a range of projects, groups and events that take place at a volunteer-led non-governmental organisation in the fields of socio-cultural and socio-political informal education and sports education in Ireland. The organisation works at local, national and international levels, using sports as a vehicle to promote social and cultural inclusion and counter racism and other forms of discrimination. The variety of activities run by the organisation on an ongoing basis include:

- a weekly football activity session open to all but attended in majority by refugee, migrant and ethnic minority young men, with a range of supportive services alongside (e.g. mentoring as well as support in welfare, personal development, as well social and cultural integration, as examples)
- a weekly football group for young women, again with supportive services alongside as above
- a variety of socio-cultural and sports events, workshops and groups (e.g. young leaders development programmes, youth exchange programmes, anti-discrimination workshops in schools delivered by young people)
- support through mentoring and peer mentoring

The programme also functions as a 'gateway' to other training and skills development opportunities, which could include team and leadership skills, coaching qualifications and ongoing support for young people who play semi-professional in clubs or are trying to move into professional footballing careers.

2. For whom – Target group(s)

The young people taking part in the programme are diverse in both age and ethnic background. The majority are ethnic minority young people, including those who arrived with their families from other EU countries, refugees and asylum seekers. Irish traveller young people are also represented. The programme uses an intergenerational approach and the boundaries between 'educator/facilitator' and 'participant' roles can be gradual/fluid: young people often join the events and groups as teenagers when they may be mostly 'participants', but as there is a strong emphasis on capacity building, they then may take on roles as co-facilitators of sessions or events, as peer mentors or as young leaders representing the organisation at events like conferences (both in Ireland and internationally). At the same time, mentoring through organisational leaders may continue for some of the young adults who mainly act in an educator/facilitator capacity.

3. Requirements and access

There are no access requirements apart from the interest in participation. For young people with very limited funds (for example young asylum seekers in 'Direct Provision' centres), the organisation tries to provide material support such as football boots where possible. The programme includes a strong focus on breaking down practical, social or cultural barriers to participation: another example is visiting families and communities of Muslim young women to address any concerns they might have about the cultural appropriateness of young women's involvement in sports.

4. Elements of good practice

The programme supports the cultivation of APC and resilience to vulnerability in a range of ways and can be considered a holistic form of APC practice. Young people emphasise how they benefit particularly from learning through the activities and from role models such as the young coaches. While sports activities are a common medium of participation in the programme, young people also acquire (consciously or unconsciously) a wider range of 'soft skills' (such as teamwork, leadership, organisational skills). Mentorship supports the skills transfer and capacity building processes.

Socio-economic skills are promoted by encouraging young people to think about their aspirations, dreams and future careers early on. This includes providing alternative skills (such as coaching qualifications) for young people who aspire to becoming professional footballers (a very competitive field).

Socio-cultural skills and politico-legal skills are supported through the organisation's emphasis on diversity and equality, working against racism and sectarianism throughout its activities (for example anti-discrimination workshops led by young people in schools; events aimed at promoting voter registration among ethnic minority families; or joint football matches between the police, immigration services and young asylum seekers and refugees).

In terms of moving towards greater gender-equality in participation, IE_GP2 supports young women (especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds and Muslim faith) not only to become involved in sports activities (in a context where female role models, and particularly ethnic minority female role models) are lacking, but it also builds their confidence and competences in terms of socio-economic, socio-cultural and politico-legal dimensions. Examples include young women becoming involved in sports activities in their general lives through participation in IE_GP2, developing confidence in relation to pursuing education and employment aims, as well as participation on a range of political platforms and organisations (e.g. student unions)

The organisation engages in extensive networks at local, national and international levels. This forms an important part not just of its community development and international development aims, but also provides opportunities for interns from international backgrounds on the one hand, and platforms for the young people involved in IE_GP2 to get involved in other organisations internationally, and to speak at conferences and events.

5. Perceived challenges

The key challenges reported by programme leaders are:

- Involving more indigenous Irish young people, which the programme is addressing through its anti-discrimination and anti-xenophobia programmes (e.g. in schools or community groups)
- Sustaining its work which is volunteer-led and takes place in a small community-based NGO with limited funding or recognition from some of the more powerful actors in the fields of sports or from government – this is something the programme and organisation is trying to address through continuously promoting its work on a variety of national and international platforms, as well as through extensive participation in networks and initiatives.
- Concerns that ongoing issues with racism, sectarianism and discrimination (especially based on gender and faith) remain a problem both at national and international levels which is often insufficiently or only superficially addressed

Concerns that some of the innovative practices and ideas from the programme are being plagiarised by other (often more resourceful) organisations

6. Testimonials

For me it's just about motivating me to play sports, and not getting like a bad influence with people so you won't do bad stuff when you get older. So just staying active and doing sports is much better than ending up somewhere without a life.

...especially the youth exchange helped me like build confidence on me, speaking to people as well. And yeah it just matured me as well.

I used to be very shy when I was a kid but then I got into [the programme] and I just got very confident



7. More Information

EduMAP project's publications:

[Books and articles](#)

Academic publications that address key themes of the EduMAP project

[Deliverables and reports](#)

EduMAP's official deliverables, related reports and publications

[Good practice cases](#)

Key features from 40 'good practice' cases from 20 countries

[Working papers](#)

A selection of findings from desk and field research in 20 European countries

[Other resources](#)

Other types of resources made for the project (illustrations, comics etc.)