



InterSPORT – IS

KICK OFF REPORT

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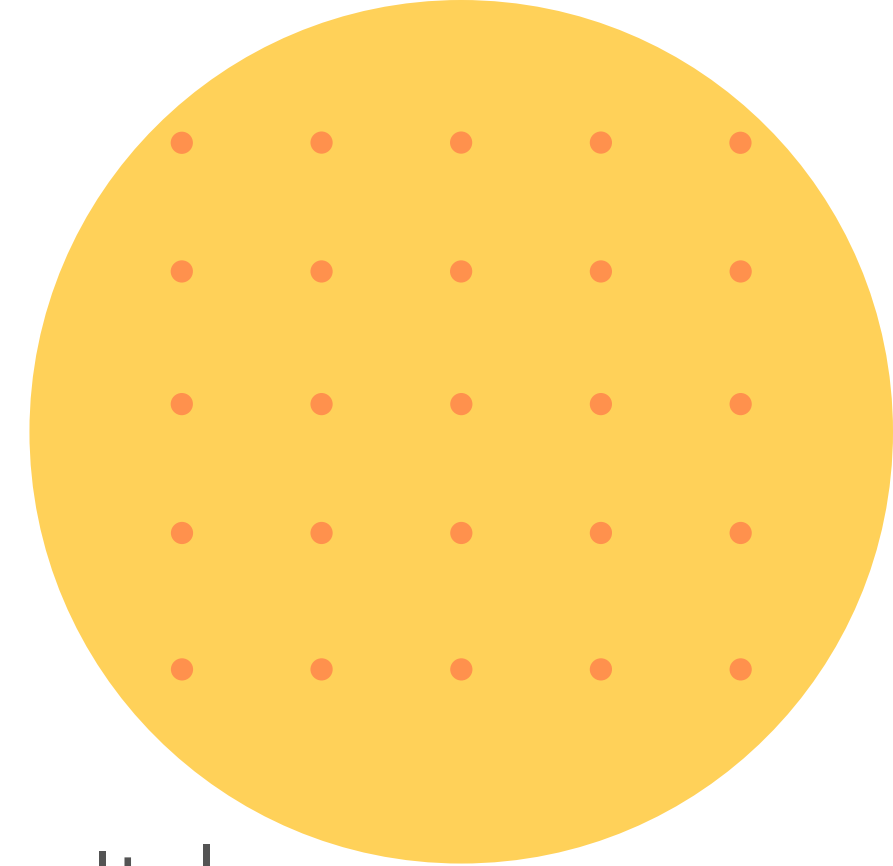
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PARTNERSHIP



Lead partner- Italy



Italy



Greece



Spain



On January 29, 2023, in Megara, Greece, the kick-off meeting of the interSPORT-IS project (ID 101090395) took place, with the participation of a total of 12 representatives from consortium associations (GAYCS, SOS EUROPA, EUEXIA E YOUTH HORIZONS). This meeting allowed for the enhancement of synergies, mutual understanding, team building, and laid the foundation for efficient, structured, and sustainable cooperation. Issues related to project management and partner coordination were addressed, including operational discussions on the budget, activities, agenda, implementation strategy, and expected outcomes. This session also included the definition of a specific strategy for risk analysis, risk management, and risk mitigation, as well as for dissemination, communication, monitoring, and evaluation. A specific moment was also dedicated to planning all coordination meetings and clarifying the role of each partner and their expected contributions.

Before this meeting, all partners collectively conducted extensive preparatory work, which involved a series of questionnaires aimed at assessing the level of knowledge about the intersex topic related to the world of sports. These surveys targeted local communities of participating organizations, specific target groups, and overall users/members, as well as communities of other sports organizations and local associations related to intersex, with the objectives of:

- i. Analyzing the needs of target groups, specific difficulties encountered, and the current level of participation in sports.
- ii. Gathering key data on common perceptions and practices, especially related to intersex issues in sports.



The kick-off meeting was also a moment to discuss the results of these questionnaires, in order to fully understand the starting point of the participants regarding the intersex topic in sports.

The questionnaires highlighted that there is still too little known about intersex, particularly in the world of sports. This leaves sports associations unprepared to accommodate intersex athletes.

In the afternoon, the focus shifted towards increasing awareness and initiating discussions on intersex issues in sports through interactive discussions, brainstorming, idea exchange, reflections, and sharing of best practices. This session was particularly important due to the limited availability of data, knowledge, and information currently available on this topic. By the end of the meeting, participants gained greater awareness of the intersex topic in sports, further strengthening their leadership for the upcoming activities outlined in the project.



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ANALYSIS OF THE INTERSEX



WHAT IS INTERSEX?

The term "intersex" refers to a condition in which a person is born with sexual characteristics that do not entirely align with the typical definitions of "male" or "female". These variations can involve genitalia, hormonal levels, or chromosomal patterns.

For instance, an intersex person may have genitalia that do not conform to the standard expectations for either a man or a woman, or they may exhibit a combination of both male and female sexual characteristics.

It is important to emphasize that intersex is not a pathological condition or a disorder. It is simply a natural biological variation within human diversity.

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness and advocacy for the rights of intersex individuals, including the protection of human rights and the promotion of informed medical decisions.



COMMON INTERSEX VARIATIONS



- AIS (Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome)
- Klinefelter Syndrome
- Turner Syndrome
- 5-alpha Reductase Deficiency
- Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia (CAH)

INCIDENCE AND PREVALENCE

Approximately 1 in 2,000 individuals are born with intersex traits, making it more common than many realize.



MEDICAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS



Historically, medical intervention was common to "normalize" intersex individuals. However, there's growing recognition of the importance of informed consent and body autonomy.

LEGAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Many countries now recognize the rights of intersex individuals, including protection from discrimination and the right to bodily integrity.

CHALLENGES FACED BY INTERSEX INDIVIDUALS

- Stigma and discrimination
- Limited access to accurate information and support
- Challenges in medical decision-making

SUPPORTING INTERSEX INDIVIDUALS

- Provide safe spaces for open dialogue
- Advocate for informed consent in medical interventions
- Promote accurate and respectful language





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INTERSEX & SPORT

The involvement of intersex individuals in sports raises various issues related to fairness, inclusion, and medical privacy. Here are some key points to consider:





1. BIOLOGICAL VARIABILITY AND FAIR COMPETITION:

Intersex individuals may have biological variations that influence their physical development. This raises questions about fairness in sports competition and the need to define rules that account for this diversity.

2. SPORTS REGULATIONS:

International sports organizations, such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and other sports federations, have developed guidelines and policies to manage the participation of intersex athletes in competitions. These regulations seek to balance competitive fairness and respect for the athlete's self-determination.

3. Medical Examinations and Privacy:

At times, intersex athletes have been subjected to invasive medical examinations to determine their eligibility for competition. This raises concerns about privacy and the athlete's autonomy.

4. Rights of Intersex Individuals:

It is important to respect the human rights and self-determination of intersex individuals, including their rights to participate in sports without discrimination.

5. Education and Awareness:

Education about intersex and related issues in sports is crucial for promoting understanding and inclusion.





6. Research and Scientific Studies:

Ongoing research on intersex variations and their impact in sports is essential for developing policies and regulations based on scientific evidence.

7. Collaboration with Intersex Athletes:

Involving intersex athletes and organizations representing this community in the decision-making process is crucial to ensure fair and inclusive representation.



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INTERSEX & SPORTS EXAMPLES

There are several well-known athletes who are open about their experience of being intersex and have faced challenges related to participation in sports. Here are some examples:





Caster Semenya:

Caster Semenya is a South African sprinter who has won Olympic and world medals in the 800 meters. She has faced controversies and legal battles regarding her naturally high levels of testosterone, which led to regulations against athletes with certain biological characteristics. The athlete had been excluded from some sports competitions for refusing to take medication to lower her high level of testosterone, caused by a genetic disorder that leads to hyperandrogenism. Because of this, Semenya turned to the European Court of Human Rights in February 2021, filing a case against the Swiss Supreme Court. Today, the verdict has come: the athlete "has been discriminated against."

Annet Negesa:

Ugandan athlete Annet Negesa is a middle-distance runner who participated in the 2012 London Olympics. Like Semenya, she also faced issues due to her high testosterone levels. She had to undergo surgery in order to continue competing with women. Ugandan middle-distance runner Annet Negesa, a talent in African middle-distance running, told a German TV channel about her ordeal. The sprinter's sports career came to an end after the surgery to "remain a woman," that is, to lower her excessively high testosterone levels. "Your hormones are a problem," a federal doctor told her, "but it can be resolved." Annet is a DSD athlete, with differences in sexual development: like Caster Semenya, she has a high level of testosterone, and according to the authorities, she would have an "unfair" advantage over other athletes, making it unjust to compete with them. Annet undergoes the procedure at the Women Fertility Center in Kampala. She suffers severe disruptions and will never compete again. For years, she kept silent, then on the advice of a lawyer, she told everything.



Dutee Chand:

is an Indian sprinter who has won medals at both national and international levels. In 2014, she was temporarily suspended due to her high testosterone levels, but later gained the right to compete. Chand experiences hyperandrogenism, In 2014, her elevated testosterone caused the Indian Athletics Federation to remove her from its programme and ban her from events. She appealed to higher athletic bodies, which overturned the ban. As a sprinter, she was unaffected by the 2019 restrictions on intersex characteristics in middle distance events; she offered the services of her legal team to Caster Semenya.



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ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEMS



FACTORS INFLUENCING INTERSEX PARTICIPATION IN GRASSROOTS SPORTS

Internal Factors within Sports Organizations

Policies and Procedures

- Lack of inclusive policies for intersex individuals.
- Absence of specific welcoming and support procedures.

Training and Awareness

- Insufficient staff training on inclusivity and gender equity.
- Low awareness of specific challenges faced by intersex individuals.

Infrastructure and Facilities

- Absence of accessible and inclusive spaces and equipment for intersex individuals.

External Factors to Sports Organizations

Social Culture and Public Perceptions

- Limited societal understanding and awareness of intersex individuals in sports.
- Presence of prejudices and stereotypes.

National Policies and Legislation

- Lack of laws and regulations promoting the inclusion of intersex individuals in sports.
- Legal barriers hindering participation.

Access to Economic Resources

- Limited availability of funds for implementing inclusive policies and programs.
- Difficulty in obtaining funding for inclusive projects.

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS IDENTIFIED ISSUES:

Development of Inclusive Policies:

- Establish policies that promote the inclusion of intersex individuals in sports.
- Define specific welcoming and support procedures.

Training and Awareness:

- Offer training programs on the challenges faced by intersex individuals in sports.
- Foster a culture of respect and acceptance within the organization.

Public Education and Awareness:

- Conduct educational campaigns to raise societal awareness about intersex individuals in sports.
- Dispel prejudices and stereotypes through awareness programs.

Adaptation of Infrastructure:

- Make spaces and equipment accessible and inclusive for intersex individuals.

Engage with Relevant Authorities:

- Advocate for the creation of laws and regulations that promote inclusion.
- Collaborate with governmental bodies to remove legal barriers.

Financial Resource Management:

- Seek funding and sponsorships to implement inclusive policies and programs.
- Optimize the use of available resources to promote inclusion.

THANK YOU!

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is.intersport@gmail.com

