

Bridging Education, Inclusion, and Sustainability in Adapted Sports





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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Erasmus+ Program and the VERDIS Consortium....	1
1.1 The Erasmus+ Program: Objectives and Categories.....	2
1.2 Salta Fronteiras and the VERDIS Consortium: Mission and Partnerships	7
Chapter 2: Description of the VERDIS Project	11
2.1 Identified Problems and Addressed Needs	12
2.2 Project Objectives.....	15
Chapter 3: Key Project Activities	18
3.1 Local Sessions.....	19
3.2 Seminar	22
3.3 Follow-Up Mobility	29
Chapter 4: Skills Developed	35
4.1 Technical and Personal Skills	36
4.2 Sustainability and Inclusion Competencies	38
Chapter 5: Project Results and Impacts.....	41
5.1 Key Results and Achieved Impacts	43
5.2 Challenges and Lessons Learned	45
Chapter 6: Testimonials and Consortium Experiences	47
6.1 Participant Stories.....	49
6.2 Reflections from Partner Organizations	51
Chapter 7: Conclusion and Future of VERDIS	53
7.1 Final Reflections	54
7.2 Next Steps and Recommendations	57
Chapter 8: Activities	59
8.1 Local Activities.....	60
8.2 Seminar Activities.....	63
8.3 Follow Up Mobility Activities.....	65
Bibliography.....	69

CHAPTER 1

Introduction to the Erasmus+ Program and the VERDIS Consortium

1.1 THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAM: OBJECTIVES AND CATEGORIES

Erasmus+ stands as one of the European Union's most transformative initiatives, aimed at fostering education, training, youth development, and sport across Europe and beyond. Introduced in 1987, the program has since grown into a powerful tool for personal, social, and professional development. With an expanded budget of €26.2 billion for the 2021-2027 period, Erasmus+ reflects the EU's commitment to addressing the challenges of an ever-changing world while fostering values such as inclusion, equity, and sustainability.



Objectives of Erasmus+

Erasmus+ operates with a clear mission: to empower individuals, strengthen organizations, and contribute to cohesive and inclusive societies. Its objectives extend beyond traditional educational goals, aiming to create meaningful opportunities for lifelong learning, innovation, and cultural exchange. These objectives include:

Enhancing Learning Mobility

Erasmus+ promotes cross-border mobility for students, educators, trainees, and youth workers, facilitating experiences that enrich their knowledge and skills

while exposing them to diverse cultures and methodologies. The program recognizes that learning happens not only in formal settings but also through immersion in new environments, fostering adaptability, communication, and problem-solving skills.

Promoting Cooperation and Innovation

Through partnerships and collaborative projects, Erasmus+ encourages innovation in education and training systems. By bringing together schools, universities, NGOs, and public institutions, the program builds bridges between sectors and disciplines, promoting best practices and creative solutions to shared challenges.



Ensuring Inclusion and Equity

A cornerstone of Erasmus+ is its dedication to inclusivity. The program actively supports individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with disabilities, and those facing social or geographical barriers. Special measures, including additional funding and personalized support, ensure that everyone can access the program's opportunities, regardless of their circumstances.



Fostering Civic Engagement and Sustainability

Erasmus+ integrates contemporary priorities, such as climate action and digital transformation, into its framework. By engaging participants in projects addressing sustainability, social inclusion, and active citizenship, the program empowers individuals to become agents of positive change in their communities and beyond.



Categories of Erasmus+

Erasmus+ encompasses a diverse range of actions designed to achieve its ambitious objectives. These actions fall into three main categories:

Key Action 1: *Learning Mobility of Individuals*

This action supports student exchanges, vocational training, staff mobility, and volunteer opportunities, enabling participants to experience life in different countries while gaining practical skills and personal insights.

Key Action 2: *Cooperation Among Organizations and Institutions*

Collaborative projects under this action aim to enhance the quality and innovation of education and training systems by fostering partnerships across

borders. These projects address pressing issues such as digital education, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion.

Key Action 3: Support for Policy Development and Cooperation

This action strengthens European collaboration in policy development, ensuring that the education and training systems are responsive to societal needs and aligned with EU priorities.

In addition to these key actions, Erasmus+ supports specialized initiatives like Jean Monnet Actions, which promote excellence in teaching and research related to the European Union, and sports-focused projects that address inclusion and participation through physical activities.

Erasmus+: More Than Education

Erasmus+ transcends the traditional boundaries of education and training. It is a program designed to inspire and empower individuals, creating pathways for personal transformation and community impact. For participants, Erasmus+ is not just an opportunity to acquire knowledge but a chance to explore the world, build meaningful connections, and gain a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives.



The program's human dimension is especially profound for individuals with disabilities or those facing other challenges. Erasmus+ actively ensures that such participants are not left behind, offering tailored support to enable full engagement. Mobility opportunities for individuals with disabilities demonstrate how the program transforms lives by removing barriers and fostering inclusion.

For many participants, Erasmus+ becomes a journey of self-discovery. It allows them to interact with people from different cultures, share ideas, and develop a sense of belonging to a larger, interconnected world. Stories of Erasmus+ alumni often highlight how the program instilled confidence, broadened horizons, and sparked a lifelong commitment to intercultural dialogue and collaboration.

VERDIS and Erasmus+: A Shared Vision

The VERDIS project is a prime example of how Erasmus+ goes beyond conventional education to address broader social goals. By combining education, inclusion, and sustainability through adapted sports, VERDIS aligns perfectly with the core principles of Erasmus+. It empowers individuals with disabilities to participate actively in sports and environmental action while fostering connections between diverse groups.

Through its seminars, local sessions, and follow-up mobility activities, VERDIS showcases the best of Erasmus+: a program that not only educates but transforms, not only trains but inspires. Participants in VERDIS engage in real-world issues, such as climate change and inclusion, gaining practical skills and a sense of responsibility for creating positive change in their communities.

Erasmus+ is not just a program; it is a movement that celebrates the richness of diversity, the power of connection, and the importance of equity. By offering opportunities for all, it paves the way for a more inclusive and compassionate world—values embodied in every aspect of the VERDIS project.



1.2 SALTA FRONTEIRAS AND THE VERDIS CONSORTIUM: MISSION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Salta Fronteiras: A Leader in Inclusion, Youth Empowerment, and Sustainability

Salta Fronteiras Associação, based in Felgueiras, Portugal, has been a leading force for over 25 years in promoting youth development, social inclusion, and sustainability. Through non-formal education and innovative projects, the organization has empowered individuals and strengthened communities, particularly those facing barriers to participation.



At the heart of Salta Fronteiras' work is its commitment to inclusion, exemplified by its **Boccia team**, which has become a symbol of resilience and opportunity for individuals with physical disabilities. This adapted sport not only serves as a platform for athletic achievement but also fosters social integration and personal growth. The team's active participation in the VERDIS project brought valuable insights and demonstrated the impact of inclusive sports on promoting equality and breaking down barriers.

Salta Fronteiras' mission is driven by three core pillars:

1. **Youth Empowerment:** Offering opportunities for young people to develop leadership skills and engage in meaningful, community-oriented activities.
2. **Social Inclusion:** Promoting equity by addressing barriers faced by individuals with disabilities, ensuring accessible and empowering initiatives.
3. **Sustainability:** Integrating environmental education and sustainable practices into projects, reflecting broader European and global priorities.

The organization's regional and national collaborations, including its membership in the Comissão para a Proteção de Crianças e Jovens (CPCJ), demonstrate its dedication to systemic change and partnership-driven solutions.



The VERDIS Consortium: A Partnership for Inclusion and Sustainability

The VERDIS project—“Bridging Education, Inclusion, and Sustainability in Adapted Sports”—brought together three organizations with distinct yet complementary expertise: Salta Fronteiras (Portugal), MIHI (Latvia), and Gençlikte Spor Sanat ve Eğitim Derneği (Turkey). This consortium was built on a shared vision of using adapted sports to foster inclusion and sustainability.

MIHI (Latvia): Building Bridges for Inclusion

MIHI, based in Latvia, is a dynamic organization with a strong focus on empowering youth and promoting inclusion. It has extensive experience in creating inclusive spaces for young people, particularly those from marginalized communities.

- **Key Expertise:** MIHI is recognized for its work in adapted sports, developing innovative methodologies to make sports accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- **Role in VERDIS:** The organization played a leading role in designing and implementing inclusive sports activities, ensuring that adapted sports were effectively integrated with sustainability principles.

Gençlikte Spor Sanat ve Eğitim Derneği (Turkey): Empowering Communities Through Sports and Arts

The Turkish partner has a well-established reputation for combining sports, arts, and education to promote social cohesion and community development. Their approach targets disadvantaged groups, using creative strategies to foster confidence and inclusion.

- **Key Expertise:** Leveraging the universal appeal of sports and arts, the organization creates engaging programs that strengthen community ties and empower individuals.
- **Role in VERDIS:** Gençlikte Spor Sanat ve Eğitim Derneği contributed to the project's success by designing activities that blended sports with

sustainability, enriching participant experiences and achieving the project's broader goals.

Guidelines for Inclusion and Sustainability in Adapted Sports

A standout achievement of the VERDIS project was the development of the Guidelines for Inclusion and Sustainability in Adapted Sports. These guidelines are a comprehensive resource, encapsulating the consortium's methodologies, success stories, and actionable strategies for replicating the project's impact.

The document serves as a lasting legacy, offering:

- Frameworks for inclusive sports practices.
- Practical steps to integrate sustainability into sports and educational activities.
- Case studies that illustrate real-world applications and successes.

The guidelines not only reflect the achievements of VERDIS but also provide a roadmap for future projects under Erasmus+ and similar initiatives.

A Partnership Rooted in Collaboration

The VERDIS consortium demonstrates how international partnerships can drive meaningful change. By combining the unique strengths of Salta Fronteiras, MIHI, and Gençlikte Spor Sanat ve Eğitim Derneği, the project bridged the gap between inclusion and sustainability, creating lasting impact for participants and communities alike.

Salta Fronteiras' leadership, supported by its Boccia team and dedicated athletes, ensured that the project remained grounded in real-world experiences and practical solutions. Their participation enriched the project's activities, showcasing the transformative potential of adapted sports and fostering a culture of equity and empowerment.

Together, the VERDIS partners have set a benchmark for inclusive and sustainable practices, leaving a legacy that will inspire future initiatives and collaborations across Europe.

CHAPTER 2

Description of the VERDIS Project

2.1 IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS AND ADDRESSED NEEDS

Identified Problems

The VERDIS project was designed to address three critical and interconnected societal challenges: the exclusion of people with disabilities, barriers to accessibility in adapted sports, and the lack of environmental sustainability within sports practices. These challenges underscore systemic issues that hinder social inclusion and sustainability efforts across Europe.

1. Exclusion of People with Disabilities

- **Social Exclusion:** Across the EU, individuals with disabilities face a significantly higher social exclusion rate of 28.4% compared to 18.4% among the general population. This exclusion manifests in limited access to healthcare, education, employment, and civic participation, perpetuating cycles of marginalization.
- **Lack of Representation in Climate Action:** People with disabilities remain largely absent from climate-related decision-making processes. Their unique perspectives and needs are often overlooked, despite their increased vulnerability to the effects of environmental crises. This lack of representation exacerbates inequalities and weakens inclusive climate responses.



2. Barriers in Adapted Sports

- **Inaccessible Infrastructure:** Adapted sports such as Boccia, which have great potential for inclusion, face challenges related to inadequate infrastructure, insufficient transportation options, and the lack of trained support staff. These factors limit the accessibility of sports for individuals with disabilities.
- **Knowledge Gaps Among Professionals:** Many sports professionals lack the necessary training to implement inclusive and sustainable practices. This deficiency reduces opportunities for innovation and effective inclusion in adapted sports environments.

3. Environmental Impact of Sports

- **Unsustainable Practices:** Traditional sports often operate without considering their environmental footprint, contributing to waste generation, excessive resource consumption, and significant carbon emissions. The absence of sustainability measures in adapted sports represents a missed opportunity to align sports practices with global climate goals and foster eco-conscious behaviors.



Addressed Needs

VERDIS aimed to meet these challenges by addressing key needs across three primary areas:

1. For Individuals with Disabilities

- **Inclusive Sports Opportunities:** Ensure access to safe, accessible, and inclusive sports environments that cater to their specific needs.
- **Engagement in Climate Action:** Create pathways for active participation in environmental initiatives and decision-making processes, amplifying their voices and contributions.
- **Capacity Building:** Provide leadership training and empowerment programs to enhance self-confidence, skills, and active citizenship.

2. For Professionals

- **Training and Resources:** Deliver capacity-building initiatives for coaches, educators, and volunteers, equipping them with the skills to foster inclusive and sustainable sports practices.
- **Methodological Support:** Develop and distribute intervention guidelines and resources to support the implementation of adapted sports initiatives.

3. For Communities

- **Awareness and Education:** Conduct campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of inclusion and environmental sustainability, fostering understanding and collaboration.
- **Collective Engagement:** Facilitate interactions between individuals with disabilities and their communities, encouraging shared responsibility and mutual learning in addressing societal challenges.

2.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

General Objective

To use adapted sports as a mechanism for promoting **social inclusion** and **environmental sustainability**, empowering individuals with disabilities to actively participate in sports and climate action while fostering systemic change at local, regional, and European levels.

Specific Objectives

1. Empowering Professionals

- **Comprehensive Training Programs:** Design and deliver targeted training for coaches, educators, and community leaders to develop inclusive and eco-conscious sports practices.
- **Knowledge Exchange:** Foster transnational dialogue and learning among sports professionals to drive innovation and the adoption of best practices in adapted sports.

2. Promoting Social Inclusion and Active Participation

- **Reducing Barriers:** Address structural, logistical, and societal barriers that limit participation in sports and environmental activities for individuals with disabilities.
- **Fostering Leadership:** Equip people with disabilities with the tools and opportunities to assume active roles in their communities and environmental advocacy efforts.

3. Advancing Environmental Sustainability in Sports

- **Integrating Sustainable Practices:** Introduce eco-conscious measures into sports activities, such as optimizing resource use, minimizing waste, and reducing carbon footprints.
- **Community Education:** Use sports as a platform to educate participants and their communities about sustainable living and environmental responsibility.

4. Developing and Disseminating Practical Resources

- **Guidelines for Inclusive and Sustainable Sports:** Create comprehensive, user-friendly guidelines to support the replication of VERDIS methodologies, providing actionable tools, case studies, and frameworks.
- **Adaptability Across Contexts:** Ensure that the guidelines are applicable to diverse social, cultural, and institutional contexts, enabling their adoption across Europe and beyond.

5. Building Stronger Communities and Networks

- **Transnational Collaboration:** Establish and strengthen networks between stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities, sports professionals, and policymakers, to foster mutual understanding and innovation.
- **Local Engagement:** Promote grassroots activities that bring together diverse community members to address social and environmental challenges collectively.





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Conclusion

The VERDIS project provides a comprehensive and innovative framework for addressing the intertwined challenges of social exclusion and environmental sustainability. By empowering individuals, equipping professionals, and fostering community collaboration, the project delivers a replicable model for transformative change. Its objectives not only align with European Union priorities but also set a benchmark for future initiatives that integrate inclusion and sustainability into the fabric of adapted sports and broader societal efforts.

CHAPTER 3

Key Project Activities

3.1 LOCAL SESSIONS

Locations and Dates

The VERDIS project's local sessions were held across three countries: Portugal, Latvia, and Turkey. These sessions were organized by each partner, with dates adjusted to fit the local contexts and participant schedules. These preparatory activities served as the foundation for the project's transnational mobilities and were designed to meet the specific cultural and infrastructural realities of each location.



- **Portugal (Felgueiras):** Leveraging Salta Fronteiras' extensive local networks, sessions were conducted in accessible venues, emphasizing inclusivity and preparatory engagement.
- **Latvia (Saldus Nov):** Activities were held in natural environments such as parks, promoting sustainability through outdoor sports and workshops.
- **Turkey (Konya):** Sessions highlighted inclusive sports practices and community-based activities, aligning with the expertise of Gençlikte Spor Sanat ve Eğitim Derneği.

Number and Profile of Participants

Each session involved a carefully selected group of participants to reflect the project's commitment to inclusion and representation.

1. Participants per Country:

- **10 Athletes with Disabilities:** Engaged in adapted sports such as Boccia, many participating in such activities for the first time.
- **10 Professionals:** Coaches, educators, and community leaders, including at least 2 from fewer opportunity backgrounds.

2. Total Participants:

- **30 Athletes with Disabilities:** 10 from each partner country.
- **30 Professionals:** 10 from each partner country.

3. Profiles:

- **Athletes:** Included individuals of varying ages and types of disabilities to ensure broad inclusivity.
- **Professionals:** Spanning expertise in education, coaching, and community facilitation, with a strong commitment to fostering inclusion and sustainability.

Objectives and Activities Conducted

The local sessions were designed to empower participants, provide critical skills, and create a foundation for transnational activities.

1. Objectives:

- Introduce the principles of adapted sports and foster inclusive practices through hands-on experience.
- Raise awareness of sustainability in sports practices and daily life.
- Build confidence and prepare participants emotionally and logistically for the upcoming mobilities.

2. Activities Conducted:

- **Adapted Sports and Boccia:** The sessions featured Boccia demonstrations and informal games, encouraging team bonding and skill-building in an inclusive environment.
- **Sustainability Workshops:** Participants explored sustainable sports practices, including reducing waste and utilizing recyclable materials.
- **Simulation Exercises:** Activities simulated the challenges of mobility for people with disabilities, fostering empathy and innovation.
- **Logistical Planning:** Portuguese participants contributed to the preparation for the follow-up mobility phase, gaining practical event-planning experience.
- **Language and Cultural Preparation:** Basic English sessions equipped participants with essential phrases for effective communication during transnational activities.

- **Social Engagement:** Informal Boccia matches, shared meals, and group discussions helped alleviate anxiety about mobility and built trust among participants.

3. Specific Contributions from Portugal:

- Portuguese participants played an active role in organizing and adapting mobility sessions, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity.
- Informal Boccia games served as ice-breakers and provided an avenue for athletes to gain confidence in their abilities.

Outcomes and Reflections

The local sessions yielded significant outcomes that aligned with the Erasmus+ program's goals of inclusion, sustainability, and lifelong learning.

1. Empowered Participants:

- Athletes gained confidence, developed new skills, and embraced their roles as active contributors to the project.
- Professionals enhanced their knowledge of inclusive methodologies and sustainable practices.

2. Stronger Community Bonds:

- Informal interactions and shared responsibilities created a sense of unity and readiness among participants for the transnational phases.

3. Readiness for Mobility:

- Participants expressed reduced anxiety and increased enthusiasm for international engagement, thanks to the preparatory sessions and simulations.

4. Practical and Emotional Preparedness:

- Simulation exercises and hands-on logistical involvement provided participants with practical insights and a sense of ownership over the project's activities.

Conclusion

The local sessions were integral to the success of the VERDIS project, exemplifying the Erasmus+ program's values of inclusion, sustainability, and active participation. By blending structured training with informal moments of connection, the sessions prepared participants for the challenges and opportunities of transnational collaboration. These activities not only built confidence and competence but also highlighted the transformative potential of adapted sports in fostering social cohesion and environmental responsibility.



3.2 SEMINAR

The **VERDIS Capacity-Building Seminar**, organized by **Salta Fronteiras**, took place from **April 8 to 11, 2024**, in **Felgueiras, Portugal**. It served as a key milestone in preparing professionals engaged in adapted sports, particularly in **Bocce**, while fostering a space for learning, sharing experiences, and aligning strategies among the consortium partners. The seminar successfully combined practical and theoretical approaches to promote inclusion and sustainability, which are core pillars of the project.



Participants and Profiles

*The seminar brought together **9 professionals**, with **3 participants from each partner country**: Portugal, Latvia, and Turkey. Each delegation included:*

- 2 professionals without specific barriers, and
- 1 professional from fewer-opportunity groups, ensuring diversity and equity within the group.

Participants were selected based on their direct involvement in adapted sports activities and their ability to apply the acquired knowledge to their local contexts. They included:

- **Bocce trainers and coaches** working directly with athletes with disabilities;
- **Team managers**, responsible for organizing and coordinating events;
- **Support staff and assistants**, who play a vital role in integrating athletes with specific needs into sports environments.

This diverse group brought a wealth of perspectives, ideas, and experiences, fostering rich discussions and collaborations throughout the seminar.

Facilitators

Participants had the opportunity to learn from two highly experienced facilitators, whose expertise and commitment to inclusion, sustainability, and sports education added immense value to the seminar:

- **Luís Saldanha**: Luís has been the National Youth Coordinator for the Portuguese Red Cross since 2020 and has extensive experience in youth projects funded by national and international programs, including Erasmus+. Starting his career in 2014 as a sociocultural animator, he advanced to senior technician roles, focusing on psychosocial support, training, and team management. Luís has been active in non-formal education since 2012, facilitating trainings on human rights, inclusion, and environmental protection. As a European Climate Pact Ambassador, he promotes environmental awareness in

the youth sector. During the seminar, Luís provided strategic insights, linking EU values to the project's objectives and equipping participants with actionable tools.

- **Helena Teixeira:** Helena has a rich background in adapted sports and inclusion-focused projects. Since 2016, she has been involved in initiatives such as international work camps and the European Voluntary Service, including the "**Boccia4All**" project, which promoted inclusion through adapted Bocce. She has also played key roles in programs like "Ubuntu Schools" and the Ubuntu Leaders Academy, which focus on leadership and personal development. Helena's practical expertise and dynamic approach shone throughout the seminar, as she empowered participants to apply inclusive and sustainable methodologies in real-world contexts.

Program and Methodologies

The seminar's program was thoughtfully designed around **four thematic days**, using a mixed-methods approach that integrated **formal, non-formal, and informal education**, complemented by **sports-based education**. A special highlight was the "**Walk and Talk**" **activity in Amarante**, which encouraged teamwork and practical application of sustainability and inclusion concepts in an informal setting.

Formal Education

Formal sessions were held in a structured environment and covered essential theoretical topics, including:

- EU values and their application to sports;
- Inclusion and sustainability practices in adapted sports;
- Strategic approaches to increasing the participation of individuals with disabilities in sports.

These sessions laid the theoretical groundwork for participants, helping them connect the VERDIS project's objectives to their daily activities.

Non-Formal Education

Non-formal education was a central feature of the seminar, offering participants practical, hands-on learning opportunities. Activities included:

- **Interactive workshops**, where participants brainstormed ways to adapt sports practices to be more inclusive and sustainable.
- **Simulations**, such as activities related to the "Green Circuit," which demonstrated how to apply theoretical concepts in practical scenarios.
- **Team tasks**, both in Felgueiras and during the "Walk and Talk" in Amarante, where participants collaborated to solve creative challenges, encouraging teamwork and the exchange of ideas.

These activities allowed participants to engage actively with the content, experiment with innovative approaches, and build confidence in applying their knowledge.

Informal Education

Informal learning moments, such as shared meals, breaks, and the relaxed atmosphere of the "Walk and Talk," played a vital role in strengthening relationships among participants. These spontaneous interactions provided a platform for sharing personal experiences and exchanging insights, fostering trust and collaboration within the group. Informal learning, often underestimated, proved to be essential for building a strong support network among the consortium partners.

Key Activities

The seminar's program included several activities designed to achieve its objectives. Each thematic day was organized as follows:

1. **Day 1:** Reflection on EU and sports values, with discussions on how these principles can be applied to promote inclusion and sustainability.
2. **Day 2:** Focus on inclusion through sports, with participants sharing best practices and analyzing strategies to enhance the participation of individuals with disabilities.

3. **Day 3:** Theoretical exploration of sustainable practices and green sports, emphasizing the environmental impact of sports activities and ways to minimize it.
4. **Day 4:** Practical application of the discussed theories, featuring the first presentation of the "**Green Circuit**", an innovative activity combining sustainability and inclusion in adapted Bocce.

The "**Walk and Talk**" in Amarante was another standout activity. Participants completed tasks related to the project's themes while exploring the local environment, fostering interpersonal connections and a deeper understanding of inclusion and sustainability.



Sharing Best Practices and Local Sessions

An important component of the seminar was the **sharing of best practices**, where participants presented examples of local sessions conducted in their countries prior to the event. These presentations offered valuable opportunities to learn from one another, identify adaptable strategies, and refine methodologies based on peer feedback. The local sessions provided a testing ground for the approaches discussed during the seminar, equipping participants with insights to implement the concepts effectively in their communities.



The introduction of the "**Green Circuit**" was another highlight, demonstrating how theoretical concepts could be translated into practical, impactful activities. This circuit showcased the potential of sports to address both inclusion and sustainability challenges.

Impact and Next Steps

The seminar served as a solid foundation for the next phases of the VERDIS project. It empowered participants with practical tools and theoretical knowledge that will be instrumental in implementing local sessions in their respective countries. The feedback received and lessons learned during the event will help refine the project's methodologies, ensuring they are effective, adaptable, and impactful.

Participants left the seminar not only better prepared but also highly motivated to continue promoting inclusion and sustainability through adapted sports. The introduction of innovative concepts, such as the "Green Circuit," and the collaborative spirit fostered throughout the seminar have set a strong precedent for the project's future.

This seminar was a pivotal moment in the VERDIS project, offering a unique blend of theory, practice, and collaboration. By combining structured learning with hands-on activities and informal exchanges, it reinforced the project's commitment to creating a more inclusive and sustainable environment for

adapted sports. Salta Fronteiras, alongside the consortium partners, remains deeply committed to supporting this transformative work.



3.3 FOLLOW-UP MOBILITY

- Location and Dates
- Number and Profile of Participants
- Objectives and Activities Conducted

Follow-Up Mobility of the VERDIS Project

The **Follow-Up Mobility of the VERDIS Project**, organized by **Salta Fronteiras**, took place in **Porto**, between **August 26 and September 1, 2024**, as part of the **European Week of Sport**. This event marked the culmination of months of collaborative work among partners from Portugal, Latvia, and Turkey, aiming to consolidate learnings, share results, and promote inclusion and sustainability through adapted sports.

Objectives of the Mobility

The Follow-Up Mobility had the following main objectives:

1. **Consolidating acquired competencies**: Strengthening the participants' practical and theoretical learnings developed throughout the project by applying them in real-world contexts.
2. **Promoting inclusive coexistence**: Creating moments of exchange between people with and without disabilities, fostering mutual understanding and empathy.
3. **Sharing experiences and routines**: Demonstrating how the daily experiences of people with disabilities can be seamlessly integrated into local communities.
4. **Disseminating project results**: Presenting the **Guidelines for Inclusive and Sustainable Sports** and implementing the **Green Circuit**, raising awareness among the community and policymakers about the importance of inclusion and sustainability in sports.
5. **Fostering local and international impact**: Stimulating the continuity of inclusive and sustainable practices, expanding the project's ideas to other communities and countries.

6. **Engaging the local community:** Increasing the participation of stakeholders and community members in meaningful discussions about inclusion and the impact of adapted sports.

Location and Accessibility

*The event took place at the **Porto Concept Home**, a university residence adapted to ensure full accessibility for all participants. These adaptations were carefully planned and implemented by the consortium beforehand and included:*

- **Access ramps** in all common areas and corridors.
- **Adapted bathrooms**, with support bars, extra space for wheelchairs, and accessible showers.
- **Accessible swimming pool**, where Salta Fronteiras staff received specific training to assist participants entering and exiting the water.
- **Reorganized furniture**, to facilitate the circulation of wheelchairs.

These improvements were crucial in providing comfort, safety, and autonomy for all participants, reinforcing the project's commitment to inclusion. Throughout the mobility, the use of local, recycled, or repurposed materials played an essential role, both in the adaptations and in the activities carried out.

Participants and Profiles

The mobility gathered:

- **7 professionals** and **5 athletes with disabilities** from each partner country (Portugal, Latvia, and Turkey).
- **Facilitators and staff from Salta Fronteiras**, providing pedagogical and logistical support.
- **Around 50 members of the local community**, including stakeholders, families, policymakers, and representatives from sports organizations.

The participants included:

- **Bocce coaches**, experienced in adapted sports.
- **Athletes with motor disabilities**, who acted as leaders in many activities and inspiring examples for the community.
- **Community representatives**, who actively participated in activities and contributed to discussions about inclusion.

This diversity enriched the mobility, enabling meaningful exchanges of experiences. Interaction between people with and without disabilities was pivotal in creating an empathetic and collaborative environment.



Program and Activities

The program structure aimed to foster interaction, learning, and the practical application of knowledge acquired throughout the project. All activities emphasized the use of recycled, natural, or repurposed materials, reflecting the commitment to sustainability. The main activities included:

Building the Green Circuit

Participants, divided into small groups, worked together to design and create a **sensory maze**, using recycled materials and natural elements from the local environment. This circuit was designed to simulate challenges faced by people with disabilities, with an equally strong focus on sustainability.

Objective: Raise awareness in the local community, promoting empathy, understanding, and environmental consciousness.

*The **Green Circuit** was structured to include:*

1. **Mobility Station:** Simulated physical barriers faced by wheelchair users, such as ramps and uneven surfaces built with recycled materials.
2. **Visual and Auditory Stimulus Stations:** Challenges where participants experienced sensory limitations, fostering a deeper understanding of accessibility issues.
3. **Sustainability-Themed Stations:** Reflections on the environmental impact of sports and suggestions to make them more eco-friendly, such as repurposing materials to create sports equipment.
4. **Emotional Reflection Station:** A space where participants discussed the emotions generated by the experience and considered how to apply their learnings in their own communities.

Presentation of the Guidelines

- During the community event, the **Guidelines for Inclusive and Sustainable Sports** were presented, summarizing the project's best practices.
- **Impact:** These guidelines were well-received by policymakers, who highlighted their importance for future programs.

- **The Guidelines included** principles of universal design, strategies to promote inclusion in sports environments, and recommendations for sustainable practices in sports events.

Bocce Tournament

- Mixed teams, composed of project participants and community members, participated in an inclusive tournament.
- **Objective:** Demonstrate the principles of inclusion and sustainability in practice.
- **Highlight:** The tournament used recycled materials, such as balls and targets, created by participants during the mobility.

Moments of Reflection and Evaluation

- At the end of each day, reflection sessions were held where participants shared their experiences and suggested improvements for future initiatives.
- These evaluations helped consolidate learning and ensure that everyone felt valued.



Green Circuit: A Transformative Tool

The **Green Circuit** stood out as the main tool for demonstrating the intersection between inclusion and sustainability. Open to the community, it provided an immersive and educational experience. Divided into modules, the circuit addressed:

1. Practical Inclusion:

- Simulated daily barriers faced by people with disabilities.
- Discussions on how to adapt public and private spaces to improve accessibility.

2. Sustainability in Practice:

- Use of recyclable and repurposed materials to build the stations.
- Reflections on the ecological footprint of sports and strategies for more sustainable events.

3. Community Impact:

- Community participants reported greater awareness of accessibility challenges and behavioral changes related to sustainability.

Impact and Legacy

The Follow-Up Mobility left a lasting impact on both participants and the local community:

- **Participants:** Reported greater confidence and inspiration to implement inclusive and sustainable practices in their communities.
- **Local community:** Was profoundly impacted by the Green Circuit and the Bocce tournament, increasing awareness about inclusion.
- **Policymakers:** Recognized the relevance of the Guidelines and committed to integrating them into local policies.

The VERDIS project demonstrated how sports can be a powerful tool to promote inclusion and sustainability, leaving a legacy that will undoubtedly inspire future initiatives.

CHAPTER 4

Skills Developed

Sports, combined with formal, non-formal, and informal education, emerge as a powerful tool for social transformation, fostering inclusion, skills development, and sustainability. Within the framework of the VERDIS project, these dimensions were integrated into a cohesive approach, enabling individuals with and without disabilities to share meaningful experiences, break barriers, and build a more inclusive society.



By leveraging diverse educational methodologies, the project provided opportunities to empower people, challenge them to step out of their comfort zones, and develop skills that extend far beyond the sports field. This balance between theory, practice, and lived experiences not only contributed to technical training but also drove personal growth and strengthened community bonds. More than just a series of activities, VERDIS stands as a testament to how the synergy between education and sports can transform lives and promote inclusive, sustainable communities.

4.1 TECHNICAL AND PERSONAL SKILLS

1. Development of Technical Skills

Adapted Sports Practices and Inclusive Strategies:

- The VERDIS project utilized adapted sports, such as boccia, as a medium to teach specific skills that extended beyond the game itself, including motor coordination, strategic thinking, and the effective use of adapted equipment. This approach demonstrated that inclusion is a practical reality, turning challenges into opportunities for mutual learning.
- Facilitators were trained to assess participants' needs, adapt activities accordingly, and ensure that everyone could actively participate. This level of customization required attention to detail and a people-centered methodology.

Capacity Building Through Formal and Non-Formal Education:

- Formal education sessions provided theoretical tools based on best practices and inclusive strategies, forming the foundation for activity implementation.
- Non-formal education played a central role in engaging participants actively through group dynamics, collaborative games, and sensory activities, offering practical and meaningful learning experiences.

2. Development of Personal Skills

Empathy and Team Collaboration:

- Activities like the Green Circuit allowed participants without disabilities to experience the barriers faced by individuals with disabilities. This hands-on experience fostered empathy and understanding, while collaborative activities highlighted the importance of teamwork, where each individual's unique strengths contributed to the group's success.
- By working together, participants learned to value each other's perspectives, reinforcing the idea that inclusion enriches everyone involved.

Autonomy, Leadership, and Resilience:

- Youth with disabilities were encouraged to take leadership roles, such as explaining game rules or guiding their peers. This shift not only boosted their confidence but also challenged societal stereotypes, demonstrating their capabilities in inclusive settings.
- All participants were invited to step out of their comfort zones, embracing challenges that cultivated resilience and a proactive attitude toward overcoming obstacles.

4.2 SUSTAINABILITY AND INCLUSION COMPETENCIES

1. Sustainability in Sports and Educational Practices

Embedding Sustainability Across All Dimensions:

- Sustainability was a key pillar of the VERDIS project, integrated into all activities. For example, the Green Circuit was designed using over 80% recycled materials, showcasing that environmental responsibility can be seamlessly aligned with educational and inclusive initiatives.
- Participants were encouraged to critically evaluate the environmental impact of their actions, adopting practices such as using public transport and selecting biodegradable materials, reinforcing their role as eco-conscious citizens.

Education for Sustainability:

- The project incorporated sustainability as a transversal value, not just as an isolated theme. Workshops addressed recycling, waste management, and conscious consumption, linking these concepts to sports and daily life. This approach helped participants understand their responsibility toward creating a sustainable future.

2. Inclusion Through Interaction and Education

Sports and Education as Connective Tools:

- The project effectively utilized sports and non-formal education to create meaningful connections among people from diverse backgrounds and abilities. Activities such as collaborative games, orientation sessions, and informal moments highlighted how shared experiences can foster mutual understanding and break down social barriers.
- Inclusion was not only discussed but practiced, as participants with and without disabilities engaged naturally and equally, demonstrating that collaboration is key to dismantling stereotypes.

The Impact of Interaction and Shared Learning:

- The social interaction fostered by sports and educational activities created an atmosphere of camaraderie and mutual support. Participants learned from one another, valuing the richness of diverse perspectives and experiences.
- These shared moments of learning and connection extended beyond the duration of the project, creating a foundation for future inclusive initiatives and strengthening community bonds.





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The VERDIS project proved that the combination of sports, formal and non-formal education, sustainability, and inclusion can create profound and lasting change. Through carefully designed activities, the project empowered individuals, encouraged interaction, and provided spaces where everyone could participate equally. Beyond the development of technical and personal skills, the project demonstrated that transformation occurs when people are challenged to embrace diversity as a core value and step beyond their comfort zones.

This model serves as an inspiration for future initiatives that seek to integrate sports, education, and sustainability, showcasing the potential for fostering inclusive, equitable, and environmentally conscious communities. VERDIS leaves a living legacy, a reminder that by working together with intention and purpose, challenges can be turned into opportunities, and meaningful change can be achieved for individuals and society as a whole.

CHAPTER 5

Project Results and Impacts

The VERDIS project was designed with a vision to use adapted sports as a tool to bridge inclusion, sustainability, and active citizenship. Rooted in the principles of the Erasmus+ programme, it sought to address critical gaps in the sports sector by empowering professionals and athletes, particularly those with disabilities, to play an active role in environmental sustainability and social inclusion. By combining non-formal and informal education methodologies with hands-on experiences, VERDIS created opportunities for diverse stakeholders to engage, learn, and collaborate in meaningful ways.



The project's target groups were divided into direct and indirect participants, each benefiting from its activities in distinct but interconnected ways. Direct participants included bocce professionals and athletes, who took part in capacity-building sessions, awareness-raising activities, and transnational exchanges. These individuals directly contributed to and benefited from the project's core activities, which were meticulously designed to address their unique needs and challenges. Indirect participants, such as community stakeholders, local organisations, and policymakers, interacted with the project's results and were influenced by its outcomes through dissemination efforts and collaborative initiatives.

VERDIS operated on multiple levels, ensuring that its impact would be felt in the short, medium, and long term. By fostering a deep understanding of environmental sustainability, promoting inclusive practices in sports, and empowering participants to advocate for change, the project aimed to build a foundation for sustained progress. Below, we delve into the key results achieved, the impact generated, and the challenges and lessons learned, which collectively illustrate the transformative potential of this initiative.

5.1 KEY RESULTS AND ACHIEVED IMPACTS

The VERDIS project achieved significant outcomes across its direct and indirect target groups, reflecting its multifaceted approach to addressing the intersection of inclusion and sustainability through adapted sports.

Direct Target Groups

Bocce Professionals

One of the project's primary goals was to enhance the competencies of bocce professionals, including coaches, managers, and support staff, who work directly with people with disabilities. Through capacity-building activities, these professionals were introduced to innovative methodologies that combined environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and civic participation. The training sessions were designed to provide not only technical knowledge but also practical tools for implementing these values in their daily work. Participants learned how to adapt sports activities to be more inclusive, how to incorporate “green” habits into sports settings, and how to engage with athletes and communities in meaningful ways.

Short-term impacts for bocce professionals included increased awareness of environmental and social challenges faced across Europe, as well as a deeper understanding of local, regional, and European strategies to address these issues. They gained insight into the specific needs of athletes with disabilities and developed the skills to create inclusive and supportive environments. Beyond technical growth, participants experienced cultural and professional enrichment through transnational exchanges, which broadened their perspectives and highlighted the value of European cooperation.

In the long term, these professionals are now better equipped to deliver high-quality, innovative interventions in their sports contexts. They have embraced sustainable practices and are actively promoting these values among their peers and athletes. The project also strengthened their ability to advocate for the inclusion of people with disabilities in decision-making processes and climate action, ensuring that their voices are heard and valued.

Athletes

Athletes with disabilities were central to the VERDIS project, participating in capacity-building and awareness-raising activities that empowered them to take on active roles in their communities. By engaging in non-formal and informal education sessions, these athletes gained knowledge about environmental sustainability and its application in sports. They learned how to advocate for themselves and their peers, developing skills in public speaking, critical analysis, and civic engagement.

In the short term, athletes reported increased confidence in their abilities to contribute to their communities and raise awareness about inclusion and sustainability. The multicultural and transnational nature of the project exposed them to diverse perspectives, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual understanding. Through their involvement in the project, many athletes discovered new opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Long-term impacts include enhanced social inclusion, greater participation in community initiatives, and the adoption of sustainable practices in their daily lives. Athletes are now better equipped to influence their communities and decision-makers, advocating for greener sports and inclusive environments. Their participation in the project has not only transformed their individual lives but has also set an example for others, inspiring broader societal change.

Indirect Target Groups

Organisations and Communities

Partner organisations and community stakeholders played a crucial role in supporting the VERDIS project and were deeply influenced by its outcomes. These organisations gained valuable insights into the needs and motivations of athletes with disabilities, as well as the challenges and opportunities associated with promoting sustainability in adapted sports. The project enhanced their ability to deliver inclusive and sustainable initiatives, equipping them with innovative tools and methodologies.

For local communities, particularly in Felgueiras where many project activities were conducted, the benefits were immediate and visible. Increased

awareness of the importance of inclusion and sustainability created a ripple effect, encouraging individuals and organisations to adopt these values in their practices. The project also strengthened networks of local partners, laying the groundwork for future collaboration and initiatives that support people with disabilities.

At the European level, the project demonstrated the power of transnational cooperation in addressing shared challenges. By fostering connections between organisations and individuals from different countries, VERDIS contributed to a stronger European identity and a shared commitment to inclusion and sustainability.

5.2 CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Implementing a project of this scope and ambition was not without its challenges. However, these obstacles provided valuable learning opportunities that enhanced the project's overall impact.

Challenges One significant challenge was addressing the diverse needs of participants, particularly in a transnational context. Ensuring that all activities were accessible and inclusive required careful planning and constant adaptation. Engaging decision-makers and encouraging them to adopt inclusive and sustainable practices also posed difficulties, as many were unfamiliar with the specific needs of athletes with disabilities.

Resource limitations were another challenge, particularly in implementing sustainable practices. Providing accessible infrastructure and eco-friendly materials required creative problem-solving and collaboration among partners.

Lessons Learned The project highlighted the transformative potential of collaboration and mutual learning. By bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise, the VERDIS consortium was able to create innovative solutions



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that addressed complex challenges. The integration of non-formal and informal education proved to be a powerful catalyst for change, fostering empathy, critical thinking, and practical skills among participants.

Another key lesson was the importance of engaging local communities and stakeholders from the outset. Their involvement ensured greater buy-in and sustainability, amplifying the project's impact and paving the way for long-term change.

Finally, the project underscored the need for ongoing reflection and adaptation. By remaining flexible and responsive to the needs of participants, the consortium was able to overcome challenges and deliver meaningful results.

The VERDIS project stands as a powerful example of how sports, education, and sustainability can intersect to create lasting impact. Through its carefully designed activities and strong commitment to inclusion, the project empowered individuals, strengthened organisations, and inspired communities to embrace the values of equality, diversity, and environmental responsibility. By addressing challenges and learning from its experiences, VERDIS has laid the foundation for future initiatives that continue to drive progress toward a more inclusive and sustainable society.

CHAPTER 6

Testimonials and Consortium Experiences

The VERDIS project represents a pioneering approach to the integration of inclusion, sustainability, and sports. Through its diverse activities, the project brought together athletes, professionals, families, and partner organizations to create a transformative environment where the principles of equity and environmental responsibility were not only discussed but actively practiced. By bridging education, empathy, and action, VERDIS demonstrated the immense potential of adapted sports as a platform for social change.



At the heart of the project were the participants, whose stories and experiences highlight the depth of its impact. Athletes with disabilities found their voices and built confidence as they navigated new challenges and showcased their abilities. Professionals, such as coaches and trainers, redefined their approaches to inclusion and sustainability, learning to incorporate these values into their work. Families and communities witnessed firsthand the power of adaptive sports to break barriers and foster connections.

Equally significant were the partner organizations, which played a crucial role in designing and implementing the project. Their reflections provide insight into the challenges of creating inclusive and sustainable systems, as well as the lessons learned from transnational collaboration. Together, these narratives illustrate how VERDIS not only changed individual lives but also laid the groundwork for systemic change across communities and regions.

Below, we explore these stories and reflections in detail, highlighting the key moments that defined the VERDIS project and offering a roadmap for future initiatives to build upon its success.

6.1 PARTICIPANT STORIES

The VERDIS project created a transformative space where participants, both athletes and professionals, experienced personal growth, empathy-building, and a renewed sense of purpose. Through activities like the Green Circuit - Sensory Maze, adaptive sports sessions, and local and transnational exchanges, participants shared powerful stories that illustrated the project's deep impact on their understanding of inclusion, sustainability, and the human connection.

Athletes: Finding Voice and Confidence

For athletes with disabilities, the project was not just an opportunity to engage in sports but a chance to redefine how they see themselves and are seen by others. One participant, who uses a wheelchair, shared their experience during an adaptive sports session where their non-disabled teammates tried bocce for the first time. "Seeing them struggle at first and then celebrate their

progress made me feel like they finally understood my perspective. I'm not fragile; I'm capable. It's just that my challenges are different," they reflected. This moment encapsulated the project's ability to foster mutual respect and understanding, breaking down barriers through shared experiences.

Another athlete recounted how participating in the Green Circuit was empowering, as it highlighted their daily challenges to others. "Watching my peers struggle to navigate the maze made me feel seen. It gave me hope that society can become more empathetic when people are given the opportunity to walk in our shoes—literally." This experience reinforced the project's commitment to designing activities that foster empathy while advocating for inclusive and sustainable practices.

Professionals: Bridging Gaps Through Understanding

For professionals like coaches, managers, and trainers, the VERDIS project offered a chance to rethink their roles and approaches. A coach described the profound impact of the Green Circuit, saying, "It was an eye-opening experience. For the first time, I realized how much thought and effort go into creating accessible spaces. It made me more aware of the challenges my athletes face and how I can better support them." This moment spurred a shift in their professional practices, as they began incorporating more inclusive strategies into their training routines.

Professionals also spoke about the cultural exchanges facilitated by the project. Working with peers from different countries provided them with insights into diverse approaches to inclusion and sustainability. "The collaboration helped me see that inclusion isn't just a set of rules or policies—it's a mindset. It requires commitment and constant learning," one professional noted.

Families and Communities: Witnessing Transformation

Family members of athletes were also deeply moved by the project. One parent shared how their child, who typically hesitated to take on leadership roles, guided others during an adaptive sports session. "Seeing them lead, with such confidence and joy, brought me to tears. VERDIS showed them—and us—

that they are capable of so much more than we sometimes realize." These moments not only transformed perceptions within families but also inspired broader conversations about inclusion in their communities.

6.2 REFLECTIONS FROM PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Salta Fronteiras (Portugal):

Building Trust and Laying Foundations

For Salta Fronteiras, the project was an opportunity to deepen its commitment to inclusion and sustainability. However, as Rita Gonçalves, a project leader, noted, one of the most significant challenges was establishing trust with athletes with disabilities. "Building trust is not a one-time effort; it's a continuous process that requires listening, understanding, and adapting to their needs. It's about showing that you're committed to their success and well-being." This trust became the foundation for the project's activities, enabling meaningful interactions and long-term impact.

Salta Fronteiras also reflected on how the project strengthened their organizational capacity. By integrating sustainable practices into sports, they were able to design innovative activities that aligned with their mission while addressing broader societal challenges. "VERDIS allowed us to connect two areas of expertise—inclusion and sustainability—and create a model that we can replicate and expand upon," Gonçalves said.

MIHI (Latvia):

Balancing Accessibility and Sustainability

MIHI brought its expertise in outdoor activities and education to the project, emphasizing the importance of nature as a space for learning and inclusion. Reflecting on their experience, they noted that one of their key challenges was balancing sustainability with accessibility, particularly in rural contexts. "The Green Circuit taught us that sustainable practices don't have to compromise accessibility. Using recycled and local materials not only reduced waste but

also demonstrated that thoughtful design benefits everyone," a representative shared.

The project also provided MIHI with opportunities to enhance their methodologies. By collaborating with international partners, they gained new insights into how sports can be a vehicle for social change. "The cultural exchange was invaluable. It showed us that while the challenges may vary, the commitment to inclusion and sustainability is universal," they reflected.

SAREM (Turkey): **Fostering Intersectionality in Sports**

For SAREM, the VERDIS project represented a chance to expand their expertise in using sports as a tool for social cohesion. They were particularly inspired by the project's focus on intersectionality—empowering both athletes and professionals. "VERDIS highlighted how inclusion and sustainability are interconnected. By addressing both, we created a model that goes beyond sports, touching on broader societal issues," a SAREM representative noted.

The sensory maze was a standout moment for SAREM. Watching participants navigate the maze and reflect on the experience was transformative. "The maze wasn't just an activity; it was a mirror. It showed participants their biases and assumptions, and it sparked conversations about how we can design spaces that truly include everyone," they shared.

The testimonials and reflections gathered from participants and partner organizations paint a vivid picture of the VERDIS project's transformative impact. From fostering empathy and confidence among athletes to inspiring professionals to rethink their practices, the project demonstrated how inclusion, sustainability, and sports can intersect to create meaningful change. Partner organizations have emerged stronger and more committed to their mission, equipped with new tools and insights to drive progress. Together, these stories and experiences form a powerful narrative of resilience, collaboration, and the shared human journey toward a more inclusive and sustainable world.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion and Future of VERDIS

7.1 FINAL REFLECTIONS

The VERDIS project proved to be a transformative journey, merging inclusion, sustainability, and adaptive sports into a unique approach that deeply impacted individuals, communities, and organizations. While the challenges encountered were significant, the positive outcomes showcased the power of sports as an inclusive tool and the potential of international collaboration to address social and environmental barriers.

Throughout the project, stories of resilience, learning, and empathy emerged, demonstrating that meaningful change is possible with commitment, innovation, and a people-centered approach. However, achieving this transformation required overcoming obstacles such as initial participant resistance, distrust, anxiety about new experiences, and structural barriers. These challenges, though significant, provided opportunities for growth and adaptation, strengthening the project's foundation and amplifying its impact.



Positive Impacts

The results of VERDIS highlighted the strength of its integrated approach, producing meaningful impacts across multiple levels:

1. Impacts on Athletes with Disabilities:

- **Confidence and Leadership:** Athletes reported significant increases in self-confidence as they participated in activities that highlighted their abilities. Many took on leadership roles, guiding teams in activities such as the Green Circuit and demonstrating their indispensable contributions.
- **Empowerment and Active Participation:** Participation in transnational mobilities allowed athletes to explore new contexts and embrace cultural diversity, fostering a sense of belonging and active involvement.
- **Challenging Stereotypes:** By engaging in inclusive environments, athletes challenged stereotypes about their abilities, both for themselves and others.

2. Impacts on Professionals:

- **Capacity Building and Empathy:** Coaches and managers learned new inclusive methodologies and developed empathy by experiencing the barriers faced by individuals with disabilities during activities like the Green Circuit.
- **Innovative Practices:** Many professionals adapted their methods post-project, integrating concepts of inclusion and sustainability into their training and management practices.
- **International Collaboration:** Exchanging experiences with partners from different countries broadened their perspectives on how to address inclusion and sustainability comprehensively.

3. Impacts on Local Communities:

- **Awareness Raising:** Project activities helped communities recognize the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities, fostering greater acceptance and understanding.

- **Strengthened Networks:** Local partnerships were reinforced, laying the groundwork for future inclusive and sustainable initiatives.

4. Impacts on Partner Organizations:

- **Institutional Strengthening:** The project enabled partner organizations to enhance their skills and methodologies, consolidating their capacity to implement inclusive initiatives.
- **Replicable Model:** The best practices developed in VERDIS can be applied in other contexts, expanding the project's reach and impact.

Barriers and Challenges

Despite the positive impacts, the project faced challenges that underscored the need for continuous strategies to address obstacles in similar initiatives:

1. **Initial Resistance from Participants with Disabilities:**
Some athletes using wheelchairs were hesitant to engage in activities, due to insecurities and past experiences of exclusion. This resistance was overcome through participant-centered strategies, which built trust and highlighted their vital contributions.
2. **Fear of Exploring the New:**
Anxiety about traveling to new environments or participating in international contexts was a significant barrier. Preparatory sessions and mentor support played a crucial role in alleviating these fears.
3. **Linguistic Barriers:**
During transnational mobilities, language barriers hindered communication for some participants. Visual resources, informal translation, and practical activities helped mitigate these challenges.
4. **Infrastructure and Logistics:**
The lack of fully accessible facilities and adequate resources in some locations posed a challenge to full inclusion. Creative and improvised solutions were necessary to ensure all participants could engage.

7.2 NEXT STEPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the lessons learned, it is essential to build upon the foundations laid by VERDIS and address the challenges identified while scaling up the good practices developed.

1. Building Trust and Providing Personalized Support

- **Listening Sessions:** Facilitate initial dialogues to identify participants' concerns and tailor activities to their needs.
- **Peer Mentorship:** Enable experienced participants to mentor newcomers, fostering confidence and security.

2. Preparing for Mobilities

- **Preparatory Activities:** Conduct simulations that allow participants to familiarize themselves with new contexts.
- **Support Networks:** Establish emotional support groups to reduce anxieties related to travel and intercultural interactions.

3. Addressing Linguistic Barriers

- **Visual and Multisensory Resources:** Prioritize accessible materials to facilitate universal understanding.
- **Translation Tools:** Integrate easy-to-use technologies to aid communication among participants from different languages.

4. Strengthening Infrastructure

- **Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborate with governments and businesses to improve sports facilities and make them more accessible.
- **Technical Guides:** Develop resources to help organizations adapt spaces and activities effectively.

5. Monitoring and Continuous Evaluation

- **Clear Indicators:** Establish metrics to assess the effectiveness of activities and identify areas for improvement.
- **Regular Feedback:** Promote mechanisms to collect participants' perceptions and suggestions.

6. Expanding and Sharing the Project

- **Educational Materials:** Create and distribute guides, videos, and other resources to share VERDIS's practices widely.
- **Broaden Partnerships:** Include new actors, such as schools, businesses, and environmental organizations, to expand the project's reach.

Final Conclusion

The VERDIS project was more than a short-term initiative; it was the beginning of a continuous transformation. By addressing barriers and promoting inclusion and sustainability through adaptive sports, the project created a lasting legacy that transcends borders and contexts.

The lessons learned and impacts achieved demonstrate that meaningful change is possible when individuals and organizations unite around a shared goal. The future of VERDIS lies in its replication and expansion, ensuring that more people and communities benefit from its innovative approach. The path forward is clear: to continue building a world where inclusion and sustainability are the cornerstones of a more just, empathetic, and collaborative society.

CHAPTER 8

Activities

8.1 LOCAL ACTIVITIES

1. "Bocce4All" Event – Promoting Health and Community Well-being

Conducted by MIHI

Objective: To explore the positive impact of sports on participants' lives, focusing on promoting mental well-being and improving physical health.

Activities Conducted:

1. **Creative Motivational Collages:** Participants created collages focused on healthy living, drawing inspiration from personal experiences and goals related to physical and mental well-being.
2. **Physical Exercise Sessions:** The day included engaging physical exercises designed to improve fitness levels and enhance mental well-being through movement.
3. **Nutritious Meal Preparation:** Participants worked together to prepare a healthy meal, emphasizing the importance of nutrition in maintaining overall well-being.

2. "Sports and Inclusion" – Enhancing Social Cohesion through Sport

Conducted by MIHI at Veczemju Cliffs, Latvia

Objective: To deepen team competencies in promoting sports values, social inclusion, and sustainable practices while fostering collaboration between hearing and deaf participants.

Activities Conducted:

1. **Educational Workshops:** Sessions focused on youth-related project development and planning. Participants collaboratively drafted project ideas to address community needs.
2. **Sports and Inclusivity Exercises:** Organized team sports activities designed to promote collaboration and inclusivity between hearing and deaf participants.

3. **Skill Development in Latvian Sign Language:** Practical sessions to enhance participants' communication skills in Latvian Sign Language.

3. "Green Steps Workshop" – Fostering Environmental Awareness

Organized by Salta Fronteiras

Objective: To educate and engage participants in sustainable practices, emphasizing the importance of individual actions in global environmental conservation.

Activities Conducted:

1. **Sustainable Living Practices:** Participants learn about eco-friendly habits that can be incorporated into daily life.
2. **DIY Eco-friendly Products:** Hands-on session where participants create their own environmentally friendly household products.

4. "Eco-Challenge Day" – Promoting Active Environmental Engagement

Organized by SAREM

Objective: To engage the local community in a series of challenges that promote environmental health and sustainability.

Activities Conducted:

1. **Local Clean-up Drive:** Participants gather for a clean-up event at a local park or beach.
2. **Recycling Relay Race:** A competitive event where teams sort recyclable materials correctly under time pressure.

5. "Adaptive Sports for Sustainability" – Integrating Eco-friendly Practices in Adaptive Sports

Organized by Salta Fronteiras

Objective: To demonstrate the integration of sustainable practices within the realm of adaptive sports, promoting both inclusivity and environmental consciousness among participants using wheelchairs.

Activities Conducted:

1. **Eco-Adaptive Sports Tournaments:** Hosting sports tournaments such as wheelchair basketball and tennis using equipment made from recycled materials, highlighting how sports can adapt to be more environmentally friendly.
2. **Workshop on Sustainable Sports Equipment:** Educating participants on how to maintain and create adaptive sports equipment using sustainable, eco-friendly materials.

Outcomes and Impact:

- **Environmental Advocacy in Sports:** Raises awareness about sustainable practices within the sports industry, especially in adaptive sports.
- **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** Encourages the participation of individuals in wheelchairs, ensuring that sports activities are inclusive and environmentally conscious.

6. "Green Wheels" – Promoting Environmental Stewardship through Wheelchair Accessible Nature Trails

Organized by Salta Fronteiras

Objective: To encourage individuals using wheelchairs to actively participate in environmental conservation efforts by experiencing accessible nature trails.

Activities Conducted:

1. **Accessible Trail Rides:** Organizing guided tours on wheelchair-accessible trails that are maintained using environmentally friendly practices.
2. **Conservation Workshops:** Workshops held in accessible venues focusing on environmental conservation topics, teaching participants how they can contribute to preserving their local natural environments.

Outcomes and Impact:

- **Accessibility in Environmental Activities:** Demonstrates that environmental activities can be accessible to everyone, regardless of physical ability.
- **Active Participation in Conservation:** Empowers participants using wheelchairs to be active stewards of the environment, promoting a sense of responsibility and inclusion.

8.2 SEMINAR ACTIVITIES

1. Walk and Talk - Reflecting on Local Contexts

Facilitated by Salta Fronteiras

Objective: To engage seminar participants in a reflective discussion about the integration of inclusivity and sustainability in sports programs.

Activity Description:

- **Interactive Group Discussions:** Participants, divided by organization, walk around the seminar area while discussing key questions on inclusivity and sustainability in sports. They use post-it notes to record their thoughts and insights.
- **Discussion Points:**
 1. Exploring ways to ensure sports programs are welcoming and inclusive of diverse backgrounds, abilities, and identities.
 2. Identifying changes necessary in sports facilities and operations to minimize environmental impacts.
 3. Discussing the involvement of youth in decision-making processes to enhance inclusivity and sustainability.
 4. Determining resources or support needed to implement inclusive and sustainable practices in sports.
 5. Exploring collaborations with local organizations to advance inclusivity and sustainability in sports.
 6. Developing educational initiatives to promote the importance of these values within the sports community.

7. Discussing methods to measure and track progress towards more inclusive and sustainable sports practices.

Outcome: Participants are expected to leave with a deeper understanding and practical ideas on how to enhance their sports programs in terms of inclusivity and environmental sustainability.

2. Silent Floor - Visualizing Sustainability in Sports

Facilitated by Salta Fronteiras

Objective: To stimulate creative and silent reflection on personal commitments to sustainability in sports contexts.

Activity Description:

- **Silent Reflection:** Participants respond to the prompt "I can turn sports, in my context, more sustainable by..." on flip charts placed around the room. They can write words, draw, or jot down questions and ideas.
- **Interactive Element:** Participants are encouraged to build on others' ideas by adding comments, questions, or connections, fostering a collaborative yet quiet dialogue.
- **Ambiance:** The activity is conducted in silence with calm music in the background to encourage deep thought and reflection.

Outcome: This activity aims to compile a diverse array of personal commitments and practical ideas, enhancing the group's collective understanding of how sports can be a vehicle for sustainability.

3. Human Bingo - Sharing Experiences on Sustainability

Facilitated by Salta Fronteiras

Objective: To facilitate knowledge exchange and personal interaction among participants on the theme of environmental sustainability in sports.

Activity Description:

- **Interactive Game:** Each participant receives a bingo card with questions related to sustainability in sports. They find partners to answer these questions, noting keywords in the corresponding bingo squares.
- **Dynamic Interaction:** After each interaction, participants find new partners, enriching the discussion and diversity of perspectives.
- **Game Objective:** The first participant to fill their card shouts "BINGO!" and shares their insights with the group.

Outcome: This engaging activity not only allows participants to share and learn from each other's experiences but also highlights the collective knowledge within the room about sustainable sports practices.

These activities are designed to be interactive and reflective, helping participants at the seminar organized by Salta Fronteiras to engage deeply with the themes of sustainability and inclusivity in sports. Through discussions, silent reflection, and interactive games, the seminar aims to foster a proactive and thoughtful approach to these critical issues.

8.3 FOLLOW UP MOBILITY ACTIVITIES

Follow Up Mobility Activities Organized by Salta Fronteiras

1. Good Practices -

Presentation and Discussion

Objective: To share and critically evaluate the best practices from each organization, with a specific focus on the outcomes of local sessions conducted in each country, especially regarding sustainability and inclusivity in sports. Activity Description:

- **Presentations:** Representatives from each participating organization will present detailed case studies of their most successful projects. These presentations will include methodologies, key outcomes, community impact, and lessons learned, particularly focusing on

how these practices have fostered environmental sustainability and social inclusion.

- **Discussion:** A facilitated discussion will follow, where participants can ask questions, challenge assumptions, and explore the applicability of these practices in different contexts. This session will also include breakout groups to discuss specific aspects of the presentations in greater detail, allowing for deeper engagement and knowledge exchange.

Outcome: This activity will enable participants to gather a diverse array of actionable strategies that could be adapted to their own organizational contexts, fostering a greater global impact through shared knowledge and collaboration.

2. World Café - Interactive Group Discussions

Objective: This session aims to harness the collective intelligence of the participants to tackle key questions about the integration of sustainability and inclusivity into sports programs. Activity Setup:

- **Setup:** The room will be arranged with six tables, each representing a different theme or question. Each table will have a designated facilitator to guide the discussions and ensure that all voices are heard.
- **Rounds:**
 - **Round 1 (15 minutes):** Participants at each table discuss the initial question, with the goal of generating a wide range of ideas and perspectives. This round is crucial for setting the stage for deeper analysis in subsequent rounds.
 - **Rounds 2 & 3 (10 minutes each):** Participants rotate to new tables, bringing fresh insights to each discussion. This cross-pollination of ideas is designed to refine the group's thoughts and develop more nuanced approaches to the challenges presented.

Questions/Themes:

1. Integrating environmental education into sports training programs: Strategies and benefits.

2. Ensuring inclusivity in green sports initiatives: Overcoming barriers to participation.
3. Encouraging sustainable behavior change among athletes and participants.
4. Addressing the unique challenges faced by disabled athletes and promoting inclusivity.

Outcome: The World Café method will facilitate a dynamic and productive dialogue on complex issues, with participants leaving with a broader understanding of how to implement sustainable and inclusive practices in their sports programs.

3. Sensory Maze Experience - **Raising Awareness for Disabled Athletes**

Objective: To simulate the experiences of disabled athletes in order to deepen understanding and empathy among participants, thereby enhancing the inclusivity of sports programs. Activity Description:

- **Setup:** A series of mazes and obstacle courses will be set up, each designed to simulate different physical disabilities. These setups will challenge participants to navigate the sports environment while experiencing impairments such as visual or auditory limitations.
- **Reflection and Discussion:** Post-experience, a guided reflection session will help participants process their experiences and discuss the emotional and physical challenges they encountered. This session will also explore broader themes such as accessibility, adaptations in sports settings, and the importance of supportive technologies and policies.
- **Deeper Dive:** The discussion will then transition to strategy formulation, where participants brainstorm on how sports organizations can better design their facilities and programs to be truly inclusive. This part of the session will leverage insights gained from the maze experience to propose concrete changes in sports management and infrastructure.

Outcome: Participants will gain firsthand insights into the barriers faced by disabled athletes, fostering a deeper commitment to creating accessible and welcoming sports environments. The session is designed

to translate empathy into action, encouraging participants to advocate for and implement changes within their own organizations.

These enhanced descriptions of the follow-up mobility activities highlight Salta Fronteiras' commitment to using innovative, interactive methodologies to address critical issues in sports sustainability and inclusivity. By the end of these sessions, participants will not only have gained knowledge but also practical strategies and a renewed commitment to fostering inclusive and sustainable sports communities.

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