

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

SPORTISM: A Transdisciplinary Approach to the Application of Physical Activity in the Treatment and Inclusion of Children with Autism
Novi Sad, Serbia, 24.10.2025.



Presentation of the **project Sportism**

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Association of inclusive culture – our vision

- To create a society where **every person, regardless of ability, can participate fully** in education, sport, culture, and community life.
- To promote **equal rights and opportunities** for children, youth, and adults with special needs.
- To strengthen **social inclusion and understanding** through shared experiences in sport, art, and everyday activities.



THE CREATION OF THE PROJECT IDEA





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Partner organizations

Coordinating organization
Association of inclusive culture from Slovenia

Serbia's Sport Association 'Milan Petrović'

Italy's Maendeleo for Children

Croatia's Centre for Autism Rijeka

and Romania's ACS Kory Francis



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Partnership

- 5 partner countries: Slovenia, Italy, Croatia, Serbia, Romania
- Multidisciplinary team: special educators, kinesiologists, coaches, physiotherapists, psychologists
- Emphasis on **transnational cooperation** and exchange of expertise



Target population: children and adolescents with

*Autism
spectrum
disorder*

*Intellectual
disabilities*

*Multiple
disabilities*



Challenges:

- Low access to sport for children with ASD and intellectual disabilities
- Lack of professional training for sport experts
- Absence of inclusion criteria and monitoring tools
- Few inclusive sport programs
- Limited awareness among professionals and families

Our Response:

- Develop 200 exercises for coordination & balance
- Create e-training diary and inclusion criteria
- Train professionals and volunteers
- Create forum for parents
- Create digital manuals for parents
- Disseminate results via web platform, social media channels and international conference











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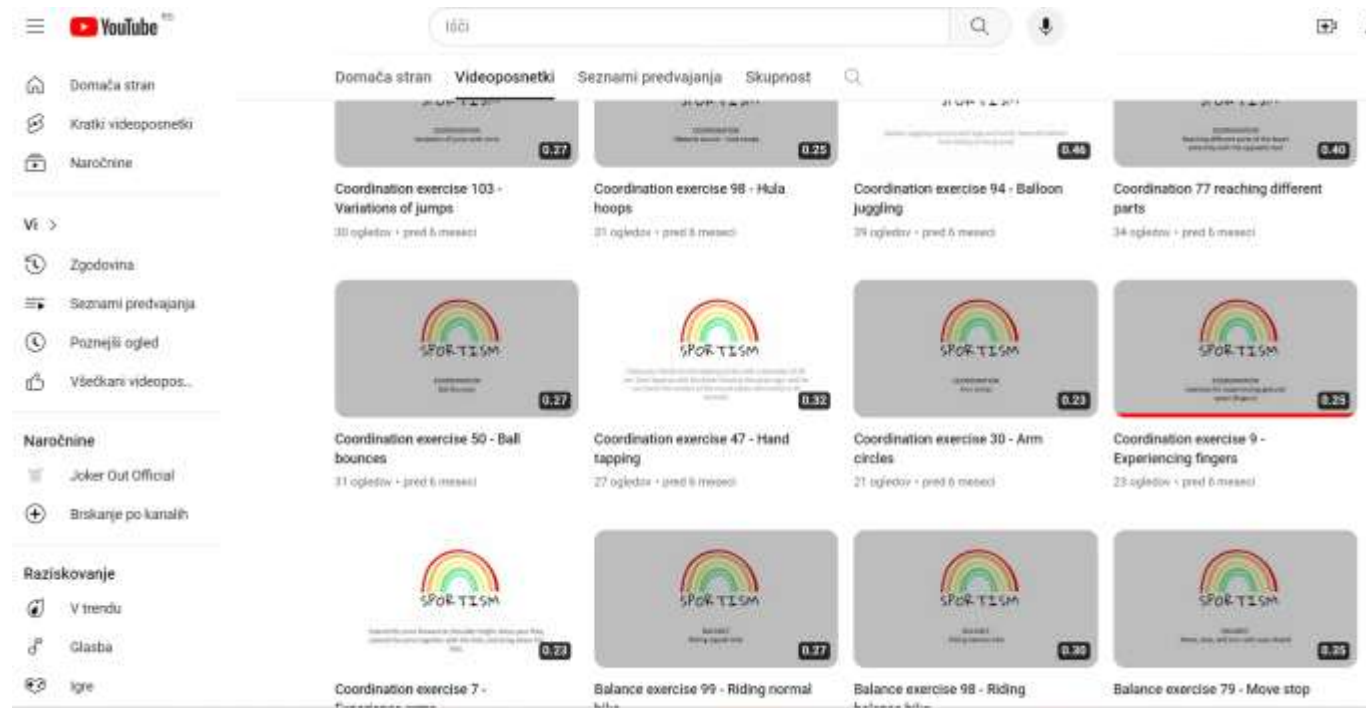
Project objectives

- **Exchanges of knowledge, practical experiences** and good practices of working with children from target population.
- Encourage the **inclusion of children from target population**.
- **Empower and educate professionals** for the work with children from target population.
- **Design innovative criteria for inclusion, video manuals** for developing coordination and balance, an **e-training diary and a web forum** for long-term accessibility of information, long-term cooperation and networking of professionals from the field of children from target population.
- **Involve and train volunteers** for working with children from target population.
- **Increase awareness of the importance of sport and physical activities** for children from target population.

Key Deliverables

-  **E-Training Diary** – tool for tracking children’s progress and adapting training
-  **Video Library** – 200 exercises for balance and coordination
-  **E-Manuals** – guides for professionals and parents
-  **Online Platform & Forum** – multilingual space for sharing good practices
-  **Inclusion Criteria** – framework for integrating children into sport programs
-   **Training Modules** – for professionals and volunteers
-  **Awareness Campaigns** – public events as *Be a Sportsman – Play with Me* festival

200 Video manuals - coordination and balance



Forum

Strength exercise

by Ajda Kolman - Friday, 15 December 2023, 9:34 AM

Hi, I would like to know, are there recommended guidelines for implementing strength exercises in the routine of a person with autism? And how can strength training contribute to the overall well-being and confidence of individuals with autism?

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Re: Strength exercise

by EMESE AGNES MANJU - Friday, 22 December 2023, 9:12 AM

Strength training offers several benefits for individuals with autism:

1. **Physical Health:** It promotes overall physical fitness, improving muscle strength, endurance, and coordination.
2. **Motor Skills:** Engaging in strength training activities helps enhance fine and gross motor skills, contributing to better physical coordination.
3. **Routine and Structure:** The structured nature of strength training provides a predictable routine, which can be comforting for individuals with autism who often thrive on consistency.
4. **Sensory Integration:** Strength training activities involve different sensory stimuli, contributing to sensory integration, which is crucial for individuals with autism to regulate their sensory experiences.
5. **Self-Esteem and Confidence:** Achieving strength training goals can boost self-esteem and confidence, providing a sense of accomplishment and empowerment.
6. **Behavioral Regulation:** Regular physical activity, including strength training, can assist in managing and regulating behavior, potentially reducing anxiety and improving focus.
7. **Social Opportunities:** Participating in strength training programs may provide social opportunities, whether through group sessions or partnerships with trainers, fostering social skills development.
8. **Emotional Well-being:** Exercise, including strength training, releases endorphins, promoting positive mood and emotional well-being, which can be particularly beneficial for individuals with autism.

Remember, individual responses to strength training may vary, so it's essential to tailor activities to the specific needs and preferences of each person with autism. Always consult with healthcare professionals or specialists when incorporating new activities into a wellness plan.

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Training of professionals

Why it's important

- Builds professional capacity for inclusive sport programs
- Ensures quality and safety when working with children with ASD and intellectual disabilities
- Promotes a unified approach and shared methodology among partners
- Increases sustainability and transfer of knowledge beyond the project

What we did

- Organized international and local trainings for trainers, teachers, and volunteers
- Combined theoretical sessions (characteristics of ASD, adaptation principles) and practical workshops (motor skills, coordination, balance)
- Shared good practices from all partner countries
- Created educational materials and video tutorials for ongoing learning



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Training of professionals



- Conference in Slovenia - More sport for kids with special needs, February 16th 2024
- Conference in Serbia - International Expert Meeting, April 22nd 2024
- Croatia - Second Professional Assembly of the Intercounty Professional Council of teachers and teachers of physical and health cultures, 24th June 2024
- Bulgaria - International Conference “Hidden Discrimination towards people with sensory disabilities”, 26th June 2024
- Croatia – Autism fitness Master in Osijek and Dubrovnik, 23rd and 30th November 2024

Training of volunteers

Why it's important

- Builds a **committed volunteer base** to support inclusive sport programs
- Ensures consistency and **quality of support** for children with ASD, intellectual and multiple disabilities
- Strengthens the **multidisciplinary team** around children (professionals + volunteers)
- Boosts **sustainability** by equipping non-professionals with the skills needed for continued involvement

What we did

- Conducted **dedicated training sessions** for volunteers, certified to guarantee quality and consistency.
- Covered **key themes**: understanding target groups (ASD/intellectual + multiple disabilities), adapting activities, inclusive communication, supporting peer and sport interactions
- **Integrated** volunteers into sports programs alongside trained professionals
- Provided **volunteer-friendly materials** and guidelines to enable autonomous, high-quality support



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E-diary

- Digital diary for recording the **child's progress over time**
- Enables **continuous monitoring** and adjustment of exercises
- Provides **parents** with insight into the child's functioning and progress
- Facilitates **information exchange among professionals** and supports a multidisciplinary approach
- **Unique online platform** with user instructions
- Includes materials for professionals (exercise adaptations) and for parents (encouraging physical activity at home)

Dissemination and Awareness

- Website: sportismproject.eu
- Social media: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube channel
- Local and international media coverage
- Inclusive sport events in Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, Romania and Italy
- Final conference for sharing results









Impact

- **For children:** improved motor and social skills, inclusion opportunities
- **For professionals:** new knowledge and practical tools
- **For volunteers:** stronger social responsibility and empathy
- **For society:** increased awareness and accessibility in sport



Sustainability

-  **E-Training Diary** remains active as a free online tool for continuous monitoring and training adaptation.
-  Platform and materials will be used by professionals, schools, and sport clubs beyond the project.
-  Trained professionals and volunteers continue implementing inclusive sport activities.
-  Partnership network committed to maintaining and expanding the use of project results.
-  E-manuals and video exercises available for future trainings and new organisations.
-  Knowledge and good practices integrated into local and national programmes promoting inclusion through sport.

Conclusion

- The project is built on **real and shared needs** identified in all five partner countries.
- Main challenges: **less movement, fewer inclusion opportunities, limited expertise.**
- SPORTISM offers **structured, replicable tools** for training and inclusion through movement.
- Sport serves as a **vehicle for social inclusion, confidence, and wellbeing.**
- The project aligns with EU priorities: **Inclusion, Diversity, Equal Opportunities, and Digital Transformation.**



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Thank you

Thank you to all partners, professionals, trainers, volunteers, and families who made the **SPORTISM – From the Basis to Inclusion** project possible.

Together, we proved that sport can be a bridge — connecting children, families, and professionals across Europe.

Let's keep building inclusion through movement, knowledge, and collaboration.



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