

Aspiring and Inspiring Youth Leaders

LEARNINGS INSIGHT REPORT ON INVOLVING YOUTH LEADERS

An analysis of the key findings of the ERASMUS+ Aspiring and Inspiring Youth Leadership Project

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IO Description from the application	
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Output description (including its form, impact and transferability)	<p>Description: A collection of experiences and learnings with the process of involving Youth Leaders better in the governance of national and international sport federations/organisations. The learnings are about the specific lessons we learned regarding the involvement of Youth Leaders with the aim of improving governance. It will also include the specific learnings with this group when it comes to developing leadership programmes.</p> <p>Form Analytic report with a summary of learnings</p> <p>Impact / Transferability The report will serve for any person or organisation who is planning to embark on a similar road, to take learnings in order to speed up the process and to prevent wasting time on areas which could have been prevented. The insight will be set up in such a way that it is transferable for other purposes, though not too general as it will lose its function. This IO should not be confused with a final project report which is describing the outcomes and results of the project itself.</p>
Please describe the tasks leading to the production of the intellectual output and the applied methodology.	<p>a. Agree on methodology and instruct partners how to document insights/experiences along the way</p> <p>b. Review experiences/insights pooled from partners</p> <p>c. Produce and publish report publicly (for use by other organisations or e.g. students)</p>

Please describe the tasks leading to the production of the intellectual output and the applied methodology.	<p>a. Create and develop an awareness communications brief, objectives, key concepts, target audiences</p> <p>b. Develop awareness communication guidelines draft version</p> <p>c. Scrutinise guidelines by selected project partners and selected future-users</p> <p>d. Develop final awareness communication guidelines and publish publicly</p> <p>e. Deploy the guidelines and tools to hockey and publish the awareness campaign as a case study</p>																
Number and profile of staff involved ('manager', 'teacher/trainer/researcher', 'technician', 'administrative staff'). Please justify it and link it to concrete tasks.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Partner & Profile</th> <th>Partner & Profile</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CU Researcher</td> <td>a,b,c</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SQ Manager</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>SG Manager</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>EHF Manager</td> <td>b,c</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CHF Manager</td> <td>a,b,c</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WHF Manager</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>CHF/WHF/UHF/PHF/SHF/DHF Researcher</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Explanation : CU = University of Copenhagen, SQ = SportsinQ, SG = StreetGames, EHF = European Hockey Federation, CHF = Czech Hockey Federation, WHF = Wales Hockey Federation, DHF = Danish Hockey Federation, SHF = Swedish Hockey Federation, PHF = Polish Hockey Federation, UHF = Ukrainian Hockey Federation</p>	Partner & Profile	Partner & Profile	CU Researcher	a,b,c	SQ Manager		SG Manager		EHF Manager	b,c	CHF Manager	a,b,c	WHF Manager		CHF/WHF/UHF/PHF/SHF/DHF Researcher	
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Media	Final version will be published on the project Website & project FB page. Consider putting on the dedicated website (see IO5) for sharing publicly.																

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This programme is about 10 European partners from various backgrounds who teamed up to put together an inspiring leadership programme for those youth leaders who are ready to make a next step toward a more senior function in the national or international sports world. The leadership programme is put together with help of the youth participants themselves together with other experts in the field of sports.



Special thanks to the author **Adam Evans** from the **University of Copenhagen** for leading on the production of this Learnings insight report on involving youth leaders

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Report Rationale: This report outlines the processes involved in the Aspiring and Inspiring Youth Leadership (AIYL) project, covering data collection, goal establishment, and subsequent monitoring and evaluation. The evaluation methodology, conducted from January 2021 to December 2023, adheres to a method-driven framework based on Rossi and colleagues (2004). The AIYL goals and action plan, developed early in the project, provide evaluative steps for achieving desired outcomes. The data presented will evaluate goal achievement, share learning outcomes, and discuss potential impact and sustainability.

2. Aims and objectives: This report has the following general aims:

1. To evaluate the development and execution of administrative, management and communication procedures within the project, focusing on the quality of coordination, upon monitoring and evaluation findings, as well as effective dissemination.
2. To examine the effectiveness and efficacy of the Intellectual Outputs generated in the project, assessing whether they contributed to sustainable implementation.

In addition, the report has the following specific aims and objectives:

- a) To summarize key lessons learned, shared learning outcomes and transferrable / scalable knowledge derived from the project. These outcomes will focus upon specific intellectual outputs.
- b) To gain insights into the experiences and perspectives of project participants, including partners, stakeholders and service end-users, in order to assess project impact.

3. Report methods: This report employs various data for the evaluation of Intellectual Outputs, utilizing methods tailored to each output when necessary. Methods include Evidence Building through literature searches, Record Keeping involving partners and EuroHockey, Quantitative Data Collection, Questionnaires and Stakeholder and partner interviews conducted in a semi-structured format.

4. Intellectual Output 1 utilized a scoping review methodology to analyse literature on youth leadership programmes in sports. The systematic search covered both peer-reviewed and grey literature, resulting in 149 included articles. Results were grouped into themes, including the conceptualization of leadership and youth leadership, models of youth leadership (cognitive psychological and multilevel approaches), and youth leadership programmes.

The report emphasized the complexity of the term "leadership" in sport. Two dominant models, transformational and multilevel approaches, are discussed. Good practice in Youth leadership programmes was examined with an emphasis on effective programme features.

Key findings and recommendations from Intellectual Output 1 were presented to project partners in August 2021, influencing subsequent outputs. Recommendations included broadening the understanding of youth leadership beyond considering it 'only' a trait by adopting a multi-level approach. Clarity on the definition of "youth" was identified as crucial for the project.

The report was completed in May 2022, with key findings circulated earlier, and the discussions from Intellectual Output 1 had a direct impact on subsequent project phases.

5. Intellectual Output 2: The grassroots model, developed collaboratively by EuroHockey, the Welsh Hockey Federation, and Street Games, targeted youth aged between 18 and 30, with flexibility for a younger audience. The model aimed to introduce youth to leadership in hockey, offering a highly adaptable toolkit sensitive to cultural and experiential differences. Content aligned with the outcomes of Intellectual Output 1, covering modules such as communication, leadership qualities, governance, and project management. Pilot Implementation of the Grassroots Programme was intended for six countries. Pilots faced challenges in Poland, Ukraine, and the Czech Republic, but were successful in Denmark, Sweden and Wales. Youth leaders took responsibility for planning and implementation, with life-circumstances changes and alignment with national federation goals affecting pilot execution.

Intellectual Output 2 achieved its goals with the development and piloting of the grassroots programme. Learning outcomes from pilot feedback included:

- The need for flexibility and adaptation to local contexts, requiring effort from youth leaders. How Medium-term commitment from youth leaders was crucial for effective planning and implementation, and support at the national federation level could enhance sustainability.
- Aligning programme goals with national federation objectives increased the chances of sustainability and provided a pathway for youth leaders.
- Balancing educational content with social activities and favouring in-person programmes were noted, with opinions split on residential options.
- Feedback suggested that a single-day format could be effective.
- The programme's basic content and reliance on volunteers were highlighted, recommending a clear pathway to more advanced leadership programmes for differentiation and advancement.
- The EuroHockey Institute was suggested as a potential avenue for this progression.

6. Intellectual Output 3 involved the development of an educational curriculum by SportsinQ in collaboration with the consortium, aligning with recommendations from Intellectual Output 1. Inspired by the IOC Young Leaders Programme and these findings, the curriculum adopted a multi-level approach, integrating various elements of sport leadership. Modules covered topics such as Sport, Governance, and Integrity, Sport and Culture, Personal leadership, Leading effective teams, Technical Management in Sport, and Value creation with a sports business plan. The programme aimed to strike a balance between theory, applied knowledge, reflections, and blended learning.

The curriculum underwent trials with youth leaders at transnational project meetings, resulting in positive feedback and adjustments based on suggestions. The curriculum was pitched at an undergraduate level, offering 3 online sessions (including intensive preparations and work assignments) and a 2-day in-person event over a 10-month period. A 'project proposal' model was used for participant selection. Other elements, such as personal leadership and leading effective teams, were piloted separately by an independent sport psychologist, Marjolein Torenbeek.

Intellectual Output 3 achieved its goals with the development and scheduling of the 10-month Regional Youth Leader Programme. Feedback and piloting led to key decisions about the application process, format, duration, and content of the programme. Shared learning outcomes included:

- The recognition of the need for adaptability in programme duration due to significant changes in the life circumstances of youth leaders.
- The congested educational landscape for youth leaders emphasized the importance of setting the programme apart and aligning it with participants' needs and aspirations.
- Engagement challenges highlighted the necessity of ongoing support from national federations and a flexible approach.
- The input of youth leaders was crucial in adapting the programme, emphasizing the importance of participant involvement in future planning for better alignment with their priorities and needs.
- Team-building exercises were deemed essential for fostering a sense of unity among youth leaders.

Overall, Intellectual Output 3 demonstrated success in achieving its goals and adapting the curriculum based on valuable feedback from pilot implementations.

7. Intellectual Output 4: consisted of a presentation/report focusing on career pathways into sporting positions, primarily within hockey. The report was divided into three sections: 1) insights into common career pathways into sport, 2) self-directed brainstorming and opportunity recognition, and 3) insights and research. Each section featured a case study of a well-recognized figure in hockey who pursued a career in the sport. The presentation provided a clear overview of the skillsets required for various roles, including players, volunteers, coaches/officials, club board members, development officers, and senior administrative roles.

The intention of the document was to encourage free and critical thinking among young leaders about the diverse roles and careers available in sports. The presentation was designed as a self-guided course on the FIH learning platform, with an auto-generated certificate upon completion. This course content was also mirrored on the EuroHockey Institute website, accessible to participants in Intellectual Outputs 2 and 3.

Goal Achievement and Shared Learning Outcomes: Intellectual Output 4: Intellectual Output 4 achieved its goals, with resources completed fully and on time. Feedback from youth leaders during steering group meetings indicated the potential benefits of the resources. The information provided, based on well-established practices within hockey, is likely to be most relevant to this sport. Additionally, the information serves as a supplementary resource to other Intellectual Outputs within the programme. Overall, Intellectual Output 4 successfully fulfilled its objectives.

8. Intellectual Output 5: consisted of guidelines for creating awareness to ensure that the various outputs are deployed in partner countries and beyond. The document describes how the team worked towards the definition of the guidelines, defines the target audiences and gives direction to the communication plan leading for the start of implementation in 2024. It also defines the content owners and leading organisations who took the lead in ensuring a sustainable follow up for the project. To this end, EuroHockey, the European hockey governing body took it upon themselves to embed the key outputs in their development and education platform, the EuroHockey Institute.

The intention of the document was to ensure impact during the start of the roll out is maximised by presenting information to target audiences. During the various transnational project meetings, all project partners took a role in discussing which way of communication would benefit the programme (especially the youth leaders).

Intellectual Output 5 successfully achieved its goals, despite a minor delay. The resources were fully created, and key individuals and organisations responsible for activating the campaign were outlined in the document; EuroHockey led the implementation efforts. Specifically, Mr. Tom Pedersen and Mr. Cameron Findler lead the EuroHockey workgroup taskforce, and Mr. Jamie Hooper, a former youth leader, has been added as the implementation lead and mentor for the IO3 program, overseeing its rollout from 2024.

One significant lesson highlighted in the guidelines is the importance of connecting youth leaders from the workgroup and the EuroHockey Youth Festival to effectively communicate the benefits of participating in the developed programmes. This peer-to-peer communication strategy aims to enhance impact and encourage young leaders to actively engage with their networks, promoting engagement. The project, originally targeting the European hockey family, will extend its reach to the international hockey federation (FIH) development teams and other entities such as NOC's, youth organizations (e.g., ENGSO), commercial businesses, academic parties, and other sport federations through the networks of the workgroup.

9. Project management:

Following the conclusion of the Aspiring and Inspiring Youth Leadership (AIYL) project, feedback was gathered through two focus groups—one with youth leaders and the other with project partners. The discussions covered various aspects of the project, with both positive observations and specific points for improvement. Key points from the feedback can be summarized as follows:



i. Inclusivity and Safe Space:

- Partners highlighted that the project had a very inclusive atmosphere, acting as a 'safe space.'
- Participants felt heard and believed that their input was taken seriously.
- The skillset and knowledge base of the group were deemed highly appropriate for the project's needs.

ii. Challenges in Project Initiation:

- Project initiation during the COVID-19 pandemic required a hybrid format.
- Difficulties were noted in establishing connections between the two halves of the group, particularly between those in Britain and those in the rest of Europe.
- Suggestions were made (and consequently realized) for an overnight stay and social event to foster better connections during the early stages.

iii. Communication and Meeting Efficiency:

- The extended periods between steering group meetings posed challenges in maintaining connections.
- Partners suggested more frequent online meetings or interim updates to share information and ensure progressive discussions.
- The group, having other commitments, spent time at the start of meetings reminding members about the project, hindering efficiency.

iv. Sharing of Good Practices:

- Despite challenges, the sharing of good practices and reflections during meetings and throughout the project was considered a particular strength.
- Maintaining communication channels beyond meetings, such as through WhatsApp and a regularly updated shared drive with all materials, was emphasized.

v. Clarity of Roles and Engagement:

- Some youth leaders felt unclear about their role in the early stages of the project, feeling like 'passengers' until their involvement in specific intellectual outputs began.
- Ongoing engagement was challenging, and there was a perceived lack of a strategic view of the entire project at times.

vi. Challenge of Changing Personnel:

- The large number of youth leaders and changing partners posed challenges later in the project.
- The changing list of partners, especially concerning youth leaders, was considered one of the biggest learnings for future projects.
- Partners' roles in other projects and jobs limited their engagement and potentially impacted their effectiveness.

Overall, the feedback highlighted the positive aspects of the project's inclusivity and knowledge-sharing, while also pointing out challenges related to communication, engagement, and the changing dynamics of the group.

10. Conclusions

The AIYL ERASMUS+ programme has successfully achieved its goals with logical and focused objectives aligned to five Intellectual Outputs. Each output saw timely goal achievement, reflecting an effective partnership that combined expertise and experience. The collaboration brought together knowledge of education programme standards with the real-life experiences of young people in Europe. Actions taken were informed by solid evidence and established good practices from hockey, scientific research, and other programmes.

Challenges primarily revolved around the rapid turnover of personnel among partners, influenced by contemporary challenges faced by young people, such as study, job commitments, and other considerations. Variable support from national federations could potentially hinder future programme implementation, although it did not impede the successful production of learning materials aligned with the project's goals. The integration of these resources into the new EuroHockey Institute suggests a high likelihood of cohesive service provision.

It is worth noting that, despite being piloted, the learning resources are yet to be fully implemented in their final format. The sustainability of the programmes will become clearer over time. Nevertheless, positive indicators suggest that aligning with the EuroHockey Institute and linking resources to the global federation (FIH) will ensure their long-term utilization.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ASPIRING AND INSPIRING YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROJECT

The Aspiring and Inspiring Youth Leadership project represents a partnership of 10 European partners from various backgrounds teaming up to put together an inspiring leadership programme for youth leaders who are ready to make a next step toward a more senior function in the national or international sports world. The leadership programme will be constructed with help of youth participants themselves, together with other non-hockey specific experts.

“Sport Leadership off the pitch is of the same importance as leadership on the pitch. I’m looking forward for a journey where together with selected youth leaders we will put together a program which will help future young people not only to achieve their sports potential but above all their human potential”

Gino Schilders, programme lead

The aim of AIYL is to tailor a comprehensive curriculum which will cover the multi-functional sector of sports administration and governance. The result will be a European sport leadership training programme covering multiple days over a longer period of time, within which formal learning with on-the-job learning experiences will be combined.

The main objective of the AIYL project is to:

- Ensure a long-term reform agenda necessary for sport to keep playing a critical role in society via Good Governance principles, ensuring a healthy pipeline of future sport administration and management leaders. This will be done by helping young leaders to develop themselves and to inspire them to go after their dreams, get their voices heard and to take on more senior leadership roles in sport administration. Including starting up or leading a club, joining the management team of a national (or international) sport organisation/federation and/or also being end-responsible for running a (European) major sporting event.

The project also aims to increase diversity in management and decision-making positions in sport, which will in turn lead to better governed organisations. The project is committed to working with international standards of Good Governance and upholding both EU and Olympic values as a matter of priority.



- **EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**
- **DATA CAPTURE**

This section of the report delineates the overall processes involved in data collection, goal establishment, and the subsequent monitoring and evaluation.

Evaluation Methodology

This report is founded on a methodological assessment of the Aspiring and Inspiring Youth Leadership (AIYL) project, conducted from January 2021 to December 2023. The approach employed in this evaluation adhered to a method-driven framework, rooted in the programme's goals and built upon applied and scientifically rigorous processes integral to the project. For instance, the decision-making process of the project directly incorporated evidence-building and the compilation of best practices, while ongoing monitoring and evaluation data collection took place throughout the project to assess goal attainment.

The action plan for the AIYL project were developed following the rationale outlined by Rossi and colleagues (2004). These documents were created in the early stages of the project, particularly in relation to the development of components aligned with the EIH Erasmus+ project.

The AIYL goals and action plan were designed as detailed expressions of how the project should unfold on a step-by-step basis. Essentially, they represented the intended actions deemed necessary to achieve the desired outcomes, as suggested by Rossi et al. (2004). The AIYL goals and action plan elucidated, in straightforward terms, the project's structure, the resources employed (and how they would be utilized) to bring about change, and how these changes aligned with the overarching project goals.

The following report presents data relating to the extent to which goals were achieved, shared learning outcomes arising from project outcomes, and discusses the potential for impact and sustainability of project work.

This report therefore has the following aims:

- To assess the development and implementation of administrative, management and communication procedures in AIYL.
- To assess the effectiveness and efficacy of the courses and framework
- To assess the efficacy, effectiveness, fidelity, and sustainability of the AIYL education pathways.

Data capture

This report relies on various general approaches to data acquisition employed across the evaluation of all Intellectual Outputs, alongside specific measures tailored to individual intellectual outputs when necessary. The general methods of data capture encompass the following:

1. Evidence Building:

- Conducted through literature searches using academic search engines and databases, with a focus on the Royal Danish Library system and various academic search databases.
- Employed Boolean search strings in multi-stage models of data checking and refinement typically adopting a scoping review methodology.

2. Record Keeping:

- Involves the maintenance of records, minutes, and timelines by all project partners, with a particular emphasis on the Czech Hockey Federation as the project coordinators

3. Quantitative Data Collection:

- Encompasses data related to event attendance, engagement levels, communication reach, and diversity.
- Primarily gathered by event organizers and the Czech Hockey Federation as project coordinators.

4. Questionnaires:

- Used with participants in events associated with the project, specifically aiming to assess their participation experience.

5. Stakeholder and partner interviews:

- Conducted in a semi-structured format, frequently incorporating project goals and objectives as a central framework for organizing discussions. These interviews took place in person after the completion of the project.

In summary, the information gathered through these methods served as the basis for the summaries, analyses, evaluations, and recommendations provided below for each Intellectual Output, as well as for the overall impact assessment of AIYL.

THE AIYL GOALS

- INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 1: RESEARCH REPORT
- INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 2: GRASSROOTS MODEL
- INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 3: REGIONAL YOUTH LEADER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
- INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 4: CAREER PATHWAYS
- INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 5: AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

As outlined above, AIYL had multiple goals relating to the following Intellectual Outputs:

Intellectual Output 1: Research Report

Intellectual Output 1 was a research report that presented data obtained through a scoping review of literature focused upon youth leadership programmes in sport.

The **central aim** of this report was to:

- Identify and categorize the main practices, solutions, or programmes already in existence in the field of leadership programmes in sport, particularly in relation to young people.

This primary aim was underpinned by the following objectives:

- To Identify and categorize the main practices, solutions, or programmes already in existence in the field of leadership programmes, particularly in relation to young people.
- To focus upon methodologies, standards/gold standards, goals and objectives of previous programmes, including, for example, the rationale behind youth sport leadership programmes; and with a social-scientific focus (e.g. sociological, psychological, pedagogical or political foci).

Intellectual Output 2: Grassroots model

- Create blueprint/framework based on Wales journey and existing set up
- Produce Pilot plan for Grassroot guidelines and best practise for national development
- Produce Final Grassroot guidelines and best practise for national development

Intellectual Output 3: Regional Youth Leader Development Programme

- Define structure/scope/set up for the development curriculum
- Define how the courses will be offered (who/when/where/conditions/max group size/modularity options/finances*)
- Paper on certification possibilities (incl. options like open-badges)
- Find partners/trainer candidates to deliver the content and mentors for experience-base parts
- Produce Pilot plan for Youth Leader Development Programme
- Produce Final Youth Leader Development Programme

Intellectual Output 4: Career Pathways

- Analyse pathways of successful sport officials/managers + which interventions "boosted" their careers
- Create pathways framework
- Define potential career pathways
- Define skillsets necessary to walk the pathways

Intellectual Output 5: Awareness Campaign

- Create and develop an awareness communications brief, objectives, target audiences
- Define ID key concepts
- Develop awareness communication campaign
- Integrate campaign with content (photo, video, social etc)
- Publish communication strategy as a case study

Regarding the evaluation of the project's impact, this report concentrates on the attainment of goals within the AIYL ERASMUS+ project. These goals primarily revolve around the creation of Intellectual Outputs and their initial reception by stakeholders. Although it is possible to draw definitive conclusions about short-term impact, reflections on the long-term sustainability of AIYL are not within the scope of the current report.

- INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 1: RESEARCH REPORT
- RESULTS
- GOAL ACHIEVEMENT: INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 1
- SHARED LEARNING OUTCOMES: INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 1

The following sections of this report outline evidence relating to each intellectual output relating to the EuroHockey Institute programme. Specifically, the report outlines the extent to which goals were achieved, and shared learning outcomes were forthcoming from the programme.

Intellectual Output 1: Research Report

The primary aims of intellectual output 1 included:

- To identify and categorize the main practices, solutions, or programmes already in existence in the field of leadership programmes in sport, particularly in relation to young people.
- This primary aim was underpinned by the following objectives:
- To identify and categorize the main practices, solutions, or programmes already in existence in the field of leadership programmes, particularly in relation to young people.
- To focus upon methodologies, standards/gold standards, goals and objectives of previous programmes, including, for example, the rationale behind youth sport leadership programmes; and with a social-scientific focus (e.g. sociological, psychological, pedagogical or political foci).

Results

Intellectual Output 1 utilized a scoping review methodology to analyse literature on youth leadership programs in sports. The approach involved a systematic search across academic search engines, encompassing both peer-reviewed and grey literature, along with a narrative review of diverse data sources. The intention was to map existing literature on leadership in sports, with a focus on youth and leadership programs, highlighting consensus on good practices. One hundred and forty nine articles were included.

Results were grouped into several themes, including:

- 1) Conceptualizing leadership and youth leadership:** Leadership, a widely used yet complex term, lacks a clear definition and is approached from various perspectives, resulting in numerous models and theories. The predominant approach views leadership as a teachable 'trait,' often explored through cognitive psychology, emphasizing individual qualities. Leadership is also conceptualized as a multi-scale process, operating at individual, dyadic, group, organizational, contextual, and societal levels. Youth leadership differs from adult leadership due to age, experience, and developmental variations. Assumptions about youth leadership involve developmental stages, dynamic complexity, teachability, and its significance in providing young voices and supporting social justice. While sports are recognized for teaching leadership, intentional instruction beyond sports participation is crucial for positive youth development and leadership skill acquisition.
- 2) Models of Youth Leadership:** Models of youth leadership can broadly be aligned with either Cognitive psychological approaches of multilevel approaches – although these two approaches need not be mutually exclusive. From the perspective of cognitive and applied psychology, there is a predominant focus on transformational leadership, emphasizes the connection between group performance and a leader's orientation or style. Transformational leadership, characterized by shared vision, challenging followers to improve, and intrinsic motivation, is often contrasted with transactional leadership, which relies on exchanges with followers for compliance. Transformational leaders must exhibit role modeling, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, and inspirational motivation, with positive outcomes observed on individual and dyadic scales. However, critiques highlight limitations such as the focus on correlation rather than causation, overlooking important variables, neglecting identity and power dynamics, and a lack of consideration for the dark side of leadership. Conversely, while the transformational leadership model often centers on individual leaders and their traits, alternative approaches view leadership as a collective and socially constructed phenomenon. These perspectives emphasize the need for multilevel investigations, incorporating organizational, developmental, and socio-cultural factors in understanding leadership in sports. In this collaborative model, effective leadership emerges from relational interactions and contextual experiences, extending beyond individual skills. In sports, off-field elements such as governance, organizational culture, and socio-cultural differences are considered significant, urging leaders, including youth leaders, to possess knowledge about the diverse contexts and cultures in which they lead and how to influence them.
- 3) Youth Leadership Programmes:** Youth leadership programmes, while common, are less prevalent in sports and are grounded in key assumptions, such as the staged development of youth leadership and the belief that all young people can be leaders. While some programmes focus on marginalized groups with social justice goals, others may neglect social inequality. Effective programs emphasize learner-centered flexibility, a balance between formal learning and practical experience, reflexivity, and engagement with youth leader voices.

Discussions, self-reflections, awareness of socio-cultural contexts, and diverse learning techniques are integral. Notable case studies in this report include the IOC Young Leaders Programme, Nordic International Leadership Education Programme, IOC New Leaders Programme, and Women's Sport Leadership Academy.

The report was completed in May 2022, although key findings were circulated significantly before this date.

Goal achievement: Intellectual Output 1

Intellectual output 1 was summarized and presented to project partners in August 2021. The group engaged in discussions regarding this output, reaching a consensus on its content. The outcomes and recommendations from this discussion had a direct impact upon Intellectual Outputs 2 and 3.

In particular, recommendations included consideration as youth leadership as more than just a teachable trait, and instead to incorporate understanding of socio-cultural contexts and group dynamics in any educational programmes. The prevalent concept of transformational leadership, whilst valuable, has faced scrutiny from multi-frame approaches, which consider broader factors like inequalities, cultural norms, organizational configurations, and interpersonal relationships. Similarly, while sports provide a crucial arena for leadership development, intentional efforts are required, and consensus points toward effective leader-centred programs combining theoretical and practical experiences. The goal to empower young people and to encourage their reflections on leadership and fostering cross-sectorial partnerships were considered crucial elements.

Shared learning outcomes: intellectual output 1

To summarise, several shared learning outcomes arose from Intellectual Output 1. These included:

- That leadership is a contested term, and a clear definition and setting educational goals for education programmes are essential
- The need to incorporate a multi-level approach to understanding youth leadership
- The need to balance theoretical, practical, collaborative and self-directed learning through youth leadership educational programmes, and
- The importance of placing emphasis in youth leadership programmes on present leadership potential of young people, rather than the leader they may become in the future.
- In this respect, a clear definition of 'youth' was required in the project.



INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 2: GRASSROOTS MODEL

- RESULTS
- PILOT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GRASSROOTS PROGRAMME
- THE DANISH PILOT
- THE WELSH PILOT
- THE SWEDISH PILOT
- GOAL ACHIEVEMENT AND SHARED LEARNING OUTCOMES:
INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 2

The primary aims of intellectual output 2 included:

- To create blueprint/framework based on Wales journey and existing set up
- Produce Pilot plan for Grassroots guidelines and best practice for national development
- Produce Final Grassroots guidelines and best practice for national development

Results

The grassroots model was developed over time by EuroHockey, the Welsh Hockey Federation, and Street Games. A working definition of youth was adopted as those aged between 18 and 30, although the resources in the grassroots handbook could equally be directed at those younger than this age range. The intention of the grassroots model was to provide a first introduction to youth leadership for those involved in the sport of hockey. The toolkit was intended to be highly flexible and adaptable to local needs and specific audiences. The authors were keenly aware of the potential for cultural and experiential difference amongst audiences for the Grassroots programme, and built the toolkit in a manner which enabled significant interpretation by course leads.

Content was developed according to the outcomes of Intellectual Output 1, and situated against several modules and activities. Example icebreaker activities and sharing strategies were aligned with models for exercises (e.g. SWOT analyses and Risk Assessments). Modules included communication (e.g. Public Speaking), defining leadership qualities, governance and project management. Modules were interspersed with numerous group activities and opportunities to reflect upon content and practice, indicating alignment with many of the learning outcomes from Intellectual Output 1 (e.g. mixture of theory, practice, collaboration and reflection, and taking a multi-level approach).

Pilot implementation of the grassroots programme

The programme, rebranded as the EuroHockey Institute National Youth Leadership Certificate, was intended to be piloted in six countries (Wales, Denmark, Sweden, Ukraine, Poland and the Czech Republic). Due to changes in organizational representation of youth leaders from Poland and the war in Ukraine, these pilots did not proceed. The pilot in the Czech Republic did not proceed in the scope planned as the youth leader was not able to gather a sufficiently large group to test the programme. Nevertheless, he met with a group of young volunteers, however, and had their first youth forum meeting in the country – a significant step towards hosting the programme in the future. In all cases, Youth leaders in the partnership took full responsibility for planning and implementation of the pilots. Notably, changes in the life-circumstances of the youth leaders (for example moving between study and employment) was a primary reason why the pilots were difficult to plan and execute. Similarly, aligning the course with specific national federation goals was key in obtaining support and longer-term commitment from those involved at the planning level, and in increasing the likelihood of one of the participants taking up the role in the future. Setting clear expectations for the programme was considered key, here.

The programme was implemented effectively with larger groups in two countries (Denmark and Wales), and with a smaller group in a third country (Sweden). Feedback was obtained from these pilot programmes by the youth leader responsible for the programme. Findings for the Danish and Welsh pilots are outlined below:

The Danish Pilot

The Danish pilot of the grassroots model proceeded in person in December 2022. The pilot was very successful, and was attended by 5 participants aged on average 19 years (2 women and 3 men). These participants were youth board members, a team manager and a youth coach. Participants were recruited by the national federation, who emailed clubs, and additional advertisements were made by email and word of mouth. The programme was run over two days with an overnight stay. Feedback about the key elements of the course were that there could be some cultural differences between content and the Danish context (the assumption was that the programme was based upon the British curriculum – although this was not the case - and this made it less relevant to the Danish context). Participants enjoyed a good focus upon group activities, and the group discussed the content. Following the programme, the youth leaders associated with AIYL established an ongoing working group arising from the pilot, funded by the national association, and linked to the development committee in Denmark. There is a possibility of long-term sustainability for the programme, as youth leaders are offered the opportunity to take up more responsibilities for youth development; at the time of writing, however, much of the ongoing work of the group relies heavily upon the AIYL youth leader, who championed the programme and follow-up actions.

The Welsh Pilot

The Welsh pilot ran over a 5 hour period with four participants, including the youth leader who coordinated the session. Feedback was positive although with a small number of participants meaningful conclusions are difficult to draw. However, for those that did participate, the course was considered to be very useful, appropriate for a number of scenarios, led to good understanding of leadership and was fun, if a little lengthy. Those delivering the workshop also noted similar feedback, and would adapt the content in future to be more focused and incorporate more specific definitions for many concepts to ensure focused discussions.

The Swedish Pilot

The Swedish pilot ran in January 2023 with a group of three men aged 21. Participants did not hold key roles within hockey, but were members of club hockey and occasionally worked in hockey with other young people. Due to a short notice period, participants were approached by direct contact with a hockey club and through limited communication through the Swedish federation. The programme ran across two days, with minimal team building and discussion due to the small group size. Content was adapted somewhat, although all key content was covered, and content was briefly evaluated. Participants felt the programme was worthwhile, although hampered by a small group size. No further actions were enacted following the programme in the Swedish context, perhaps underlining the participants' marginal roles within the hockey community in this country.

Goal achievement and shared learning outcomes: Intellectual Output 2

Goals were achieved for Intellectual output 2; the grassroots programme was generated, and pilots were run in several countries. Where pilots were run, feedback was obtained, leading to several learning outcomes. These can be summarised as follows:

- The need for flexibility and adaptation to national and local contexts is essential, although requires some effort from youth leaders involved in planning and implementing the programme.
- Planning an implementation of the programme is also reliant upon a medium-term commitment from youth leaders, increasing the chances of changes in their life-circumstances limiting effectiveness. Support at national federation level could be one way to allay this.
- Similarly, ensuring that a demonstrable goal (aligned to national federation goals and organisation, such as committees) is more likely to enhance sustainability and provide a pathway for youth leaders on the course to utilise their skills in real-world settings. Youth development committees would be one such avenue for progression.

- With regards to content, feedback focused upon balancing educational content with social and other activities. In-person programmes were favoured. Opinions were split about whether to make the programme residential or not, and feedback suggested that, if necessary, content could be covered in a single day. This could potentially support those with less time to devote to participating in a two half-day leadership programme; although one could question whether those unwilling to commit to such a relatively short-duration course would make suitable or effective leaders in the first place.
- That said, course content is relatively basic, theoretical principles are relatively limited, and the programme is heavily dependent upon volunteers. This is likely to maximise participation and flexibility, perhaps at the cost of a degree of intellectual sophistication. Nevertheless, the intention for the certification is to provide an introduction to leadership principles and practices, and the programme fills this role well for younger participants in particular. In an environment in which young people face a myriad of educational options and competitive courses, a clear pathway from this programme into more advanced leadership educational programmes would potentially set the programme apart and therefore be recommended. The EuroHockey Institute would be one potential avenue through which to do this.

INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 3: REGIONAL YOUTH LEADER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

- RESULTS
- GOAL ACHIEVEMENT AND SHARED LEARNING OUTCOMES:
INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 3

Objectives for Intellectual Output 3 included the following:

- Define structure/scope/set up for the development curriculum
- Define how the courses will be offered (who/when/where/conditions/max group size/modularity options/finances)
- Paper on certification possibilities (incl. options like open-badges)
- Find partners/trainer candidates to deliver the content and mentors for experience-base parts
- Produce Pilot plan for Youth Leader Development Programme
- Produce Final Youth Leader Development Programme

Results

The educational curriculum for Intellectual Output 3 was produced throughout 2022 by SportsInQ (in collaboration with the consortium), and was again directly informed by the recommendations of Intellectual Output 1. Initially inspired by the IOC Young Leaders Programme, the syllabus was developed so that it took a multi-level approach. The intention of this programme was to move beyond seeing the course as focused upon a single element (e.g. leadership as a trait, or as a purely entrepreneurial role), and to integrate other elements of sport leadership into the programme (such as culture and principles of governance). The programme sought balance between theory, applied knowledge, reflections and blended learning. The programme introduced several modules including

- Sport, Governance and Integrity
- Sport and Culture
- Personal leadership and Leading effective teams
- Technical Management in Sport, and
- Value creation and developing a sports business plan.

Content was pitched approximately at undergraduate level (albeit with fewer hours of contact and self-directed learning than a typical undergraduate course), and included 2 online sessions and an in-person 2 day event. This model of delivery was chosen to maximize the potential for participation for participants from federations with fewer resources, and non-professional hockey players/workforce who could find travel costly and time-consuming. The programme was envisaged to take place over a 10 month period. According to the course manual, the programme was intended to be:

- Relevant to National Federation and committee's and their stakeholders in Europe;
- To cover the most common needs and skills of volunteer administrators or elected executives of a National Federation or Committee or any other sport organization;
- To be an "open" programme: all comments and feedback will be welcome so that we can improve the material; and
- To provide knowledge which may be passed on to others.

Significant discussions were held during the ERASMUS+ meetings about who the course should be targeted at, the selection processes in place, and the format, duration and organization of the course. Final decisions were based upon considering the way that this programme was integrated into a continuous development pathway with Intellectual Output 2 and other EuroHockey initiatives, and the course was ultimately targeted at highly skilled youth leaders who were likely to have experience working with their national federation (or with clubs and associations close to them). The notion was that such persons were likely to have the support to devise, develop and implement sustainable sports development programmes as part of the education programme, as well as to have set clear objectives for a move into sports governance in the future.

As a consequence, the selection process for the course was structured around a 'project proposal' model, with two phases of application; an initial proposal submission, followed by a 'dragon's den' style presentation format. Cohort size was envisaged to be around 8-12 persons. This model clear has significant strengths, including the likelihood of the participation of strong applicants with the possibility of leveraging networks and resources. Potential weaknesses of this model include the possibility that nominations from national federations will be rather 'closed' to persons from outside established networks; such actions have been shown to have a tendency to reproduce existing inequalities and/or favour those who embody an established culture or established groups. Put differently, marginalized groups may find access to the course more challenging under such an application process without positive affirmative action.

Nevertheless, the final curriculum was robust, sophisticated and produced in a timely fashion. What's more, various modules and elements of the programme were trialed with youth leaders at transnational project meetings, with largely positive feedback and changes made in accordance with the group's suggestions.



Examples would include tuning the delivery schedule and hours required on the course according to feedback from youth leaders about the likely time-commitment they would be able to give such a programme, and in discussing the 'dragon's den' element of the application process. Much of the curriculum and content would also be well suited to the envisaged level of an early-Undergraduate education, albeit of a shorter duration than normal for such a programme.

A second example of piloting of key elements of the programmes concerned the 'personal leadership and leading effective teams' elements were run by independent sport Psychologist Marjolein Torenbeek, who again sought a balance between theory, practice, individual and group reflections. Sessions were again offered over a mixture of in-person and online meetings and sessions. Content aimed to aid the professional growth of youth leaders throughout the project by applying self-regulation principles. At the outset, a kick-off meeting was conducted, where Marjolein elaborated upon concepts and theory. The youth leaders assessed their leadership competencies while establishing personal developmental objectives.

Subsequently, the plan involved individual coaching sessions via Zoom for each youth leader every four months, with peer coaching taking place in the intervals. Marjolein paired each youth leader with another for these sessions, ensuring coaching occurred every two months. This structure aimed to consistently help youth leaders focus upon their goals, fostering reflection on their efforts and monitoring their progress during coaching sessions. Additionally, the approach intended to foster better mutual understanding among the youth leaders and cultivate fundamental coaching skills, beneficial for anyone aspiring to enhance their leadership capabilities. Engagement in this element was, however, mixed, which reduced the effectiveness of the peer-reflection sessions. These were then adapted to online group workshops focusing upon time-management, giving feedback and dealing with stress and pressure. Feedback on these elements was stronger. Yet over the three-year period of the AIYL programme, significant changes in the life-circumstances of many of the Youth Leaders (e.g. gaining employment or moving roles) meant that long-term engagement was challenging. Such reflections were crucial in considering how to restructure the education programme, including its consequent time-span of 10 months; equivalent to one academic year.

Goal achievement and Shared Learning Outcomes: Intellectual Output 3

All goals were achieved in Intellectual Output 3, which resulted in the production and agreed scheduling of the 10-month Regional Youth Leader Programme. Significant amounts of feedback and piloting were achieved throughout the AIYL project, resulting in several key decisions about the application process, format of delivery, duration and content of the programme. Several shared learning outcomes arose from this process, including that:

- Longer-term options for delivery of the programme were discounted due to the widespread and significant changes seen amongst youth leaders in the AIYL programme. These tended to fundamentally impact the level of engagement youth leaders could offer the programme, and ranged from gaining or changing employment, sickness, moving country or job, and other concerns. In a field such as sport, where early-career contracts tend to last a limited period of time (often months or a couple of years), any education programme needed to be adaptable to a similar time period.
- Similarly, the youth leaders expressed how the educational landscape for them is highly congested at present, with ongoing emphasis on personal development and taking multiple 'CV-Enhancing' opportunities. Hence, even the Regional Youth Leader Programme is likely to be one of many opportunities for aspiring leaders to take. Setting the programme apart and aligning it with the needs and aspirations of participants (including ongoing engagement between sessions) will be essential to its success. The ongoing support of national federations could be crucial in ensuring this.
- Over the course of the project duration, those youth leaders who participated in coaching sessions and workshops ultimately gained valuable insights, particularly because they consistently provided input beforehand. This allowed sessions to be tailored to their specific situations and needs. However, engagement wasn't always high, particularly when youth leaders were left to organize their own schedules, or when other priorities in their lives took precedence. Consequently, a mixture of support with scheduling and a flexible approach were deemed appropriate.
- The input of Youth leaders was crucial in adapting the programme; several initial plans that seemed promising on paper (e.g. peer reflection sessions) did not translate well into practice. There were multiple reasons for this outcome, but a significant lesson learned is the importance of including participants directly in future planning, ensuring a better alignment with their priorities, situations and needs.
- Team-building exercises with the group of youth leaders were essential, and could have been more long-term. For example, during AIYL Marjolein highlighted how the youth leaders were somewhat hesitant and perceived a barrier to connecting with each other within the first 12 to 18 months. In many cases, they faced similar challenges but were unaware of each other's experiences, and lacked a sense of being part of a unified youth leader team. This learning was taken forward into account for the IO3 programme which was kept more compact and time-intensive when compared to the initial ideas. The programme also is based around frequent catch-up meetings to ensure the participants feel engaged during the full journey.

INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 4: ATHLETE CAREER PATHWAYS TOOLKIT

- RESULTS
- GOAL ACHIEVEMENT AND SHARED LEARNING OUTCOMES:
INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 4

The core goals for intellectual output 4 related to development of a framework and toolkit for athletic career progression within hockey. Goals were as follows:

- Analyse pathways of successful sport officials/managers + which interventions "boosted" their careers
- Create pathways framework
- Define potential career pathways
- Define skillsets necessary to walk the pathways

Results

The athletic career development programme comprised a presentation/report which reviewed career pathways into sporting positions, particularly within the sport of hockey, but also beyond. The report presented three sections, including 1) insights into common career pathways into sport, 2) self-directed brainstorming and opportunity recognition and 3) insights and research. Each section also contained a case study of a well-recognized figure in Hockey who had made their way into sport as a career. Within the presentation and supporting documents, a clear overview of the skillsets needed to enter specific roles (including players, volunteers, coaches/officials, club board members, development officers, other and senior administrative roles) were outlined. The intention of the document was to generate free, critical thinking amongst young leaders about the types of roles and careers are available to them in sport. The intention for the presentation was to situate the resources on the FIH learning platform as a self-guided course with an auto-generated certificate at the end. This course content would be mirrored on the EuroHockey Institute website, and via signposting to participants on the courses in Intellectual Outputs 2 and 3.

Goal achievement and Shared Learning Outcomes: Intellectual Output 4

Resources concerning intellectual output 4 were completed in full. Feedback was gained through discussions at one of the steering group meetings, and the youth leaders in attendance suggested resources could be beneficial. Information was based upon well-established practice within hockey, and therefore information is likely to be related most clearly to this sport. Moreover, information is likely to play a supplementary role to other Intellectual Outputs within the programme.

INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 5: AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

- RESULTS
- GOAL ACHIEVEMENT AND SHARED LEARNING OUTCOMES:
INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 5

Goals for intellectual output 5 included:

- Create and develop an awareness communications brief, objectives, target audiences
- Define ID key concepts
- Develop awareness communication campaign
- Integrate campaign with content (photo, video, social etc)
- Publish communication strategy as a case study

Results

The guidelines focus on creating awareness to ensure the deployment of various outputs in partner countries and beyond. The document details the team's efforts in defining these guidelines, identifying target audiences, and providing direction for the communication plan leading to the start of implementation in 2024. It also outlines content owners and leading organizations responsible for ensuring a sustainable follow-up for the project, with EuroHockey, the European hockey governing body, taking the initiative to integrate key outputs into their EuroHockey Institute for development and education.

The document's purpose was to maximize impact during the rollout by effectively presenting information to target audiences. Throughout transnational project meetings, all partners played a role in discussing communication strategies that would benefit the program, particularly involving youth leaders.

Intellectual Output 5 successfully achieved its goals, experiencing only a minor delay. The document identifies key individuals and organizations responsible for activating the campaign, with EuroHockey leading the implementation. Specifically, Mr. Tom Pedersen and Mr. Cameron Findler lead the EuroHockey workgroup taskforce, and Mr. Jamie Hooper, a former youth leader, is now the implementation lead and mentor for the IO3 program, overseeing its rollout from 2024.

A crucial lesson emphasized in the guidelines is the significance of connecting youth leaders from the workgroup and the EuroHockey Youth Festival to effectively communicate the benefits of participating in the developed programs. This peer-to-peer communication strategy aims to enhance impact and encourage young leaders to actively engage with their networks, promoting overall engagement.

While the project initially targeted the European hockey family, its reach will extend to the international hockey federation (FIH) development teams and other entities, including NOCs, youth organizations (e.g., ENGSO), commercial businesses, academic parties, and other sport federations through the networks of the workgroup.

Goal achievement and Shared Learning Outcomes: Intellectual Output 5

Resources concerning intellectual output 5 were completed in full and in time. Though the focus of this output was to prepare for the official kick-off at the end of the project, opportunities during the project were used to create awareness about the importance to listen to the voices of young people when it comes to strategic topics. In some countries we saw youth leaders teaming up with colleagues and starting their journey to setting up a more formal/structural youth forum. The nations where this worked best is where both the youth leader and the federation "champion" were active.

Based on feedback from mainly the youth leaders, approaches to the awareness campaign were discussed which lead to a definition of guidelines for awareness building. One key observation was that support from the national federations is important for the success of the programmes but that the intentions and activity from the youth leaders themselves is critical. The conclusion therefore was not to rely on communication with the federations but to be very active within the youth leader community itself.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Following the final meeting of AIYL, feedback was obtained from two focus groups; one conducted with youth leaders, the other with project partners. The focus groups facilitated discussion of elements of the project participants were responsible for, as well as gaining their feedback on the project management and procedures. Their observations and reflections were mainly positive (with some specific points for development). Key points can be summarised as follows:

- Partners highlighted that the atmosphere around the project was very inclusive, and something of a 'safe space.' Most felt like they had had the chance to be heard, and their input had been taken seriously. The skillset and knowledge base of the group was considered highly appropriate to the needs of the project.
- Project initiation as during the COVID19 epidemic, and therefore had to be delivered in a hybrid format. The group felt that this created difficulties in establishing connection between the two halves of the group (particularly those in Britain and those in the rest of Europe). An overnight stay and social event would have been one way to assist the group to know one another better and to therefore contribute to overall efficiency during the early stages.
- The lengthy period between steering group meetings exacerbated this issue. Partners mentioned that more online meetings or interim updates in-between meetings would have been a good way to update information, share updates between the meetings, and to ensure that meetings were progressive. In part, this was due to the majority of the group having other jobs and priorities elsewhere. Consequently, it was observed the early portions of meetings were spent reminding the group what the project was about – rather than moving forward.
- Nevertheless, during meetings and throughout much of the project, the extent to which good practice and reflections were shared was highlighted as a particular strength of the way the project was managed. Maintaining communication channels in other outlets to WhatsApp was considered important, such as a regularly update share drive with all materials. This was used, but not to the extent to which it could have been.
- In some meetings (particularly early in the project), youth leaders felt unclear of their role, or like 'passengers,' as their role in specific intellectual outputs hadn't necessary begun yet. This role was reverse once piloting began, as some of the 'old heads' became less directly involved. Ongoing engagement was therefore challenging, and some of the partners felt they lacked a strategic view of the entire project at times.
- Due to the large number of youth leaders involved in the project, a changing list of partners became a challenge later in the project. This challenge in relation to youth leaders was widely considered to be one of the biggest learnings to be taken into roll-out. Indeed, for many partners, their roles in other projects and jobs limited the extent to which they could engage with the project, and potentially limited their impact.



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- **LEGACY**

The above report has outlined results, goal achievement and shared learning outcomes for the AIYL ERASMUS+ programme. The programme had a logical and focused set of goals aligned to 5 Intellectual Outputs, each of which saw their goals achieved in good time. Overall, the partnership was effective, with a mixture of expertise and experience that drew together knowledge of the required standards for education programmes with the lived reality of many young people in Europe today. What's more, almost all actions taken were based upon sound evidence and established good practice from within hockey, scientific evidence and from other programmes.

Challenges tended to relate to rapidly changing personnel amongst each of the partners, in part because of modern day challenges faced by young people (relating to study, jobs and other considerations). Similarly, variable levels of support from national federations could prove a stumbling block to implementation of education programmes in the future. Yet this did not prevent the successful production of the learning materials and resources aligned to the project.

More information can be found on the project website and the EuroHockey Institute website (links are provided in the e-reporting)

Legacy

Though this document is focused on insights during the project duration, a summary of legacy plans is merited; sustainability was a key ambition for the project from the outset. The motto used for this project was "Carve your name on hearts, not tombstones" by Shannon L. Alder. In this respect, the project was all about mobilising people and the passion they have for developing sports and themselves. This was a project with youth leaders, by youth leaders, for youth leaders. For this reason, it is encouraging to see that, although the project has formally ended, all workgroup members remained committed to stay connected to the roll out – and expressed such sentiments during the final transnational project meeting. Be it either in an active role (coaching the new lecturers, rolling out the grassroots programme in their country) or be it in a consultant role (support new countries who want to implement the grassroots programme and who ask for help), partners will play an ambassadorial role in the beginning of 2024 when EuroHockey will officially launch both programmes. During this time, the working group will support reaching out to their networks to share their passion and the outputs to which they contributed.

Moreover, it is particularly encouraging to see that EuroHockey, the European governing body for Field Hockey, took it upon themselves to embed both youth leadership programmes in their new EuroHockey Institute development and education platform. To this end, they have explicitly committed to the dedication of human and financial resources for taking care of the full coordination of the curriculum. During the project, partners also gained support from the international hockey federation (FIH) –the global federation- with similar sentiments.

The fact that the outputs we delivered build on the yearly Youth Festival initiative started some 6 years ago by EuroHockey confirms that there remains serious long term interest to support young leaders to step up and take a seat at the management table of clubs, federations and other organisations to lead the future in European sport development.

