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**“The role of Sport in refugees’ social integration –
Sport psychosocial support program for the promotion of social integration
of refugees through Cooperative Movement Games”**

➤ **Guidelines / Good practices**

The key elements of a set of good practice principles which are identified and support the successful implementation of social inclusion programs through sport, physical activities and various games could be summarized as follows:

- Funding
 - Programming
 - Communication and awareness
 - Attracting and training of human resources
 - Collaboration
 - Assessment
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- Fundamental principles of the use of psychosocial programs and important links to promote refugees’ psychosocial well-being and social integration which are promoted through participation in the Cooperative Movement Games and their respective playful activities, are considered:
 - ✓ participation,
 - ✓ cooperation,
 - ✓ collectivity,
 - ✓ empathy,
 - ✓ recognition and understanding of diversity,
 - ✓ integration,

- ✓ strengthening resilience and problem solving procedures.

- The design, organization and implementation of Cooperative Movement Games should focus on facilitating and strengthening the mechanisms of collaboration among participants, and also the individual characteristics and social and cultural aspects, values and principles of the participants, groups or communities involved, including the local community.

- The games of the program should be selected, programmed, structured and applied in such a way so as to:

- ✓ offer participants joy and pleasure,
- ✓ establish a climate promoting intrinsic motivation,
- ✓ establish an environment fostering security, autonomy and cooperation among participants,
- ✓ foster the cultivation of motor and social skills,
- ✓ encourage participation,
- ✓ ensure tranquility,
- ✓ enforce positive emotions and feeling of hope,
- ✓ develop self-esteem and self-efficacy, but also at the same time promote recognition of diversity and appreciation of collaborative work, as well as the feeling of coexistence and interconnection with other members of the group or community.

➤ **For the needs and requirements of a successful and effective design, organization and implementation of the Cooperative Movement Games program, the following aspects should be taken into consideration:**

❖ **Ensuring the socio-cultural suitability of the games of the program:**

- To achieve a proper selection of games and the appropriate design, organization and implementation of the program, it is necessary to examine in a timely manner the specific social and cultural aspects, values and principles of the participating individuals, groups, or communities involved, as well as of each local society.

- It is necessary to clarify:
 - ✓ what exactly psychosocial well-being means to them,
 - ✓ how they spend their free time
 - ✓ whether boys and girls play together,

- ✓ whether adults play,
- ✓ which traditional or modern games are usually played,
- ✓ in which community and by whom they are played, as well as
- ✓ which of these are acceptable or can be played in public places.

❖ **Recognizing and demonstrating sensitivity to diversity - Strengthening individual and collaborative work - Promoting integration and tranquility**

- A prerequisite for the games and gamified activities which will be implemented in the program is to meet the age needs, skill level, interests and expectations of the participants in order to promote psychosocial well-being and smooth socialization.

- The type of activities offered should be inclusive, allowing everyone to participate, irrespective of their age, gender, abilities, ethnicity, sexual orientation, movement or socio-economic status, etc., and promote respect for cultural and religious disparity, building harmonious relationships within the group or community, peaceful coexistence and co-operation, critical thinking, empathy and wider social cohesion.

- They should, through the pleasure they offer, contribute to the development of feelings of joy and hope while it is very useful amid their alternations to promote and facilitate discussions and exchange of views among all participants.

- It is important that the specificities of each culture as regards the principles and values of gender relations should be seriously considered and so that the games and gamified activities selected and the way they are implemented do not cause offensive, violent or aggressive reactions.

- The goals set should be achievable so that participants are more likely to successfully complete the provided tasks, which must be accompanied by frequent positive feedback.

- The environment should encourage, support and promote autonomy, self-esteem, respect, understanding, cooperation, collectivity and learning.

- A basic principle of the program is that participation in sport and games is the right of all people, and age, gender, nationality, different religion and disability must not be a reason for discrimination. Securing the unhindered inclusion of these people in activities and games is essential.

- Particularly for disabled participants, it must be taken into account that their needs must be holistically assessed, their movement or medical condition.

❖ **Ensuring safety and health – Safeguarding functional and safe venues**

- The environment and the venue, which can be a game court, a gym, a room, a classroom or an outdoor space, should be both "objectively safe", i.e. free from dangerous objects and natural obstacles, as well as "subjectively safe", i.e. protected from the threat that the participants, and particularly girls, children and women, are being monitored, influenced and disturbed by unwanted attendees, and thus creating a sense of security and trust.

- It should always be ensured that there is enough space for everyone, there is safe access to the venue, equipment is properly arranged and in good condition, and that weather conditions are always taken into account.

❖ **Appropriate and acceptable physical contact and child protection**

- Any form of violence and abuse of children through inappropriate physical contact should not be allowed or justified.

- It is important for the program managers, teachers and carers to be aware of the official code of conduct and means of protecting children. Hence, they will be able to react in an appropriate and acceptable way, when a case appears.

❖ **Definition of terms of participation - Rules of conduct - Number of participants in teams**

- It is necessary to emphasize that the smooth implementation of the games and the activities of the program as well as the unhindered and calm participation presupposes the timely, precise, clear and permissible definition of participation's basic terms and the rules of conduct, as well as the continuous and consistent supervision.

- An effective method through which children can learn and respect the rules is to allow them to create them themselves, preferably through negotiations with the other participants, and then implement them.

- It is also equally important to see to the appropriate number of participants in a group so that its size is matched to the planned activities and vice versa (it is preferable to form groups of 10-20 participants).

❖ **Schedule programming - Effective time management**

- Flexibility in the use of time, adaptability and effective time management also facilitates the implementation of the activities. Time management makes the session more

efficient and give participants a sense of structure and readiness that is reassuring and relaxing. The session should start, develop and complete within the set time limits.

❖ **Ensuring appropriate and adequate equipment / Manufactured or improvised equipment**

- Equipment (balls, rackets, nets, etc.) is an essential ingredient of almost all sports and games. Ensuring the necessary quantity and quality of equipment, and its safe and proper use is fundamental in order to accomplish enjoyable and effective sessions.

- The teachers should make sure that they limit their needs in complex, specialized and scarce materials and should exhaust their creativity and resourcefulness in order to adapt and use the available equipment in a variety of new ways and for many different activities.

- It is necessary for the equipment to be specifically adapted for people with special characteristics and skills in order to improve their opportunities for participation.

- The potential to use manufactured or improvised equipment is also an important part of the design, organization and implementation of games, and can add variety to the content of a session and make participants be creative, enhancing their psychosocial welfare and increasing the feeling of efficiency.

- Notably, the creation and use of manufactured or improvised equipment should not undermine the safety of the participants.

❖ **Modifications / Variations of games and adjustments of key elements and factors**

- When games and gamified - playful activities do not “match” and do not meet the requirements of the participants, they have to be adapted and modified. The purpose of their adaptation is to make them physically and emotionally safer, more suitable for psychosocial support and more enjoyable, interesting and inclusive.

- Usually, the necessary modifications focus on four common basic aspects-elements of the game implementation process: a) space, b) project, c) equipment, and d) human resources. The modifications may concern each element of the activities separately, some elements, or even all of them and can be applied either to individuals, to a part of a group, to the whole group or to the whole community.

- It is important to provide participants with the opportunity to adapt themselves, modify, or further develop a game in order to cover a wider range of needs, skills and interests so that everyone can be included.

- Furthermore, it is important to take into account the possible obstacles to participation that some people, children and young people in particular, may experience because of the previous potential traumatic experiences they underwent or undergo during the crisis. Furthermore, their previous educational and social environment should be taken into account.

- It is also very important to associate the content of the games with participants' everyday life conditions. Even relate them to their experiences from the adverse conditions of the crisis. Through this learning process simple acquisition of knowledge is converted into understanding and incorporation of new skills in participants' everyday life. For instance, effective goal setting promotes participants' involvement and enhances learning.

- Moreover, recognizing and cultivating the native language and the culture of the participants' country of origin is a key factor not only for improving their language skills but also for their "psycho-emotional balance". Therefore, participants can benefit, if during the games they have the opportunity to express themselves in their native language.

- Throughout participation in games, participants should feel that the group accepts, cares, listens to, and understands them. The ability to express their opinions and feelings, mutual respect, acceptance among the participants and the spirit of support and mutual help within the group are very important elements.

- The continuous provision of sincere and constructive feedback, as well as frequent acknowledgement and praise, even for small achievements, enforces participants' intrinsic motivation and self-confidence.

- On the contrary, promoting a mentality of "winning is everything" and focusing only on extrinsic motivation such as competitiveness, favoritism, and achievement of individual goals, create a performance-oriented climate which is often associated with negative outcomes and antisocial behaviors.

❖ **The role of the good teacher / facilitator**

- Organization, in terms of operating rules, venue, necessary equipment, duration, frequency and content of sessions, coordination, encouragement and facilitation of active participation, democratic guidance, development of a pleasant and safe environment and a positive stimulating climate, where the participants will collaborate, communicate,

express themselves, inquire and learn, are the teacher's / facilitator's role, which requires a range of high skills on his/her part.

- The teachers / facilitators:
 - ✓ Should be adequately trained in order to appropriately design, organize and implement the programs, as well as create a pleasant and safe environment, where participants will feel autonomous and accepted.
 - ✓ Should be warm and supportive towards participants, listen to their opinions, guide them throughout their actions. They should be careful to avoid sovereign behaviors and critical feedback.
 - ✓ Develop a climate promoting collaboration and trust, provide feedback, interact without censorious mood and support the development of positive relationships. Such a climate contributes to personal development, self-esteem and interaction among participants. Thus, it activates the emotional support within the team and promotes psychosocial well-being and integration in the community.
 - ✓ If teachers work as a team, they have to decide in advance their roles, giving priority to the most experienced and skilled one.

- To support the successful implementation of the program, a responsible teacher should have:
 - ✓ Adequate knowledge and skills of participants' needs and how they can be met.
 - ✓ Ideas on choosing the most suitable games and activities to meet these needs.
 - ✓ Ability to develop and maintain good relationships among participants in order to ensure an appropriate social environment.
 - ✓ Ability to recognize game needs, motivate the participants to play, create opportunities for play, provide stimuli for thought, and react to unpredictable situations spontaneously, flexibly and effectively.
 - ✓ First aid training and training in anticipating, preventing and coping with risks and conflicts.
 - ✓ Knowledge of the official code of conduct and means to protect children.
 - ✓ Knowledge of the background of the crisis and the war, but also of the history and culture of the regions which refugee children come from.

- Although it may seem difficult to apply in practice, through participation in games and gamified activities, teachers / facilitators should seek to promote high

standards of behavior and ethics to the participants by setting certain common aims and guiding principles:

- ✓ Everybody have their merit and dignity!
- ✓ Everybody has the fundamental right to make their own decisions on matters concerning them!
- ✓ Everybody is responsible for their life and choices!
- ✓ Everybody should feel pleasure and have fun!
- ✓ Games and gamified activities are meant to motivate participation!
- ✓ Everyone needs the others to achieve the common goal!
- ✓ Everybody is accepted and appreciated for all their abilities!
- ✓ There is no judgment or criticism!
- ✓ Everybody is actively involved!
- ✓ Everybody should experience success!
- ✓ No one is rejected or excluded from the game!
- ✓ No one has been made to stand out from others!
- ✓ Everybody is responsible for themselves and for the team!