



FINAL REPORT OF THE PROJECT

Name of the project: Staying safe in the world of youth climbing

Type of action: Erasmus+ Sport Small Collaborative Partnerships

Duration of the project: 1.1.2021 – 31.12.2022

Grant from EU: 60.000,00 €

Project Partners:

Planinsko društvo Domžale (Slovenia)
Sportsko penjački klub Fothia (Croatia)
Horolezecký klub Atlas Opava, z.s. (Czech Republic)
Horolezecky klub Horec Liptovsky Mikulas (Slovakia)
Magyar Hegy – és Sportmászó Szövetség (Hungary)

FOCUS OF THE PROJECT

The project focused on:

- how to increase the number of children partaking in climbing,
- how to increase the safety aspect for all types of climbing,
- how to design appropriate training sessions for children,
- how to increase the appreciation of the health benefits,
- how to involve people from social layers,
- how to increase the willingness to volunteer in associated activities,
- climbing competitions for children,
- enhancing networking between the Project Partners, associated bodies, and other relevant associations.

IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES

Analysis of climbing clubs:

Our goal was to analyze the current state of the climbing, regarding children and youth, in the countries of the Project Partners (Slovenia, Slovakia, Croatia, Czechia, and Hungary). This analysis helped us to compare the differences and similarities in the functioning of our clubs and to expose some of the biggest issues the clubs might be facing. Such analysis helps us to have an overview of the present situation and to inspire for further improvements. This questionnaire with obtained answers can be useful for each country individually in proposing useful solutions to national associations and climbing clubs.

Summary analysis and national analyses are attached to this document.



Transnational Meetings:

Throughout the project, we implemented five Transnational Meetings, one in every country of Project Partners. Two of these meetings were Youth Climbing Camps and the other three were Smaller Transnational Meetings, where experts shared their practices, experience, and knowledge concerning the meeting's objectives.

In the first year of the project, we implemented the first three Transnational Meetings.

The meeting in Nagymaros (Hungary) took place in August 2021. We started to identify age-appropriate approaches to training courses regarding safety measures, technical knowledge, skills, and different types of climbing. Most of the work was done through sharing experiences, knowledge, and good practices in participants' clubs and countries. As a part of the discussion, we started preparing guidelines for working with youth, which is one of the main outputs of this project. We worked on these guidelines throughout the whole project, editing them according to experiences at Transnational Meetings.

The youth climbing camp in Kalamarka (Slovakia) took place in August 2021. Activities on camp were focused on safe participation in climbing, meaning both technical knowledge and knowing how to train without injuries. It had 4 subparts: theoretical and practical lessons, practical training (climbing), additional physical training, and workshops for knowledge sharing.

The meeting in Olomouc (Czech Republic) took place in November 2021. We discussed health benefits and appropriate training plans for youth, with an emphasis on safety and injury prevention. Most of the work was done through fieldwork and presentations of local successful practices, with lots of knowledge sharing and discussions.

In the second year of the project, we implemented the last two Transnational Meetings.

The meeting in Zagreb (Croatia) took place in May 2022. We focused on the objective to increase the number of children who are able to get acquainted with climbing and on finding good approaches to volunteering in climbing clubs. Work was done through a lot of fieldwork, followed by knowledge sharing and discussions. We prepared videos and tutorials for age-appropriate exercises, which is another one of the main outputs of this project.

The youth climbing camp in Kotečnik (Slovenia) took place in August 2022. Activities on camp were focused on introducing different types of climbing and how to practice safe climbing in various conditions and settings. It had 4 subparts: theoretical and practical lessons, practical training (climbing), additional physical training, and workshops for knowledge sharing.

Separate detailed reports for every meeting are attached to this document.

Other activities:

Other activities were more ongoing throughout the whole project and implemented in the background: Project coordination and management, Dissemination, and Project and programme evaluation.



PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROJECT

Throughout the project, Project Partners sent 118 participants to the mentioned five Transnational Meetings. Out of that, 64 were children and youth under the age of 18, and the other 54 were adults.

OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

The main objective of the project was safe participation in youth climbing, where safe means both technical knowledge and knowing how to train correctly, stay healthy and avoid injuries. Throughout the project, we worked on a number of specialized topics on increasing safety and improving training. We recognized key factors influencing the development of young climbers and specified the age-specific stages of this development. We gathered all this knowledge into the guidelines, that cover different subjects regarding age-appropriate training. The complex combination of subjects makes the guidelines innovative since they can be used as a base for climbing coaches when preparing either technical content or training programs for youth, regardless of the type of climbing.

Guidelines for youth climbing are attached to this document.

Appropriate training sessions for children and youth have to consist of carefully chosen exercises. We prepared some exemplary videos, and this is one example of using additional non-traditional learning methods. Throughout the project, we discussed and tested many more, for example, training apps and adjusted traditional games and activities. We believe that with the increasing presence of similar content online, we can improve the quality of training and the delivery of knowledge to young climbers in the coming years.

Link to videos: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAIOWpkXxaZCEYn5Qg5HxhjK7qjklKyl>

Transnational climbing camps presented the opportunity to introduce different types of climbing to participants, which they usually would not get familiar with. As the 5 countries widely differ in their topography and geology, participants experienced very different climbing techniques and climbing cultures, which would not be accessible solely on a national level. Transnational climbing camps also helped us introduce a healthy lifestyle to participants, through regular physical activity, spending time outdoors, regular and healthy meals, and quality social activities. Participants experienced a major improvement in their climbing, social and English skills.

We discussed different ways of increasing the number of young participants who can be acquainted with climbing. We recognized "open days" as one of the more easily achievable ways. We organized such an event as a good example and to show the ease of carrying out similar events. They offer the same opportunity to everyone, not discriminating against children from less fortunate financial backgrounds since they are free and don't require any climbing gear. The will to organize such events and other forms of volunteering is very different between the clubs. One of the main factors is the size of the club since smaller clubs don't usually have a big income and their work is often already based on volunteers. Through analysis and experience sharing, we came to the conclusion that regular volunteer activity, unfortunately, cannot be forced and achieved in every club. We agreed that occasional open events, where experienced climbers volunteer for a couple of hours, are not demanding and they relieve smaller climbing clubs that cannot necessarily afford free open events



with paid instructors. Such events can be regular, but even an event once a year presents a chance for youth who wants to try climbing.

Regarding the project's objective of finding ways to raise the number of children participating in climbing competitions, we realized the problem is much deeper than just the low motivation of climbers. The results of the initial Analysis helped us realize that the biggest problem the clubs have is the lack of adequate financial support and also the lack of suitable training facilities, which are the main factors in training for competitions.

DISSEMINATION

The project webpage was set up and maintained and updated throughout the project. On the webpage, the information and news on the project itself were distributed. To ensure the future impact of the project, the project's webpage will be kept online even now after the project has ended and will be regularly updated with any future collaborations between the partners. All of the reports and results will be available to be used and further developed in the future by all parties involved, while they will also be available online free of charge for future reference for any other parties.

Project's webpage: <http://staying-safe.pdd.si>

Project's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100071669840647>

Most important deliverables and useful material:

- Guidelines for youth climbing: Attached to this document.
- Videos with age-appropriate injury-preventing exercises:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAIOWpkXxaZCEYn5Qg5HxhjK7qjKlKyl>
- Analysis of climbing clubs in all five countries: Attached to this document.

CONCLUSION

By involving partners from Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, we had the benefit of sharing practices, experience, and knowledge concerning the project's objectives from a number of countries with different traditions and educational systems regarding climbing. That allowed us to come up with better solutions than we could solely on a national level. This project was built on an already existing international collaboration from another Erasmus+ project ("Climbing for everybody"). Already accumulated knowledge allowed us to make further steps in this project. Furthermore, the international relations built during this project will be the basis of any future collaborations between Project Partners and other climbing clubs and associations, whose main focus is youth climbing.

We didn't experience a lot of problems or difficulties in the project. Most of them were related to the pandemic of COVID-19. In the first year of the project, the date of the first Transnational meeting was changed, and there was a slight change in the number of participants in the first two Transnational meetings because of uncertainty and government-issued rules. Other than that, the project was implemented according to the plan and the goals set in the project plan were fulfilled.



ANNEXES

- 1) Summary analysis and national analyses of climbing clubs
- 2) Reports from Transnational Meetings
- 3) Guidelines for youth climbing