



# Final Project Evaluation SPORT4YOUTH 2015



**PLAY INTERNATIONAL**



## **Acknowledgements**

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# Introduction

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Since 2002 PL4Y International (PI) actions in Kosovo are directed towards Kosovo's youth. They aim to contribute to the social inclusion of all youth and children - especially the most vulnerable, through sport, physical activities and games.

Since 2008, PL4Y International has been implementing the Sport4Youth project. Thanks to the project, in the last years a multi-ethnic network of hundred young sport animators has been created and consolidated. The volunteers trained by PI have been organizing inclusive sport activities for the children of their localities and participating to cross-communities events.

The current report reflects the final evaluation of the Sport4Youth 2015 project. It details the objectives achieved in the framework of the Sport4Youth project as well as the main difficulties faced during the year. Finally the report proposes some recommendations for future actions.

As shown in this final report, the Sport4Youth project reached its three specific objectives:

- 1. Create bridges among communities**
- 2. Empower youth**
- 3. Provide values to children**

## **PL4Y INTERNATIONAL**

In 2015 Sport Sans Frontières changed its name and became "PL4Y International".

PL4Y International (PI) is a non-confessional and apolitical French NGO founded in 1999. Since the beginning, its main goal has been to promote sport and play as a means of educating and empowering children and young people.

Besides its activities in France, PL4Y International works in different countries: Burundi, Haiti and Kosovo. PL4Y International has been registered in Kosovo since 2002 and works under the law of the sovereign Republic of Kosovo.

PL4Y International educates and empowers vulnerable people through sport. The sport activities proposed by PL4Y International are not based on competition; they are conceived to integrate all groups in society regardless of ethnicity, gender or ability. A catalogue of games has been designed to teach basic values such as fair play, respect of the rules, and team spirit. Games are developed to encourage active learning and improve self-confidence.

## **THE SPORT4YOUTH PROJECT**

The Sport4Youth project has been implemented by PI Kosovo since 2008. The project aims at creating bridges between the communities and building capacities amongst youth and children.

Since 2008, PI has been training young Kosovars (aged 15-20) to become sport animators and to organize socio-educative sport activities for the children (6-12 years old) within their localities. In each locality, PI establishes a team of volunteers (an average of five), who are divided into three (3) positions: Leader, Animators and Assistants. Thanks to the trainings, volunteers acquire new skills and experiences, which are valuable in their future professional life. Through the games, children are learning basic values (such as fair

play, respect of the rules, tolerance). Finally volunteers and children are involved in multi-ethnic events, which for some of them, it is the first occasion to meet and exchange with people of other communities.

In 2015, four (4) types of activities have been implemented in the Sport4Youth framework: (a) trainings for volunteers, (b) regular sport and educational activities for children, (c) multi-ethnic events for children and volunteers and (d) animation of the network.

Moreover, the Sport4Youth project introduced two new components to its activities in 2015:

- The establishment of two (2) new centers in the North: Leposavić and Mitrovica North
- A pilot project in Shtime/Štimlje

## DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

The Final evaluation is based on all data collected during the project's course (monthly monitoring) as well as on specific feedback of project stakeholders (baseline questionnaire, end of year questionnaires and interviews).

The following materials have been analyzed for the purpose of this evaluation:

- Baseline study a questionnaire filled in by the new volunteers at the beginning of the year<sup>1</sup>
- Attendance lists of the volunteers participating in the trainings;
- Attendance lists of the children participating to each activity;
- Attendance lists of volunteers and children participating to other events;
- Internal Evaluation Reports of the project activities;
- Internal Monthly Reports;
- Minutes of meetings with various stakeholders (including volunteers);
- Evaluation Sheets filled by volunteers after trainings;
- End-of-year questionnaires filled by the local partners during the Diploma Ceremony;
- End-of-year questionnaires filled by the volunteers (including volunteers from North) in November/December 2015<sup>2</sup>;
- End-of-year evaluation of the volunteers' technical and social skills performed by PI pedagogical team<sup>3</sup>.

The evaluation focuses on the feedback of the main stakeholders of the project: the volunteers - aged between 14 and 25 years - who have been trained as sport animators and who are the main beneficiaries of the Sport4Youth project. Their feedback is mainly based on the end-of-year questionnaire filled in during the Diploma Ceremonies<sup>4</sup> but it also reflects the numerous discussions had between the PI team and the volunteers (Leaders, Animators and Assistants) throughout the year. It is important to underline that the end-of-year evaluation of the volunteers from the North has been conducted separately and based on partially different criteria: this is due to fact that the two (2) centers of the North have not been integrated in

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<sup>1</sup>At the beginning of the year (March 2015), PI interviewed 21 new volunteers from 6 communities (11 girls, 10 boys; 10 Albanians, 3 Roma, 2 Serbs, 1 Ashkali, 2 Bosniaks and 3 Turks).

<sup>2</sup>This questionnaire has been filled in by 60 volunteers – 10 Leaders, 24 Animators, 16 Assistants, 2 under assistants and 8 volunteers from the North.

<sup>3</sup>Not for volunteers from North.

<sup>4</sup> Two ceremonies were organized in 2015 (November and December), one for the volunteers from the 12 centers in southern Kosovo and one for the volunteers from North.

the broader network in 2015<sup>5</sup>. The collected answers and data have been further analyzed by the team and compared to yearly monitoring results in order to draft conclusions and recommendations

Furthermore for the first time, PI prepared a baseline study, interviewing 21 new volunteers at the beginning of their participation in the project. Their answers have been compared to the ones they gave at the end of the year to see if there were any noticeable change of mindset.

Due to diverse constraints, it has been decided not to conduct specific end-of-year interviews with other stakeholders such as the children and their parents. However some of the questions for the volunteers were linked to the impact of the project on the children and the collaboration established with the parents and local partners. Moreover during the year, PI's pedagogical team as well as the volunteers had several discussions with children to get their feedback on the activities they participated in.

Lastly, it was not possible to conduct an evaluation towards a population not exposed to PL4Y International's initiatives, acting as a control group to assess the level of impact of the project.

## **SPORT4YOUTH 2015: WHAT'S NEW, MAIN OBJECTIVES AND CHALLENGES**

The results achieved by the Sport4Youth project in 2014 proved its relevance and the need to continue for another year. As a result, in 2015, PI built its activities on the successes and lessons learned in 2014.

The main objectives for the Sport4Youth project 2015 were:

### **1) Creating bridges between communities**

Whereas Kosovo adopted a specific framework on community rights, the level of integration of communities is very low and inter-ethnic dialogue at grassroots level remains a challenge. Youngsters rarely have occasions to build relations with their peers from other communities. As a result, they are often highly influenced by the surrounding social setting reluctant to discover other cultures.

Through the Sport4Youth project, volunteers have the opportunity to meet with their peers from other communities, sometimes from communities they would actually never get to meet during their everyday lives. In the baseline questionnaire filled by 21 new volunteers at the start of the project, it was revealed that they are mostly used to spend time with people from their community only: this was the case for 48% of them during school time and 90% outside school time.

As in 2014, PI continued to strengthen the presence of different communities in local activities and to increase the number of children from minority groups participating in the activities in their localities and multi-ethnic events. With this objective, a specific focus was put on creating mixed teams of volunteers in multi-ethnic localities<sup>6</sup>. Moreover more efforts were put towards establishing contacts with the parents of Serbian children and volunteers in order to ensure their commitment towards the project and ensure the highest involvement of their children in the multiethnic events.

Finally in terms of methodology, PI developed specific pedagogical content on prejudice and diversity. More specifically, these workshops (including simulations, group discussion, artistic activities, etc.) aimed to foster reflection and exchanges regarding mutual perceptions, stereotypes and personal/social identities.

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<sup>5</sup> The integration of volunteers from North in the network of volunteers represents one of the main objectives for PI in 2016.

<sup>6</sup> This was the case in 8 centers, namely: Bosniak Mahalla/Bošnjaka Mahala (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica), Kamenicë/Kamenica, Graçanicë/Graçanica, Mamushë/Mamuša/Mamuša, Pejë/Peç, Shtime/Štimlje, Shtërpçë/Štrpce, Mitrovicë Veriore/Severna Mitrovica (Mitrovica North)

## 2) Youth Empowerment

As each year, many volunteers were **new in the project** (as, for example, in the case of new localities or the departure of the oldest volunteers going to university) or **new in their position** (Assistants becoming Animators and Animators or Assistants becoming Leaders). Accordingly there was a need to integrate these new volunteers, to empower them and to make them feel part of a common multi-ethnic network.

PI continued developing specific skills of the volunteers, depending on their position in the project. For this purpose, PI no longer distributed one (1) unique “manual on sport animation” but designed three (3) manuals (one by position). PI also put a specific focus on the empowerment of the Leaders. Leaders gained more responsibilities and they were more involved in the decisions affecting their local teams.

Through seminars and regular supervision, the volunteers gained sport animation skills, primarily related to the organization and management of inclusive sport activities with children, the creation and adaptation of games and the behavior with children. Besides this, the trainings aimed at developing social and personal/professional skills. Moreover, PI worked with the more experienced volunteers, allowing them to share their experiences (good practices and challenges faced as volunteers) with the new volunteers. This also contributed to the empowerment of the experienced volunteers. Finally, in terms of methodology, PI favored active learning, through workshops, role play, simulations and debates.

## 3) Providing values to children

The sport activities implemented by the volunteers in their localities and the special events organized during the year are meant to provide educative values to children. Thanks to a wide range of games, children are learning core values such as fair play, respect of the rules and team spirit and are pushed to communicate and cooperate. In this way, the inclusiveness of the activities (in terms of gender, community, social origin, etc.) facilitates the teaching of tolerance and respect of others’ differences.

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In 2015, PI extended its activities in order to reach more beneficiaries and created better access to inclusive sports for children:

### Extension of the network in the North

In 2015, PL4Y International continued working in the 12 localities<sup>7</sup> involved in the project in 2014. Furthermore, PI established two new localities in North Kosovo (namely: Mitrovica North and Leposaviq/Leposavić).

However, due to the specific political situation in the region, PI decided to:

- Not immediately integrate the volunteers from the North into the wider network of volunteers: volunteers from North have not been participating to activities in South, however some Serbian volunteers from Kamenicë/Kamenica, Shtërpçë/Štrpce and Graçanicë/Gračanica have been involved in some of the trainings organized in North. This allowed for the creation of bridges between the volunteers from Leposaviq/Leposavić and Mitrovica North and the rest of the network;

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<sup>7</sup> Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Bosniak Mahalla/Bošnjčka Mahala (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica), Roma Mahalla/Romska Mahala (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica), Kaçanik/Kaçanik, Kamenicë/Kamenica, Graçanicë/Gračanica, Mamushë/Mamuša/Mamuša, Pejë/Peć, Shtime/Štimlje, Skënderaj/Srbica, Shtërpçë/Štrpce, Tunel i pare/Prvi Tunel, Leposaviq/Leposavić, Mitrovicë Veriore/Severna Mitrovica (Mitrovica North)



- Not immediately involve them in multi-ethnic activities: PI decided to work with only one community (Serbian volunteers and children) as a way to introduce the values of inclusive sports and to build trust with the parents/local community. In order to start raising awareness on the importance to meet other people, joint events have been organized between the two centers of Leposaviq/Leposavić and Mitrovica North.

### Shtime/Štimlje pilot project

To enhance the inclusion of children from minority communities (Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian), PI worked in cooperation with the Municipality of Shtime/Štimlje, implementing a special project in line with the Municipality's education strategy. The Municipality launched a pilot project regarding full-time schools days; since December 2014, the children studying in the two (2) Emin Duraku schools were benefiting from all-day lessons contrary to their peers from other municipalities who were only having half-day school system. This new strategy for school children was very innovative as children in Kosovo normally attend school in different shifts.

Based on the successes of the Sport4Youth project, PI proposed a pilot project in Shtime/Štimlje, which aimed at empowering children and at enhancing the inclusion of minority communities (Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian). More specifically, the project worked with the schools of the region to implement new educational-sport activities for children during their sport classes. PI created the position of 'Sport Animator'<sup>8</sup> to work with the sport teachers in the schools. Moreover, the Sport Animator developed additional activities to reach out to more children in the 13 villages throughout the municipality of Shtime/Štimlje.

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES**

In 2015, the project included four main components: (a) trainings for volunteers, (b) regular sport and educational activities for children, (c) multi-ethnic events for children and volunteers and (d) animation of the network.

### **A. Trainings for volunteers**

Four trainings were implemented between March and May 2015, gathering volunteers from all localities and communities involved in the project. In general terms, these multi-ethnic trainings had the following objectives:

- **Yearly commitment:** Inform the volunteers on the project and ensure they commit to participate to all project activities and to fulfil their responsibilities
- **Sport Animation:** Provide them with basic notions on sport animation such as management of a group of children, socio-educative sport games, safety, etc.
- **Sense of Community:** Create links between the volunteers and developing social skills through team building games, sport activities and debates. For some of the volunteers, it was the first time they met youngsters from other communities.
- **Professional/Personal Development:** Empowering volunteers by strengthening skills such as reporting, organizational, communication, problem-solving and decision-making.

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<sup>8</sup> The selected Sport Animator had been volunteering in Sport4Youth Center for PLAY International for 4 years, and had the perfect profile for the project

Indeed, PLAY International pursues multiple objectives in terms of youth empowerment: a part from developing sport animation skills; it fosters social skills and strengthens personal and professional skills which are meant to be used by the volunteers beyond the scope of the project itself, in their future studies and job environment.

More specifically, the trainings were directed to each position (Leader, Animator, and Assistant). Moreover, a seminar for all new volunteers joining the project for the first time was organized at the beginning of the year. As a result, all volunteers had the opportunity to participate in one or two of the four (4) training activities:

#### i) Training of New Volunteers

The new volunteers from the newly selected localities as well as the new volunteers recruited in the localities already part of the network benefitted from one extra seminar aimed at: integrating them fully in the project, providing them with basic skills and knowledge on sport animation and preparing them to begin the activities with children in their centers. The training and the first activities organized afterwards by the volunteers in their localities helped PI determine the future roles of the new volunteers.

#### ii) Training of Leaders

The Leaders have an important role in the project. They are the direct contact of PI in the localities part of the project. They also have a direct responsibility in the organization and the quality of the regular activities implemented in their localities. They are in charge of organizing the multi-ethnic events involving their locality. They also have a role in their locality, being the representatives of PI towards the municipality and the Youth Centers. In short, they are responsible to achieve the local objectives of the project. The Training of the Leaders focused on the skills necessary to successfully perform all these tasks: organization, communication, team-management, planning and reporting etc. The new skills developed by the Leaders are meant to be valuable for their future studies and professional life.

#### iii) Training of Animators

The training for Animators had a central focus on sport animation and aimed to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the activities with children. With the objective of facilitating the implementation of qualitative sport activities, the following topics were covered: use and creation of inclusive games; understanding and development of the children's capacities; management of a group of children; adaptation of games based on the participants' specific characteristics and needs; safety and security during the sport activities.

With the support of the Leaders, the Animators were in charge of implementing the regular sport and educational activities minimum three (3) times a month in their localities. They were also responsible for the organization of the sport activities during the multi-ethnic events.

#### iv) Training of Assistants

In cooperation with the Animators, the Assistants are active on field during the activities with children. Therefore, the training aimed at providing them basic notions on sport animation such as socio-educative sport games, use of sport material, management of space and time, etc. The training also facilitated the creation of links between all the assistants in the network, through team building games, sport activities and debates.

At the beginning of the year, the Assistants supported the Animators in the organization of the regular activities with the children (install the material, support during a game, etc.). Progressively, the Assistants

had more and more responsibilities (manage a game, prepare a session of activity, etc.) according to the progress seen by the local leader and PI team.

Besides the trainings given by position, the volunteers benefitted from an ongoing capacity-building during the monthly field visits of PI staff.

## **B. Regular Sport and educational activities for children**

Thanks to the training provided and to the material received (sport material and first aid kits), the animators were able to implement a total of 418<sup>9</sup> regular sport and awareness-raising activities for the children of their localities. Animators implemented the activities with the support of the Assistants and under the guidance of the Leaders. Activities took place in each locality on average three times per month.

The games proposed by the Animators are designed to teach children basic values such as fair play, respect of the rules, team spirit and self-confidence. The sport activities are not based on competition; they are conceived to be accessible to all children and foster communication and interaction among them. Specific attention is put on the integration of girls, children coming from a vulnerable background and isolated or non-sporty kids.

Volunteers had a ‘Catalogue of Games’ that they used to prepare their activities. Games are based on a mix of collective sports such as football, rugby, baseball, basketball and volleyball. Moreover, volunteers also proposed and implemented local traditional games.

Throughout the year, the PI team conducted monthly visits to each center, providing additional support for the volunteers in implementing their activities. A total of 154<sup>10</sup> supervision visits were conducted during the year. With the expansion of the two centers in the North, the PI team supervised almost the totality of the regular activities, in order to facilitate and progressively strengthen the volunteers’ capacities and skills..

In total, over 10,000 children (in terms of participation)<sup>11</sup> benefitted from the activities implemented<sup>11</sup> in the 14 localities, including 45% of girls and 7 communities (namely, Albanian, Serbian, Roma, Ashkali, Bosniak, Turk and Gorani).

Based on the successes of the Sport4Youth project, a pilot project was implemented in the municipality of Shtime/Štimlje with the aim to empower children and enhancing the inclusion of minority communities (Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian). More specifically, PI worked in collaboration with the Municipality of Shtime/Štimlje<sup>12</sup> and the schools in the city and 13 villages and implemented a total of 122 inclusive sport activities. Accordingly, a total of 3,449 Albanian and Ashkali children – in terms of participation – participated in the regular activities, of which 55% were girls<sup>13</sup>. Overall, the feedback from the children revealed the success of the pilot project; most children stating having enjoyed discovering new games, learning about fair-play and loved playing in mixed teams (both inclusiveness of gender and community).

Most of the children participated to several project activities. Each child is counted only once in the figures based on the number of “unique children.”

However, each child is included when we express figures “in terms of participation” (if a kid participated to 12 activities, s/he would be counted 12 times).

<sup>9</sup> A total of 384 regular activities were implemented in the South and 34 activities in the North.

<sup>10</sup> 120 visits were conducted in the 12 centers in the South and 34 in the North.

<sup>11</sup> In terms of participation, 10,025 children benefitted from the activities in South and 449 in North (March-November 2015)

<sup>12</sup> More specifically, with the Department of Education and the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports [Shtime/Shtimlje]

<sup>13</sup> A total of 3,172 children – in terms of participation in the regular activities implemented in the 2 Emin Duraku Schools (classes 1-5 and classes 6-9) of which 60% were girls; 277 children participated in the regular activities implemented in the villages, of which 51% were girls.

## C. Multi-ethnic events for children and volunteers

### Joint Events

Ms. Isabelle Servoz Gallucci, Head of Office at the Council of Europe, expressed her satisfaction about the Joint Event in Skenderaj, highlighting that *“through this kind of activities, children and youth find a common language and start building a common future.”*

Joint Events were organized between different localities and communities. Volunteers and children from different localities went to another locality for one day of sport and exchange of experience.

During one part of the day, the volunteers implemented sport and awareness-raising games for the children divided in multi-ethnic teams. During the other part of the day, children had the occasion to know more on the hosting locality/community through a field-visit (Museum, Landscape, traditional show, etc.).

The Leaders were responsible for the organization of the Joint Events with the support of the PI staff. The games proposed to the children are implemented by the Animators with the support of the Assistants. The cultural visits were organized in close collaboration with the local partners.

When asked about the impact of the pilot project, two teachers from the Edim Duraku School stated:

*“It takes them [children] away from bad things. They don’t hang around in cafeterias. They spend less time watching TV or playing video games.”*

In 2015, a total of six Joint Events were organized:

Joint Event	Host Locality	Localities	Number of Participants	Communities
1	Kamenicë/ Kamenica	Bosniak Mahalla/Bošnjačka Mahala (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica), Tunel i pare/Prvi Tunel, Shtime/Štimlje and Kamenicë/Kamenica	75 (26 girls and 49 boys)	Albanian, Serbian, Ashkali and Roma
2	Mitrovicë/ Mitrovica	Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Graçanicë/Gračanica Mamushë/Mamuşa/Mamuša and Pejë/Peć	63 children (35 girls and 28 boys)	Albanian, Serbian, Roma and Turkish
3	Kaçanik/ Kačanik	Skënderaj/Srbica, Kaçanik/Kaçanik Roma Mahalla/Romska Mahala (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica) and Shtërpçë/Štrpce	77 children (36 girls and 41 boys)	Albanian, Ashkali and Roma
4	Bosniak	Mahalla/Bošnjačka Mahala	80 children (31	Albanian, Serbian,

	Mahalla/ Bošnjačka Mahala (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica)	(Mitrovicë/Mitrovica), Tunel i pare/Prvi Tunel, Shtime/Štimlje and Kamenicë/Kamenica	girls and 49 boys)	Roma, Ashkali and Bosniak
5	Pejë/ Peć	Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Graçanicë/Gračanica Mamushë/Mamuša/Mamuša and Pejë/Peć	80 children (41 girls and 39 boys)	Albanian, Serbian, Roma, Turkish and Bosniak
6	Skënderaj/ Srbica	Skënderaj/Srbica, Kaçanik/Kaçanik Roma Mahalla/Romska Mahala (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica) and Shtërpcë/Štrpce	85 children (29 girls and 56 boys)	Albanian, Serbian, Ashkali and Roma

### Anti-discrimination Day

The 2015 Anti-discrimination Day (**Big Event**) was held in Prishtinë/Priština in October. It gathered 176 children and 54 volunteers from all the 12 localities of the Sport4Youth network<sup>14</sup>, out of which 34% were members of from minority communities. Furthermore, girls represented 49% of the participating children and were well integrated in all games.

The children participated in inclusive sport activities mixed between communities and localities. The games were organized and managed by the volunteers, under the supervision of the PI staff. During the day, local and international partners and guests had the opportunity to learn more about PLAY International and its ongoing projects, through both presentations and the visit of the activities on field.

### International Days

On the occasion of the two (2) international days selected in 2015, volunteers organized special sport and educational activities linked to the topic:

- On the International Day of Children (1<sup>st</sup> June), a special activity was organized in Shtime/Štimlje in cooperation with other local NGOs;
- On the International Day of Youth (12<sup>th</sup> August), experienced volunteers implemented sport activities for youngsters and children in the center of Prishtinë/Priština.

## D. Animation of the network

### Network Meetings

Three Network Meetings gathered all volunteers active in the network. They had a common objective: strengthen the links between volunteers and contribute to their on-going training through exchanges and experience-sharing.

More specifically, each of the trainings had a different focus:

- Conceived as the launch event of the year, the first network meeting was organized in March 2015. Its main objective was to present the new structure of the project and the different responsibilities according to the positions. Project activities were discussed with all volunteers and objectives were

<sup>14</sup> Excluding the two centers in North

set. Several team-building activities were organized to ensure strong links among the volunteers of the different communities and localities.

- The second network meeting was organized in September 2015. The training focused primarily on: the evaluation of the first semester of the project and discussion about possible developments and innovations; the preparation of the Anti-discrimination Day; the creation of new games to be included in the Catalogue.
- The third network meeting was organized at the end of the year (November 2015). It was dedicated to the diplomas' ceremony. Diplomas are given to all volunteers, according to their function and the skills developed during the year. Moreover, an awareness-raising activity on sport and disabilities was organized during the day.

### **Summer Camp for volunteers**

Two summer camps for volunteers were organized in 2015.

The first was an inclusive summer camp for the Animators from the 12 localities and from the different communities' part of the project. The Inclusive Summer Camp aimed to enhance capacity building and tolerance of the volunteers and facilitate the volunteers to be more inclined to strengthen the inclusiveness of the activities they organize for the children of their localities. The volunteers enjoyed different activities and workshops, including: creation of new inclusive/cooperative games; debates and group discussions; cultural visits; language courses; outdoor activities.

The second was held in Macedonia (FYROM) and targeted the most experienced volunteers (Leaders). The Camp aimed at developing the Leaders' personal and professional skills and fostering experience-sharing among them.

During the camps, the summer camps were an opportunity for the volunteers to reinforce friendships created throughout other activities and events and share opinions and ideas. Furthermore, during both camps the volunteers had the chance to meet with their peers from other NGOs<sup>15</sup>.



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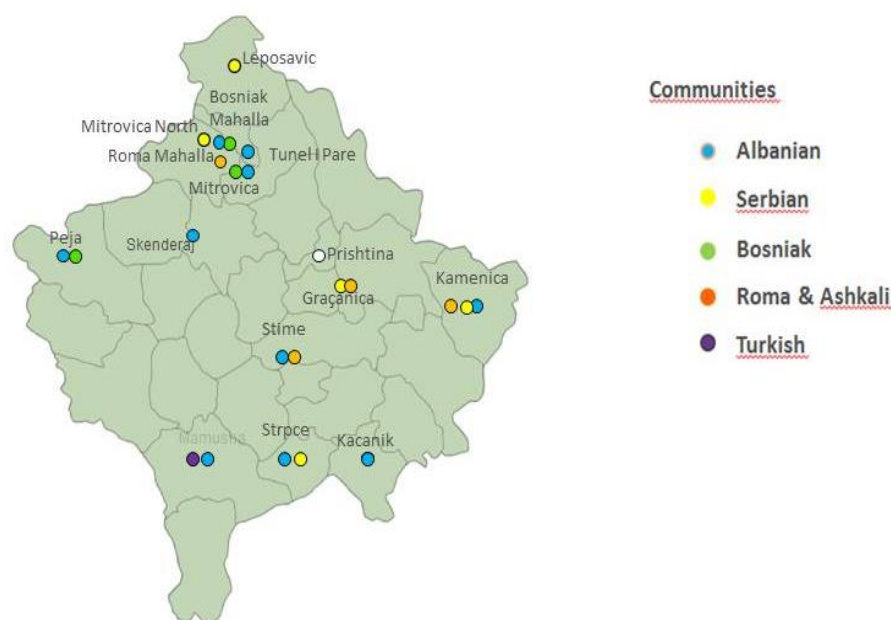
<sup>15</sup> The Italian NGO IPSIA and the Macedonian NGO CID (Center for Intercultural Dialogue)

# Target Groups and Beneficiaries

## LOCALITIES INVOLVED

In the first weeks of the year, PI finalized the list of the localities to take part in the project. The selection of the localities was based on several criteria: communities living in the place, isolation (geographical, social, etc.), commitment of local partners as well as motivation and quality work of volunteers.

In 2015, PI worked in 12 localities in the South and established two (2) new centers in the North: Leposaviq/Leposavić, Mitrovicë Veriore/Severna Mitrovica (Mitrovica North). As a result, the Sport4Youth project covered a total of **14 localities** in 2015.<sup>16</sup>



## SELECTION OF THE VOLUNTEERS

The project target group was the volunteers, boys and girls from 14 different villages/towns in Kosovo from the Albanian, Ashkali, Serb, Roma, Bosniak and Turk communities.

### Recruitment

The Sport4Youth project worked with a total of 84 volunteers over the course of 2015. In total 72 volunteers were active by the end of the year, including 62 volunteers from the South and 10 volunteers from the North. Unfortunately, 12 volunteers left the project due to different reasons: personal and family obligations, departure from Kosovo, lack of long-term interest and commitment.

<sup>16</sup>Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Bosniak Mahalla/Bošnjaka Mahala (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica), Roma Mahalla/Romska Mahala (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica), Kaçanik/Kaçanik, Kamenicë/Kamenica, Graçanicë/Gračanica, Mamushë/Mamuša/Mamuša, Pejë/Peć, Shtime/Štimlje, Skënderaj/Srbica, Shtërpçë/Štrpce, Tunel i pare/Prvi Tunel, Leposaviq/Leposavić, Mitrovicë Veriore/Severna Mitrovica (Mitrovica North)

In total, 41 new volunteers joined the project in 2015: 10 volunteers were recruited in the two new centers in the North, as they were established in 2015. Moreover, it was also necessary to recruit in the places where we were already operating in 2014.

The PI pedagogical team ensured the new volunteers respected the following criteria: motivation to work with children, interest to be part of a multiethnic project, commitment to the PI mission and availability.

### Position

In each locality, were selected (a) one Leader: responsible for the coordination of the activities, training the new volunteers and being the liaison with the local partners; (b) two Animators: in charge of implementing the activities for the children; (c) two Assistants: in charge of helping the Animators in the implementation of the regular activities (with the material, etc.).

- The **Leader** was selected based on his/her experience in the project, willingness to take more responsibilities, capacity of managing a team and coordinating activities, interest in sharing his/her experience and ability to represent the project locally.
- The **Animators** were selected based on their experience in implementing activities for the children and on the quality of the activities they organized in the previous years.
- The **Assistants** were mostly new volunteers, often younger than the other volunteers.

### Profile

The age of the volunteers varied from 14 years old to 24 years old, with a strong majority between 15 and 19. Most of the volunteers were high school students; while a few volunteers were working and/or beginning their university studies.

PI succeeded in establishing gender-balanced teams in all localities, having 33 of the 72 volunteers being girls. Thus 46% of the volunteers were girls which is a significant progression compared to the previous year (37% in 2014). However, the participation of girls among the volunteers was significantly more relevant in the centers in the South (30 out of 62, 48%) than in the North (3 out of 10: 30%).

The volunteers originated from 6 communities: 32 Albanians, 4 Ashkali, 5 Bosniaks (1 of them coming from Mitrovica North), 9 Roma, 18 Serbs,<sup>17</sup> and 4 Turks. Accordingly, 55.5% of the volunteers originated from a minority community.

Moreover, the majority of the volunteers came from medium-small localities or relatively isolated and disadvantaged neighborhoods; with the exception of two centers: Pejë/Peć and Mitrovicë/Mitrovica).

## FINAL BENEFICIARIES

The final beneficiaries were the children between 6 and 12 years old living in the villages/towns of the volunteers. They were the ones benefitting for the regular activities and events implemented all year long by the volunteers.

In 2015, approximately 15,656 children benefited from the Sport4Youth activities (in terms of participation)<sup>18</sup> including about 3,858 unique children:

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<sup>17</sup> Nine (9) of them coming from the two centers in North and being not integrated in the activities of the network

<sup>18</sup> Numbers in terms of participation differentiate from numbers in terms of unique beneficiaries as follows:

Number of unique beneficiaries (children or volunteers): each beneficiary is counted once (ex: if one child comes to 4 activities and another to 2, they are counted once each); Number of participation: every time a beneficiary comes to an activity, he/she is counted again (ex: if one child comes to 3 activities and another to 5, their participation will be counted 8 times).



- **10,025** children (in terms of participation) have been involved in the regular activities organized almost on a weekly basis in their localities by the volunteers in the 12 centers in southern Kosovo, out of which 44.8% of girls;
- **449** children (in terms of participation) have been involved in the regular activities in the two localities in the North, out of which 54.3% of girls;
- **636** kids (in terms of participation) enjoyed the multiethnic events (Joint Events and Anti-discrimination Day)
- **4,552** kids (in terms of participation) participated in the activities implemented in the framework of the Shtime/Štimlje Pilot Project

They were mostly children who had no access to sport clubs due to the lack of sport organizations in their locality or because they couldn't afford to pay membership or use of sports facilities. Most of the targeted children were not used to be involved in multi-ethnic activities before their participation in this project.

### INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES

Besides the volunteers and the children, the project impacted other stakeholders such as the local partners (municipalities, schools, youth centers and other youth organization) and the parents of the kids.

The local partners have been very much involved throughout the year, attending some of the project activities and events and being in contact with the local team of volunteers. Most importantly, positive relations have been established with local partners in the two localities in the North<sup>19</sup>: this facilitated the process of recruitment of the volunteers and the start-up of the activities with children.

The questionnaire filled by the volunteers in the network revealed that parents are aware of the project: 90%

Mr. Jashari, representative of the Municipality of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica stated that *“our long collaboration and the support of the Municipality of Mitrovica to Sport Sans Frontières-PLAY International inclusive activities. These Joint Events are the opportunity to exchange between children and youngsters from different communities and different cities, the Municipality is very proud to support such activities.”*

of the volunteers mentioned their work is well recognized by the parents of the kids and 96% mentioned the recognition of their own parents. The questionnaire filled by the volunteers in the North reveal that parents are also aware of the project: 75% of the volunteers mentioned their work is well recognized by the parents of the kids and 88% mentioning the recognition of their own parents.

<sup>19</sup> Partnership agreements have been signed with the Municipality of Leposaviq/Leposavić and the directors of sport fields in Mitrovica North and Leposaviq/Leposavić

# 2015 Evaluation

## Objective 1: Create bridges between communities

The volunteers originated from 6 communities: 32 Albanians, 4 Ashkalis, 5 Bosniaks (1 of them coming from Mitrovica North), 9 Roma, 18 Serbs,<sup>20</sup> and 4 Turks. Accordingly, 55.5% of the volunteers originated from minority communities.

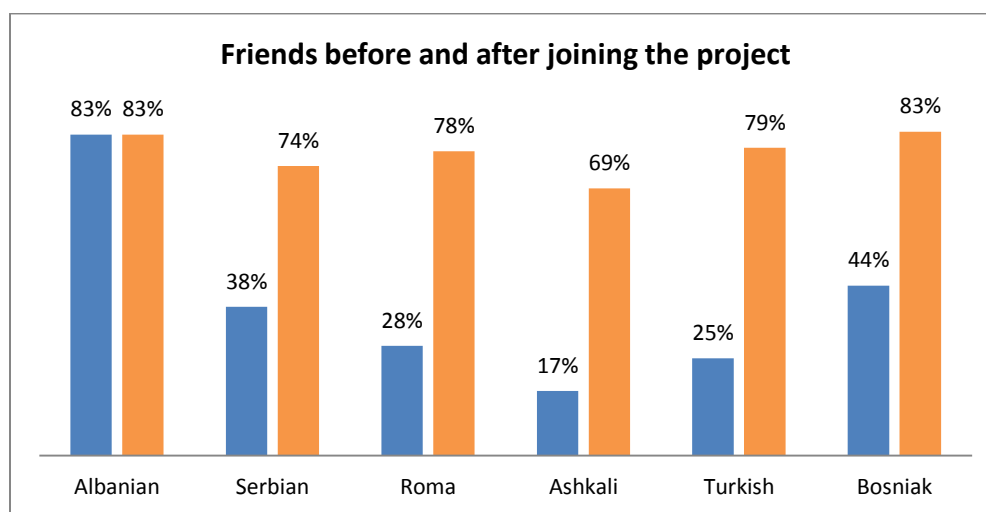
According to the end-of-year questionnaire **77%** of the volunteers think that the project **succeeded in bridging communities** (15% said “partially” and 8% “said not really”). Moreover:

- 63% of volunteers are ready to work for other multi-ethnic projects in the near future;
- 83% of the volunteers think the project is useful because they learned about other communities and cultures and
- 77% of them because they are becoming more open towards other communities.

The deeper tolerance towards the other communities is illustrated by three main indicators: (1) the fact that volunteers built friendships with their peers from different communities, (2) the fact that volunteers have changed opinion on other communities and (3) their capacity to collaborate on the field and during the project activities.

- **Friendship**<sup>21</sup>

Through the year, PI encouraged all volunteers to be open to make new friendships with others they would not necessarily be friend outside of the project. By the end of the year, all volunteers stated that they made new friends during the project.



Furthermore, 36 volunteers<sup>22</sup> (70%) made new friends from new communities<sup>23</sup>. As we can see on the graph above, the project allowed volunteers to build friendships with their peers from Serbian, Roma, Ashkali,

<sup>20</sup> Nine (9) of them coming from the two centers in North and being not integrated in the activities of the network

<sup>21</sup> All data mentioned in this section are based on the questionnaire filled by 52 volunteers at the end of the year. None of the volunteers from North filled this questionnaire meaning that the presented data do not incorporate their views.

<sup>22</sup> 36 volunteers out of 52 interviewed

<sup>23</sup> New friendships are counted when the volunteer did not have any friends in this community before the project

Turkish and Bosniak communities. The graph above also shows that most friendships were built during the course of the project and not before the volunteers joined the project. This is particularly true when it comes to new friendships with Serbian volunteers (94% increase), Bosniak volunteers (90% increase) and Roma volunteers (77% increase).

Specifically, when analyzing new friendships of Albanian volunteers, the project allowed them meet with their peers from minority communities:

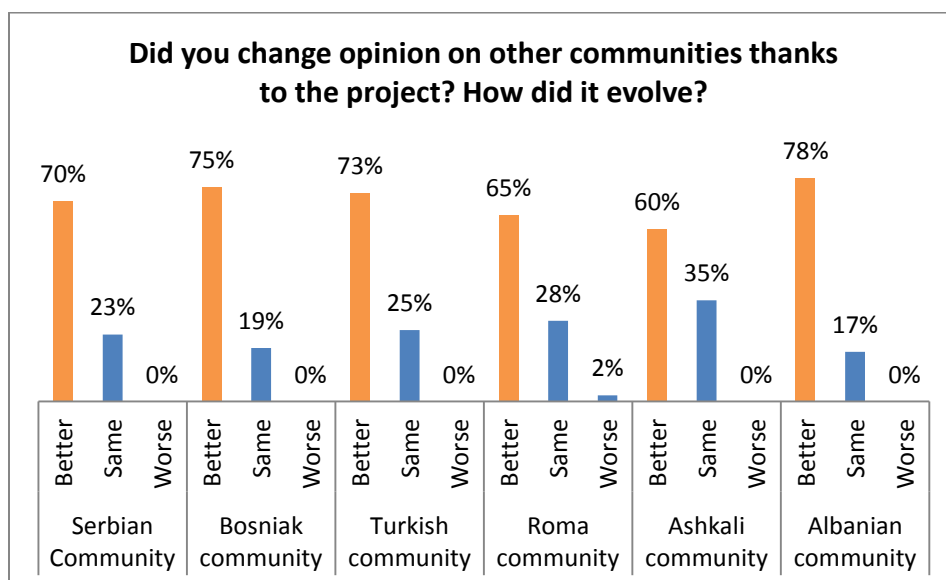
- 18 Albanian volunteers (62%) made new Roma friends;
- 18 Albanian volunteers (62%) made new Ashkali friends;
- 18 Albanian volunteers (62%) made new Turkish friends;
- 17 Albanian volunteers (59%) made new Bosniak friends;
- 14 Albanian volunteers (48%) made new Serbian friends.

As a consequence, the project clearly allowed volunteers to reconsider the other community from another perspective and gain better opinion on other communities in general.

• **Change of opinion<sup>24</sup>**

In the end-of-year questionnaire, the volunteers were asked if they changed their opinion on other communities throughout the project. The majority of the volunteers stated having a better opinion of other communities thanks to the exchanges and joint activities in which they took part. More specifically: 36 volunteers (70%) gained a better opinion of at least one community, 32 volunteers (62%) gained a better opinion on all communities.

The end-of-year questionnaire also showed that only 21% of the volunteers had the same opinion on other communities at the end of one year of joint activities, and only 1 volunteer had a worse opinion on the Roma community at the end of the project. This shows that in most of the cases the project contributed to the change of the youngsters ‘regard on others.



<sup>24</sup> All data mentioned in this section are based on the questionnaire filled by 52 volunteers at the end of the year. None of the volunteers from North filled this questionnaire meaning that the presented data do not incorporate their views.

As seen on the graph above, 78% of volunteers (all of them coming from minority communities) gained a better opinion of the Albanian community, 75% on the Bosniak community, 73% on the Turkish community, 70% on the Serbian community, 65% on the Roma community, and 60% on the Ashkali community. These numbers take into account all the volunteers in the network, including the ones that have been part of the project for more than 1 year; with the exception of the North, who had limited interactions with volunteers in the network. More specifically, volunteers who have been part of the network for more than one year have not only maintained old friendships but have built new ones in 2015.

It is interesting to note that out of the 29 Albanian volunteers, 18 volunteers (62%) have a better opinion on the Serbian community (11 didn't have any Serbian friends before the project). Similarly, out of the 5 Serbian volunteers, 4 have a better opinion on the Albanian community (3 didn't have Albanian friends before the project).

Only one volunteer said that he had a worse opinion on one community and he named the Roma community. It is the only worse opinion expressed by volunteers in the end-of-year evaluation. It is indeed very positive to see that 65% of volunteers have a better opinion on the Roma community (only 13 volunteers had Roma friends before joining the project) and 60% have a better opinion on the Ashkali community (only 8 volunteers had Ashkali friends before join the project).

It is important to note that the fact that only negative opinion falls on the Roma community proves that there are still prejudices against this community in Kosovo and that the team needs to have a special focus on the integration of Roma volunteers in the network in the future.

- **Multiethnic exchange and collaboration<sup>25</sup>**

On average, 77% of volunteers found it easy to collaborate with other communities as shown in the table below:

<b>Was it easy for you to collaborate with other communities?</b>			
	<b>Easy</b>	<b>Feasible</b>	<b>Difficult</b>
With the Serbian Community	68%	21%	11%
With the Albanian community	87%	17%	0%
With the Bosniak community	79%	15%	4%
With the Turkish community	67%	29%	4%
With the Roma community	80%	11%	7%
With the Ashkali community	79%	13%	6%

After one year of activities and joint events, only 11% of volunteers found it difficult to collaborate with the Serbian community.

Under this insight, it is interesting to note that the volunteers' perception has not been confirmed by the actual results achieved through the Joint Events. This is demonstrated by the fact that participation of children and volunteers from Serbian community was limited. In addition, this perception may also be demonstrated from obstacles in cooperation were not necessarily linked to the volunteers' mindset but may have stemmed primarily from external actors and circumstances (i.e. parents and families, community, events, etc.).

<sup>25</sup> All data mentioned in this section are based on the questionnaire filled by 52 volunteers at the end of the year. None of the volunteers from North filled this questionnaire meaning that the presented data do not incorporate their views.

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To conclude, the project proves to be successful in bridging communities. However, setting up the network and breaking rooted stereotypes is not an easy challenge to surmount. PI faced occasional problems among volunteers from different communities during activities, such as: the use of national symbols and the consequent reactions (one volunteer painted a Serbian flag on a tee-shirt during the first summer camp which offended Albanian volunteers); differentiated treatment of Roma children by the certain Albanian and Serbian volunteers during some activities; lack of respect of translation in Serbian and Turkish language by the Albanian majority during trainings. Moreover, tensions among volunteers appeared in a few occasions during the year outside of PI activities. Indeed, external factors such as the football game between Albania and Serbia and the discussion about Kosovo membership in UNESCO (October 2015), triggered offensive expressions of the volunteers' national/ethnic identity through Facebook posts and pictures.

These incidents show the strong influence of the local social environment (primarily familiar structures and education systems). If a multi-ethnic network of volunteers has been established and enriched and the relations among them have been successfully built, the positive achievements seem to be sometimes limited to the "PLAY International environment".

## **Objective 2: Youth Empowerment**

The volunteers who have been active in the project gained some specific skills that will be useful for fulfilling their responsibilities in the project and for their personal and professional life. According to the end-of-year questionnaire, **92% of the volunteers from the South and 100% of the volunteers from the North believe the project is useful** for them because they acquired new skills and knowledge. Eight-five (85%) of volunteers from South also mentioned that they appreciated having responsibilities during the project.

In general, PI pursues multiple objectives in terms of youth empowerment: first, it aims at developing sport animation skills; second, it fosters social skills; and third, it strengthens personal and professional skills which are meant to be used beyond the scope of the project itself.

The skills and capacities of the volunteers were developed through trainings, including summer camps, preparation and implementation of Joint Events, and regular supervision of the activities with children by the PI pedagogical team.

In order to increase the impact of the development of the volunteers' capacities and their responsibilities, PI ensures tailored training to reflect the different positions and related responsibilities in the project.

### **Skills developed by Leader volunteers:**

The pedagogical content directed at Leader volunteers focused primarily on the development of social and personal and professional skills as well as sport animation.

More specifically, with regard to social skills, specific attention has been put on teamwork and leadership skills (including coordination of the team, decision-making, division of tasks and responsibilities) and communication and negotiation skills (towards the team of volunteers, local partners, PI staff, children and parents).

Regarding **personal and professional empowerment**, the implemented workshops and activities aimed at strengthening the following skills: capacity of critical analysis and evaluation (with reference to past activities) and reporting; strategic vision (with regard to the future evolution of the project and the NGO);

CV writing and personal presentation (focused on content, form, scope); and organization and management of events (planning, logistics, coordination of events and activities with children).

Finally, with regard to **sport animation**, the following capacities have been strengthened: active supervision of the activities; resolution of problems emerging on the field (such as: injuries, management of problematic children, misunderstandings among volunteers, etc.); and adaptation of the session to unexpected changes or specific situations.

More specifically, according to the Leaders' self-evaluation at the end of the year:

- 90% said that they developed their communication skills;
- 80% acquired decision-taking skills, developed their relationship with local partners, organizational skills (events) and team management skills;
- 50% developed CV writing and presentation skills.

Moreover, based on the end-of-year evaluation performed by PI pedagogical team, the majority of the Leader volunteers (11 out of 13) fulfilled part of their tasks.

### **Skills developed by Animators and Assistants:**

As opposed to Leaders, the skills developed by Animators and Assistants refer mainly to sport animation. These include: planning of adapted sport activities for children (i.e. choice of games and variables, division of tasks on the field); vision of the field (i.e. use of space and time, use of sport material); attitude on the field (respect of the structure of the session; explanation of rules and sanctions); behavior towards children (i.e. inclusiveness, understanding of children and adaptation of games to specific needs); creation of games and variables (linked to specific objectives or situations); and evaluation of games and sessions.

Moreover, the capacity of communicating and cooperating on the field has been strengthened (with a specific focus on non-verbal communication and teamwork).

According to the volunteers' self-evaluation, Animators developed skills directly linked to game implementation and children management:

- 88% of them developed skills related to the preparation of activities;
- 83% acquired skills in children management;
- 79% developed skills in sport games;
- 63% of them developed teamwork skills.

The content of trainings directed at Assistant volunteers was kept at a simpler level, in accordance with their position and responsibility in the team. According to the end-of-year evaluation:

- 94% of them understand better how to behave with children;
- 78% developed teamwork skills;
- 72% acquired sport games skills.

### **Skills developed by volunteers from the North:**

The newly recruited volunteers from Mitrovica North and Leposaviq/Leposavić did not attend the same trainings as the other volunteers.<sup>26</sup>

Accordingly, the skills of the North volunteers have been developed through separated trainings.

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<sup>26</sup> The progressive integration of volunteers and children from North in the project activities will take place in 2016

Despite touching upon a broad amount of subjects, the pedagogical content of the first training was necessarily kept on a basic/beginner level. The second training was then aimed at broadening the skills and knowledge built during the first one and at reinforcing the network of volunteers. Moreover, the regular supervision by PI Staff of the activities implemented with children led to a gradual strengthening of the capacities created through the trainings.

With regard to sport animation skills, specific attention was put on: structuring and planning a sport session for children (i.e. structure of the session, choice of games, order and duration of games, needed material, attendance list); leading inclusive games (i.e. understanding of games' objectives; explanation of rules and sanctions; formation of mixed and balanced teams in terms of gender, communities, age, capacities/experience); behavior towards children (attitude and authority). Furthermore, the volunteers developed social and personal skills including communication and cooperation (before, during and after the activities); teamwork on the field; and analysis of a sport session.

Overall, the objectives of the trainings in terms of pedagogical content and capacity-building have been attained. According to the volunteers' end-of-year evaluation, all involved volunteers (100%) stated that the project is useful to their empowerment and that they learned new skills.

### **Skills developed by the Sport Animator from Shtime/Štimlje:**

The pilot project in Shtime/Štimlje provided an opportunity for the Sport Animator to further develop his social and professional skills.

Over the course of the project, the Sport Animator developed a stronger sense of organization and management skills, having greatly contributed to the redesign of the project during the summer months, proposing various activities, such as special days and a 'field trip' to Pristina for the children to watch two sport matches (men's football and women's handball), as well as, contribute to the modification of the project's budget in preparation of the Fall activities (September-November 2015).

Moreover, the Sport Animator strengthened his communication skills, developing strong relations with both local partners (municipality representations and school directors) and children (high levels of participation and motivation during the implementation of activities - both in the Edim Duraku schools and in the villages).

Overall, the organization and implementation of the activities strengthened the following skills of the Sport Animator: resolution of problems emerging on the field, management of events (planning, coordination with children), logistics, strategic vision (with regards to the evolution of the project), reporting, negotiation skills (towards local partners, PI staff, parents and children) and decision-making. The Sport Animator received a certificate of recognition for his achievements during the pilot project in Shtime/Štimlje.

### **Skills official recognition:**

To acknowledge the acquisition of new skills and reward the volunteers for their commitment, all 72 volunteers' active at the end of the year (North included), and the Sport Animator of the Shtime/Štimlje project received a 'Sport Animator' certificate. With the exception of the North, the diplomas were signed by PI, by the volunteers' respective municipality and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport.

Together with the certificate, the volunteers received an evaluation carried out by PI pedagogical team, aimed at acknowledging the successes achieved by each volunteer during the year and identifying leads for improvement. More specifically, the evaluation of volunteers' skills was based on three main criteria, namely: behavior; skills; commitment and participation.

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To conclude, through the various trainings, events and implemented activities the volunteers have been useful in terms of skills acquisition. However, this is primarily true with regard to the specific skills and knowledge linked to sport animation, which are relatively easy to catch up quickly. On the other hand, the skills related to socialization (i.e. teamwork, communication, leadership, inclusiveness, etc.) or professionalization (i.e. personal presentations, evaluation and reporting, CV writing, etc.) inevitably require a longer timeframe.

Regarding specifically the volunteers in the North, the level of skills assimilated by the beneficiaries remained necessarily at a basic level. This was due primarily to the limited duration of the trainings and the manifold nature of the pursued objectives. Accordingly, a stronger autonomy of the volunteers should be developed during the first months of 2016. In this perspective, the transfer of experience and knowledge from more experienced volunteers to the new ones should be fostered in order to ensure an improved quality of activities and the teams' progression.

### **Objective 3: Provide values to children**

The Sport4Youth project creates opportunities for children to gain access to educational and inclusive activities through the use of sports. Children are given an opportunity to learn new skills and core values, such as fair play, respect of rules, team work, and tolerance and respect of others.

In 2015, approximately 15,656 children (in terms of participation) have been involved in project activities (including 4,552 children participating in the activities of the pilot project in Shtime/Štimlje), with all the volunteers stating that the project was considered useful for the children as it created access to free sport activities and an opportunity to learn key values. As a result of the success of the activities, and the motivation of the children, 98% of the volunteers stated they would recommend new children to join the project next year.

Through the wide range of games implemented by the volunteers during regular activities and special events, **children developed their social skills**. Indeed, by playing together they learned how to: communicate; participate and let the others participate; cooperate in order to achieve a common goal; work in teams. Accordingly, the respect of core values has been promoted. These include: the observance of the rules, the respect of the others (children, volunteers, and other people), fair-play and equity, inclusion of all. Moreover, thanks to the adopted games, children developed basic sport and physical skills (such as: speed, agility, running, jumping, dribbling, passing, etc.) and got familiar with different sport material (balls of different kind, frisbees, etc.). One boy from Mitrovica North said: *"I never played this type of games before, I really enjoy it"*.

Thus 75% of the interviewed volunteers (but 50% of the volunteers from North), consider the project is useful to children because they gain new knowledge and skills. Furthermore volunteers mentioned the fact that children are more disciplined (62%) and that they learn more about Kosovo (65%).

Furthermore, the feedback received from the pilot project in Shtime/Štimlje, 90% of the children learned to play in teams, and 70% learned about fair-play. Likewise, 47,5% of the children mentioned that what they had loved the most was the games, 32,5% especially appreciated to play together. In addition, all the children reported having made new friends: 75% of Albanian children made new friends from the Ashkali community and 95% of Ashkali children made new friends from the Albanian community.

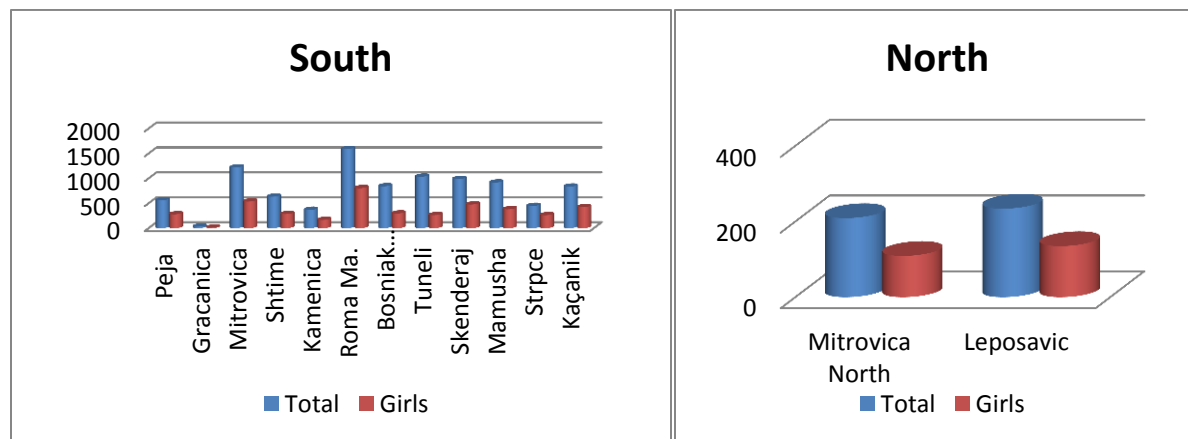




In the villages, despite only implementing activities once in each village, they were really important because children in the rural areas have even less opportunity to practice sport out of school, mainly due to limited transport and lack of resources. In fact, the children were really focused on the games, happy to play, to discover new games, willing to understand and to play fair-play.

These positive opinions are also shared by the parents and teachers<sup>27</sup>: 44% of volunteers stated having received feedbacks from parents (who sometimes attend the activities) and explained that parents told them that: “*activities are good because our children can do sport*”, “*they learn respect*” and kids “*learn new games and things*” through these activities. Volunteers also received feedbacks from teachers who also have a positive opinion on activities which allow children to “*behave better*” and the majority say it is a very good initiative and that “*these activities are very important for our country*”.

In terms of **gender**, regular activities brought girls and boys together, with an average of **45.2% of girls**.<sup>28</sup>



Children were therefore given the opportunity to play together, both boys and girls. Considering that in most of the schools the classes of physical education are not mixed, this represents an important achievement.

According to the volunteers (86 %), thanks to the project, boys and girls (children) became more eager to play together. Furthermore, 72% of the children changed their opinion on the ability of boys and girls being able to play sports together through this project.

<sup>27</sup> Testimonies collected by volunteers from parents and teachers when implementing activities

<sup>28</sup> This includes girls’ participation in the regular activities in the North. Moreover, this does not include girls’ participation in regards to the pilot project in Shtime/Štimlje

Moreover, in the pilot project in Shtime/Štimlje, the Sport Animator noticed a difference of mentality in the villages compared to the cities. Gender topic seems to be specifically taken into consideration. In fact, the Sport Animator sometimes faced some discriminative behavior or reaction from boys to girls. As example, he related accusation of girl's responsibility when the team loses, quotes like "girls should stay at home" from some boys.

The children involved in the activities were mostly **not used to participate in sport activities**, either because they had no access to sport clubs due to the lack of sport organizations in their locality or because they could not afford to pay membership and use of sports facilities.

Furthermore, most of the targeted children were not used to be involved in **multi-ethnic activities** before their participation in this project<sup>29</sup>.

In total the regular activities involved children from 7 communities: Albanian, Ashkali, Bosniak, Roma, Serbian, Turkish and Gorani. In five centers<sup>30</sup>, children from only one community were involved in regular activities and almost the totality of kids benefitting from the activities organized in the North were Serbian (with the exception of one Bosniak and two Roma). Positively 8 centers mixed children from different communities. However in certain mixed localities<sup>31</sup> only a limited number of children from minority communities participated in activities.

Kamenicë/Kamenica represents a particularly relevant case under this perspective: indeed, the Sport4Youth activities represent the only occasion for children from Albanian, Serbian and Roma communities to participate in common activities, use common spaces, play together and cooperate.

The fact that children are not used to mix with other communities (or only with the ones living in their own locality) gave a crucial importance to the joint events. This is particularly true for the Serbian children who participated in the Joint Event in Skënderaj/Srbica.

In this way, Joint Events offered unique opportunities to children to meet their peers from other communities and play together.

When asked about how they enjoyed playing with other communities, 94% of children who participated to the joint events said they did not have any problems playing with others, 3% said they had difficulties and 3% did not answer. When asked to explain why they face difficulties playing with other communities, the main reasons was that they could not speak the same language: "*I don't understand when Serbs speak*", or "*I have friends from other communities if we understand each other*".

According to the volunteers, the children's shift in attitude and mindsets thanks to the inclusive sport activities implemented is significant: 44 volunteers (83%) assessed that children are more tolerant to other communities.

Nevertheless, despite the collected answers by children and volunteers, some problems were faced during the year with regard to both community-based and gender-based discrimination. In terms of communities, discriminative attitude by the side of Albanian and Serbian children towards Roma children have been repeatedly noticed by volunteers and PI staff during activities in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica and Graçanicë/Gračanica. In terms of gender, one has to notice that despite the high percentage of girls involved in activities and events, their actual integration resulted sometimes limited. Indeed, the cooperation between boys and girls remains usually insufficient, primarily in the case of team games (such as football).

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<sup>29</sup> Except for children from Pejë/Peć and Mitrovicë/Mitrovica center.

<sup>30</sup> Namely: Kaçanik/Kaçanik, Skenderaj/Srbica, Tunel i Pare/Prvi Tunel, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica and Firajë (Shtërpçë/Štrpce)

<sup>31</sup> Namely: Pejë/Peć and Bosniak Mahalla/Bosnjačka Mahala (Mitrovicë/Mitrovica)

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To conclude, children are generally very open to playing with children from other communities and gender: despite some language differences, sport and games allow them to play together without facing any real difficulty. We can say that the limits to intercultural dialogue mainly come from adults and parents who have difficulties letting their children go to a locality they are not familiar with.

It is also interesting to stress the fact that children had more comments on the girls/boys relationship on the field and interactions among them. It is clear that boys do not perceive it as much of a problem as girls do. Accordingly, the main tool to enhance inclusion of girls through sports is to continue to implement games in gender balanced teams and to ensure that rules are respected so that every child has the opportunity to participate and play. Moreover, a reinforced focus should be put on the use of cooperative games, which will allow for an enhanced integration of girls in the activities and the effective collaboration among all children. Volunteers will be trained on the management of the new games and their educative value.



## Partnerships and Visibility

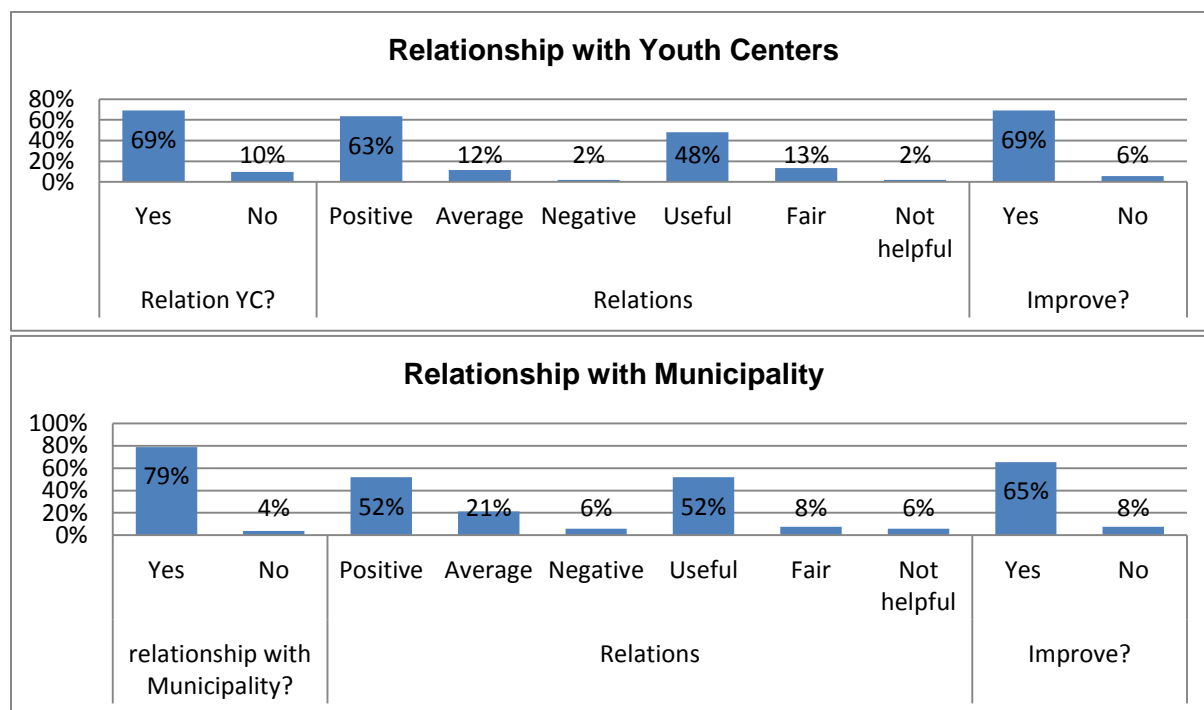
One of the main factors of sustainability of the project's results is the relations developed with relevant local and national stakeholders.

PI has continued its partnership agreement with the department of youth of the **Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport**. Representatives attended several events and end year diploma were signed by the Director of Youth.

PI has also continued and built new partnerships with the **municipalities** and the **youth organizations** in all the localities of intervention. In 2015 partnerships were signed with 9 municipalities<sup>32</sup>, 2 youth center and 10 schools. More actors were involved with the project without the signature of an official partnership agreement. The youth centers and the municipalities involved facilitated the organization of the activities locally through logistical (field, transport) and moral support.

According to the volunteers' questionnaires, 90% of them have relations with their youth center and 79% of them have relations with their municipalities. Moreover, 65% of volunteers consider their relations with the local partners had improved thanks to the project (65% with the municipalities and 69% with the youth centers).

The volunteers have clearly more developed relations with the youth centers than with their municipalities:



<sup>32</sup> Shtime/ Štimlje, Shtërpçë/ Štrpce, Gračanica/ Gračanicë, Kačanik/ Kačanik, Mamushë/ Mamuša, Kamenicë/ Kamenica, Pejë/ Peć, Skenderaj/ Srbica and Mitrovica/ Mitrovicë). The Municipality of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica covers four centers: Mitrovicë/Mitrovica center, Roma Mahalla/Romska Mahala, Bosniak Mahalla/Bonjačka Mahala and the village of Tunel i Pare/Prvi Tunel.

Moreover, 69% of the volunteers consider their relations with their youth centers are good while 63% of the volunteers have a positive view on the relations they develop with their municipalities. In addition, 44% of the volunteers had regular contact with their municipalities, and 58% had regular contact with their youth centers. Unfortunately, 4% of the volunteers did not have relations with their municipalities, whereas 10% did not have relations with their local youth centers. Overall, 81% of the volunteers have reported have positive communications with local partners; 58% stating that communication with local partners was useful.

Furthermore, to support the promotion of and awareness-raising of inclusive sports and creating bridges between communities, PI established a consortium partnership with two local organizations: Balkan Sunflowers of Kosovo and The Ideas Partnership.

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To conclude, one of the strength of the project is its relations with relevant local partners and national stakeholders. However, it has been noticed in 2015 that only a limited number of local partners was regularly following PI's activities and participating in some of them. The relatively weak involvement of local partners in the project activities (primarily regular activities with children in their localities) and the lack of responsiveness towards the Leaders' invitations or demands can be due to several reasons, including: the irregularity of the contacts between partners and Leaders; the reluctance or impossibility to take part in regular field activities; the repetitiveness of the project activities in the eyes of long-term partners, etc.

Therefore, it appears extremely important to establish and maintain regular contacts with all relevant stakeholders in the localities included (but not only) in the project; diversify the type of activities directed to local partners; and collect and analyze their feedback in several moments throughout the year.



# Conclusions and Recommendations

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Thanks to the activities organized under the Sport4Youth project, youngsters and children respectively from six and seven different communities<sup>33</sup> had the chance to meet each other and to create links. Indeed sport is a unique tool to include people from different backgrounds. Sport is therefore conceived as a “pretext” and an instrument to involve target groups in inclusive events. Even if difficulties were encountered in some cases, project beneficiaries were generally able to take part in the activities without feeling excessive pressure from their families and/or other groups they belong to.

Representing a “universal language”, sport created ideal conditions of dialogue and exchanges between people who are - or think they are - different. Sport taught them respect, tolerance and living-togetherness on the field and outside of it. By having fun together and sharing special moments, volunteers and children overcame their stereotypes and the most vulnerable of them got the confidence and the self-esteem necessary for their better integration in the society. Finally sport offered opportunities for alternative education by providing volunteers and children with new skills, teaching them core principles and conveying awareness raising messages through games.

Nevertheless, multiple challenges have been identified in the achievement of the results under the Sport4Youth project. Therefore, several actions are recommended for strengthening and broadening the impact of the implemented activities on beneficiaries and Kosovo society.

- **Creating bridges between communities**

Overall, the activities implemented under the Sport4Youth project succeeded in establishing contacts and fostering exchanges among children and youngsters from different communities and backgrounds. Sport has been used as a tool to create a multi-ethnic network of volunteers, who were empowered with new skills and had the opportunity to make new friends and exchange opinions and experiences.

This is a very unique network in Kosovo, as there are very few organization that are bringing volunteers from different communities together all year long. Largely positive results have been achieved through the implemented trainings and activities for volunteers in terms of tolerance: contacts and exchanges among volunteers from different communities have been created; language barriers were overcome through non-verbal communication and common activities/objectives; no major problem or discrimination based on ethnic/national/religious identity emerged.

Furthermore, all involved volunteers participated in the activities organized during trainings and summer camps, through which they enlarged their knowledge about other communities and cultures. Reflection and discussions on prejudice and stereotypes towards others were fostered: even if sensitive, the debates always turned out to be constructive and contributed to the strengthening of the network. In addition, the totality of the volunteers from the North expressed their willingness and motivation to meet with their peers from the other localities: the basis for the integration of North in the Network (objective for 2016) has been set and positively welcomed by the volunteers from Mitrovica North and Lepoaviq/Leposavić, which is already to be considered a great achievement.

## Recommendations

- To enhance the exchange between youngsters and children from different backgrounds, during the recruitment of the new volunteers in 2016, PI will primarily focus on youngsters coming

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<sup>33</sup> Gorani children were involved in the activities, while not represented among the volunteers

from vulnerable groups or complex personal/social background. The choice of two new centers to be included in the project followed the same line: indeed Janjevë/Janjevo and Plemetinë/Plemetina are small and isolated localities. The aim will be to reach out to volunteers who have little exposure to interethnic dialogue opportunities and who come from traditional or conservative areas. Even if recruiting less open-minded volunteers might result in more challenges and exposure of the project to higher potential risks, the impact of activities will become more relevant, with regard to the individual beneficiaries, the network of volunteers as well as Kosovo society as a whole.

- PI will also ensure that a higher percentage of volunteers from minority communities (primarily Serbian and Bosniak) participate to the project in a more continuous way. By doing so, PI will be able to enhance the participation of children from minority communities in multi-ethnic events. Indeed, children and parents will trust volunteers from their own community which will facilitate dialogue and trust.
- PI will further promote interethnic dialogue by having double-teams (composed of two main communities) in multi-ethnic areas (namely: Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Kamenicë/Kamenica, Graçanicë/Gračanica, Mamushë/Mamuşa/Mamuša, Pejë/Peć, Shtime/Štimlje, Shtërpçë/Štrpce, Janjevë/Janjevo and Plemetinë/Plemetina). This way, volunteers will be able to reach out to children of the different minorities and enhance their inclusion during regular activities.
- PI will work on the smooth integration of the volunteers from the North into the wider network by organizing exchange days between North and South, and by eventually including volunteers from the North into trainings and multi-ethnic activities in the South.
- Most importantly, enhanced importance will be given to the work on perceptions and tolerance with the aim of contributing to the change of volunteers' mindset. In 2015, PI already started to develop training content specifically addressing prejudices and identity in order to let the youngsters reflect on their views on others and diversity. The related pedagogical material will be further developed in 2016, with the aim to strengthen the impact on the volunteers' private lives and everyday attitude, going therefore beyond the project-framework. With the same objective, PI will seek to develop more partnerships with local NGOs to promote exchanges among youngsters on a larger scale.

- **Youth Empowerment**

In terms of the volunteers' motivation, according to the end-of-the-year questionnaire, the majority of the youngsters involved in the project (86%) joined it to implement activities for children of their localities. Seventy percent (70%) joined to meet new people and work with other communities and 75% to do sports. Interestingly, during the informal conversations with PI staff, some volunteers pointed out that the source of their motivation changed throughout the year if initially they became part of the project because they love sport and wanted to practice more, through training and activities they understood the value of inclusive and educative sport and enjoyed working with children.

Each year, many of the volunteers are new to the project (new localities, departure of older volunteers) or are new in their position (assistants becoming animators, and some animators becoming leaders). Accordingly there will be a need to integrate these new volunteers to make them feel part of a common multi-ethnic network. PI will continue developing the skills of the volunteers depending on their positions in the project. PI will also focus more on the empowerment of the volunteers [all positions] to ensure they gain more responsibilities and be more associated with the decisions affecting their local teams.

## Recommendations

To improve the skills developed by volunteers (including sport animations skills, personal/professional skills and social skills); PI will work more closely with experienced volunteers to foster the transfer of experience and knowledge to the new ones. These volunteers will also be given more autonomy and responsibilities in the planning and implementation of activities. Moreover, an enhanced focus will be put on the strengthening of personal skills which are supposed to be useful in the youngsters' everyday life and professional future.

Moreover, in order to strengthen the impact of the activities on the beneficiaries, the following measures should be taken into consideration:

- A stronger focus will be put on the development of personal life skills, considering the high importance for Kosovo youth of the subjects covered during trainings and summer camps (lacking in formal education systems). The involvement of external experts and partner NGOs would be recommended.
- The impact of multi-ethnic events on children, youth and civil society could be reinforced and broadened. For this, PL4Y International is considering the possibility of adding new elements or sessions during Joint Events, which would also contribute to fostering the volunteers' motivation to fully perform their tasks before and during the activities. The team will explore the following possibilities: awareness-raising activities on specific topic, environmental-activity, or participation of external guests. The Leader volunteers will be directly involved in the organization and management of these activities, leading to the development of further skills and capacities.
- A stronger autonomy of the volunteers in the North should be developed during the first months of 2016. Indeed, the level of skills assimilated by the beneficiaries during 2015 remained necessarily at a basic level. This was due primarily to the limited duration of the trainings and the manifold nature of the pursued objectives. In this perspective, the transfer of experience and knowledge from more experienced volunteers to the new ones should be fostered in order to ensure an improved quality of activities and the teams' progression.
- **Provide values to children**

Thanks to the volunteers' commitment and capacities, a high number of children benefitted from inclusive sport activities. Children from six communities were involved in multi-ethnic events, aimed at overcoming community-based and gender-based barriers through inclusive and cooperative sport games. Through the educative games, the children also gained skills and learned how to play together, regardless from gender, community and specific capacities/needs.

To conclude, children are generally very open to playing with children from other communities and genders, and despite some language differences, sport and games allow them to play together without facing any real difficulty. We can say that the limits to intercultural dialogue mainly comes from adults and parents who have difficulties letting their children go to a locality they are not familiar with.

## Recommendations:

- The catalogue of games will be improved and will include more cooperative games: this will foster the interaction and collaboration among children.



- Moreover, a part from pursuing an increased participation of minority communities, transversal attention will be dedicated to securing the results achieved in 2015 in terms of gender-inclusion, both among children and volunteers.
- Attention will be put on including awareness-raising sessions within typical sport activities. Volunteers will therefore be trained to lead small debates with children. The debates will be conducted after special activities on key issues such as inclusion of girls in sport, respect and fair play, environmental protection.
- Based on results of the Shtime/Štimlje project, PI will continue activities in the Emin Duraku schools and increase its activities in the villages; as well as provide more pedagogical support to Primary school sport teachers (in possible trainings) and involve them more closely in project implementation.
- Finally, improved monitoring and evaluation tools will be developed in order to better assess the impact of the project activities on children, in terms of development of sport skills and social skills. For this, the links with parents and other stakeholders will be strengthened and their feedbacks collected.
- **Partners and visibility/sustainability**

The culture of Sport remains primarily focused on competition and not in line with the vision promoted by PI; the use of sport as a tool to educate and bring people together. Therefore, there is still a need to continue working with, and convincing local stakeholders on the real added-value and the effective effects of sport as an inclusive sport. Nevertheless, local partner continue to provide their support to the Sport4Youth project, but there is still a need to increase awareness of the decision makers and the practitioners on the non-competitive aspects of sport.

In 2015, PI has established and strengthened its partnerships with municipalities (9), youth centers (2), and schools (10) in the localities of intervention, as well as strengthened its partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport. Additional actors were involved with the project without the signature of an official partnership agreement. The youth centers, schools and municipalities involved facilitated the organization of the activities locally through logistical (field, transport) and moral support. However, compared to 2014, local partners did not frequently attend project activities, despite the continued recognition of PI's achievement and impact on youth and children in their localities.

### **Recommendations**

PI still needs to strengthen the contacts with its partners involved in the project, as well as increase awareness of the added-value of non-competitive, inclusive sports. As a result, PI recommends:

- To work more closely with local partners to increase their visibility during project activities. Including recommending that the municipalities with provide or increase their financial support in order to ensure the sustainability of the project and increase the visibility of both the Sport4Youth project and the achievements of the volunteers.
- Work with its volunteers to continue improving their relations with local partners are more to facilitate and better encourage local partners to attend both regular activities and Sport4Youth events in their localities and others. PI will promote the work done by volunteers and advocate for added recognition of their contribution within their localities.

- Propose to sport teachers to participate and learn more about inclusive sport activities through participation to trainings or conferences. PI will also involve them more in advocacy activities to promote its project throughout Kosovo;
- Also recommends developing more partnerships with local NGOs to promote exchanges among youngsters on a larger scale.





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