

# Step Up Equality

A model of grassroots cooperation among women  
in sport to promote gender equality -  
*Main findings from Monitoring and Evaluation*



Photo credits: Balon Mundial

**IO Lead Organisation:** Women Win  
**Date:** 24.12.2021  
**By:** Women Win

# Table of contents

<b>About the IO7</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Partner organisations</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Process</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Partnership Assessment</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. IO Reflection Report Template</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. IO-specific Assessments</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Partnership Reflections and Learnings</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Successes</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Challenges</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Appendix A. IO1 Reflection</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendix B. IO2 Reflection</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Appendix C. IO3 Reflection</b>	<b>21</b>

This Report is financed by a grant from the European Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) under the European Union's Erasmus+ programme (no. 603190-EPP-1-2018-1-SE-SPO-SCP). It will be implemented in the years 2019-2021.

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

## About the IO7

This summary report led by Women Win reflects on the project's outcomes, impact and the model that has been developed and tested during the project. This report outlining the project's process is necessary in order to highlight what we can learn from this collaborative partnership and provide other initiatives with insight into the model, adapt the model to make it context-relevant.

The report will reflect on the learnings of the collaborative partnership and outline the processes and final results by the means of relevant materials produced and their reach along the project.

### Partner organisations

- Girls in Sport (Sweden)
- GEA Coop Sociale (Italy)
- ASSIST (Italy)
- Women Win (international network)
- Discover Football (Germany)
- Democracy in Sport (Poland)
- FARE Network (international network)

#### Implementation structure phase 1



#### Implementation structure phase 2



After Girls in Sports as lead organiser dropped out of the project, GEA took over to coordinate and finalise Phase 2 starting from August 2020 (according to the new agreement that was signed with EACEA), ensuring the project's overall correct management and implementation, representing the consortium towards EACEA.

# Process

This project is based on a collaborative partnership between several organisations from different levels across Europe. From the beginning the main objective of this collaborative partnership was to promote gender equality and challenge gender-based discrimination in grassroots sport across Europe through the cooperation and the exchange of best practices and expertise between different sports and countries.

Within the partnership Women Win was appointed to create and implement the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework for the project, which was intended to guide and support measuring the results of the different IOs. Furthermore, Women Win also committed to the quality check of the project's work and outputs. The MEL framework included several components; (1) a partnership assessment that involved two partnership reflection sessions, (2) the Intellectual Output (IO) Reflection Report Template for each IO, and finally, (3) IO-specific assessments were created to capture and measure the impact of the IOs. This report is based on and driven by the MEL Plan designed by Women Win that provided all partners with the same instruments, timeline, tools to contribute to monitoring, assessing and evaluating project's outcomes and impact at short/mid/long term.

## 1. Partnership Assessment

Women Win was given the task to assess the partnership in order to collectively learn from the partnership, improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the partnership and to demonstrate the value of the partnership. The purpose of this partnership was to do several partnership health checks along the project in order to monitor the partnership over time. An initial partnership reflection (baseline) was conducted in November 2019 during the partner meeting in Amsterdam. Due to the circumstances in 2020, the initially planned midline was not rolled out. The endline was conducted during the hybrid meeting (with most people attending in person in Warsaw, but some people attending online via Zoom) in November 2021.

The partnership check-in framework used for the assessment explores four different pillars; 'set-up and design', 'daily operations', 'synergy and collaborative mind-set', and 'added value and results'.

- *Set-up and design* examine the set-up and operations of the partnership and explores organisational roles and responsibilities.
- The *daily operations* pillar focuses on how partners perceive general management, leadership, daily communications and decision making.
- *Synergy and collaborative mind-set* is about perceived equity, power dynamics in the partnership; each partner's ability to fully participate in a collaborative sense.

- *Added-value and results* reflect on the partnership from the organisations' perspective. This is accomplished by identifying if and how the partnership reinforces the organisation's objectives, internal processes, commitments and investments.



## 2. IO Reflection Report Template

The IO Reflection Report Template was intended for each IO lead to fill in after the completion of the respective IO (see Appendices). However, the development and completion of some IOs have been restricted due to multifaceted challenges. The template was designed to guide the partners with the reporting and to make sure that each report includes reflections on the IO specific processes, successes and challenges faced during the process and recommendations for the IO. The following questions were guiding the IO lead organisations' reflections:

- How did the collaboration go with the partners throughout the process of producing this IO?
- What did you learn from the process of working on this IO?
- What was the biggest success in regard to this IO? Please explain why.
- What advice would you give others to accomplish the same success?
- What was the biggest challenge in regard to this IO? Please explain why.
- How would you recommend mitigating this challenge?
- What would you recommend to someone or an organisation, who would want to produce a similar IO?

The following six IOs (*IO1-6*) were planned to be produced during the course of this project:

### *IO1 - Best Practice Handbook led by Girls in Sport*

This output led by Girls in Sport delivered a handbook of mapped good practices to promote gender equality in sports. It was built on some of the findings from the research and needs assessment report (*IO2*). The ten best practices presented in the handbook are based on cases studies and a common set of criteria. The handbook was translated into the partner languages, communicated and disseminated in all partner networks and the project's dedicated channels.

### *IO2 - Research and Needs Assessment led by Discover Football*

The Research and Needs Assessment led by Discover Football is an analysis on the main challenges for gender equality in grassroots sports and the common barriers for women in sports leadership. It was based on established common framework and timeline for the summary reporting sheet of partner countries, and the partners gave constant feedback on tools provided by Discover Football. Surveys and interviews in different languages were conducted for this across all partner countries to explore barriers to women's leadership. Discover Football received support from Girls in Sport and Women Win to deliver a European Resume Report on Why we need structures to change – an analysis of the barriers for women in sports leadership in Europe. Similarly,

to the handbook, the report was translated into the four partner languages, communicated and disseminated in all partner networks and project channels.

### *IO3 - Online Training Application led by GEA*

The purpose of this output was to create an online community application to support the training path of participants and that also offers a networking tool by connecting the athletes across Europe. It also integrates IO5 into the app by enabling users to report episodes of discrimination in sport, exchange practices and initiatives to contrast discrimination. The development of the SUE App was led by GEA but relied heavily on joint decision-making and evaluation among partners. Furthermore, the possible tools were evaluated and tested together with the partners and female athletes' feedback were integrated before the beneficiaries gained access to the application.

### *IO4 - Facilitator's Toolkit led by Democracy in Sport Association*

It is a jointly created European training framework to foster women's role in grassroots sports led by Democracy in Sport Association. This toolkit is a collection of examples that have the potential to inspire those who wish to promote and facilitate women's leadership in grassroots sport. The collected data and mapping of barriers by IO2 was used to inform the training structure development for this training toolkit. It was tested with athletes and leaders in three partner countries (Italy, Germany and Poland) before the publication.

### *IO5 - Reporting (gender) discriminations in grassroots sports led by FARE Network*

This is an innovative European model lead by FARE Network that was supposed to deliver a discrimination monitoring tool. During the process, this activity has been adjusted and the result is a Reporting Gender Discrimination in Sport manual. It is a manual that provides guidelines for sports governing bodies to improve procedures, collect data and support victims in accessing remedy and contribute to the prevention of gender discrimination. Some aspects of this tool have been already implemented in the online community app (IO3).

### *IO6 - Video led by GEA and FARE Network*

GEA, supported by FARE Network, is producing a video that presents the project's pilot action and main activities, summing up the main highlights of the project as well as key findings and concepts emerged during the project.

### 3. IO-specific Assessments

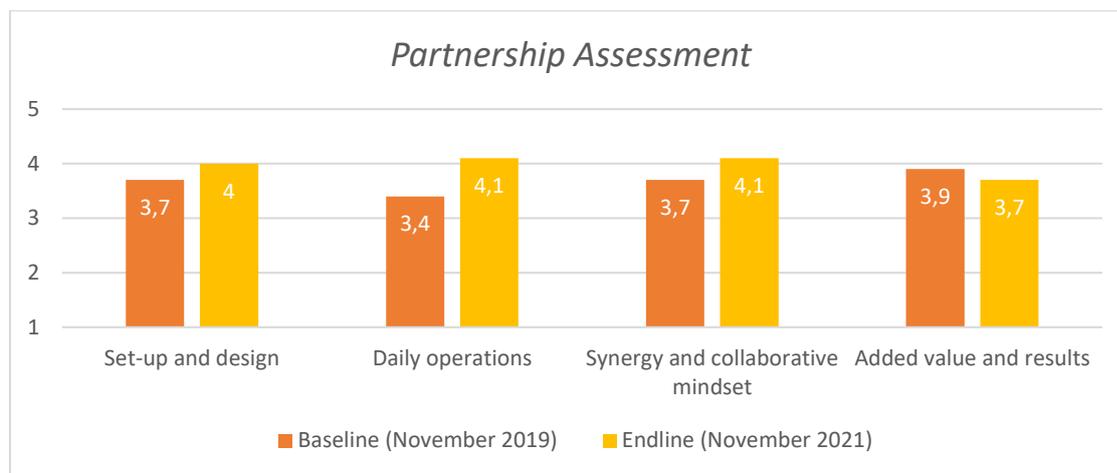
These IO specific assessments were created to capture and measure the impact of the IOs, such as the number of survey participants and media reach on different channels. These tools were created by Women Win with the input and testing of the entire project team. Unfortunately, for some of the IOs we cannot track the impact yet because of the progress of the respective IO. The existing IO

During the design phase of the project it was expected that about 1520 beneficiaries will be directly reached through local activities. Considering the network of the partners involved it was determined that the project is to reach at least 200.000 people indirectly through dissemination activities. As the project is still on going, the actual project reach will be reported in the end report to the European Commission.



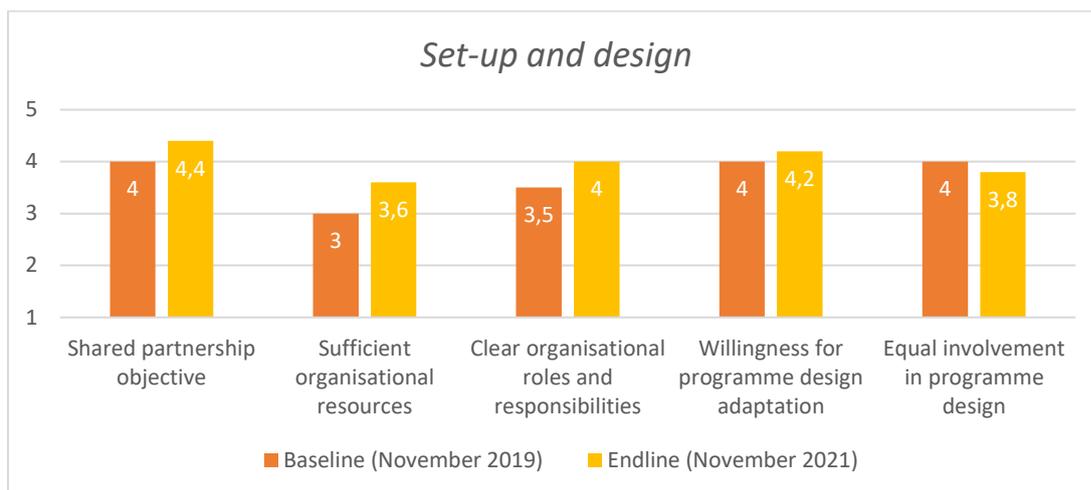
## Partnership Reflections and Learnings

The partnership assessment was accompanied by a reflective conversation between the partners during the last partnership session in November 2021. An additional reflection assessment was planned initially, but the reflective conversation was more insightful combined with the partnership assessment. Both the assessment and the conversation revolved around the previously mentioned four pillars: 'set-up and design', 'daily operations', 'synergy and collaborative mind-set', and 'added value and results'. Besides the pillars, the meeting also allowed partners to touch upon more in-depth reflections on the collaborative partnership.

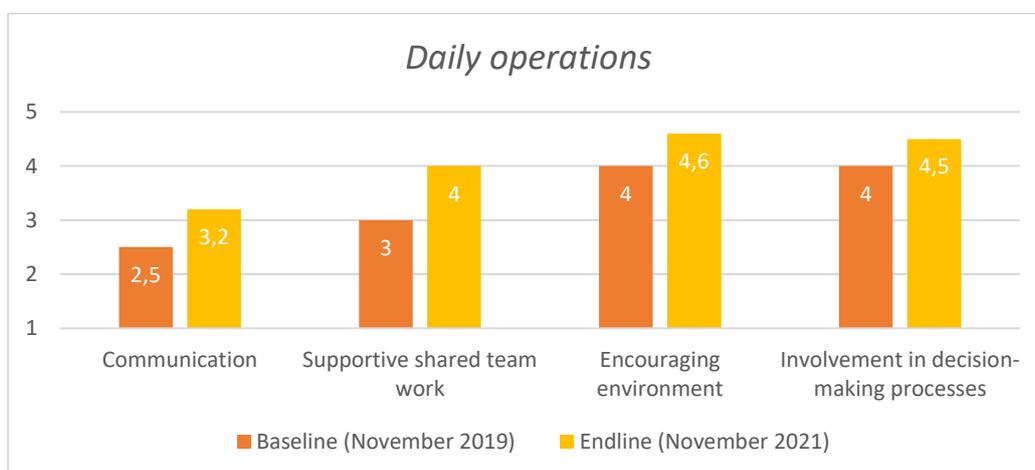


At the baseline, all four pillars were scored under four, the lowest score being 3.4. Interestingly, the first three pillars scored higher at the endline than at the baseline with a four or higher. Daily operations have seen the biggest positive change from all pillars, while the pillar on added value and results of the partnership had the highest score at the baseline it was the only pillar that was scored lower at the endline and under a four.

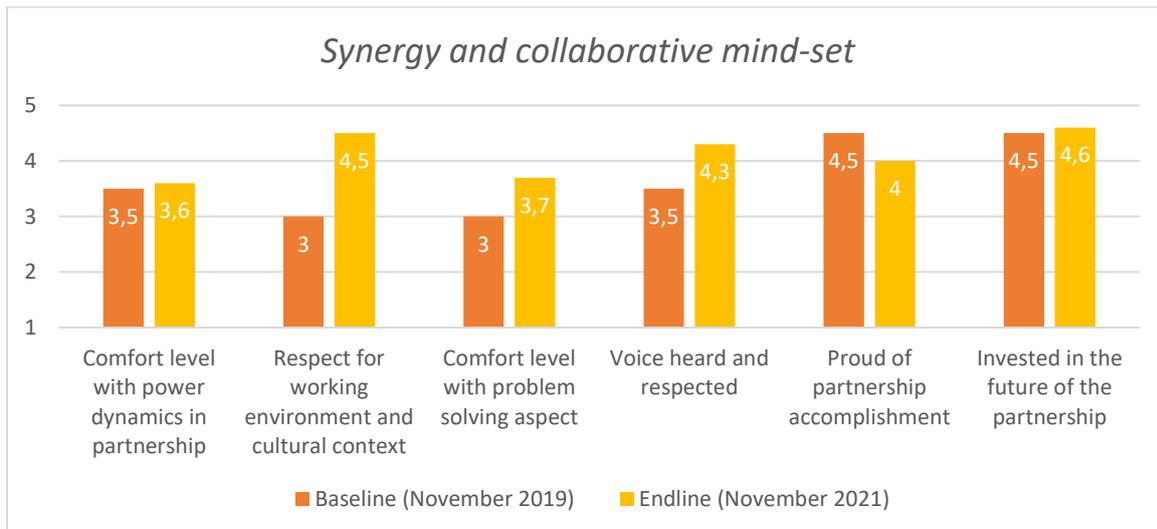
The average endline score of the pillar Set-up and design indicates that the project was true to its collaborative and co-designed nature, and that in the end every organisation could contribute with their own expertise.



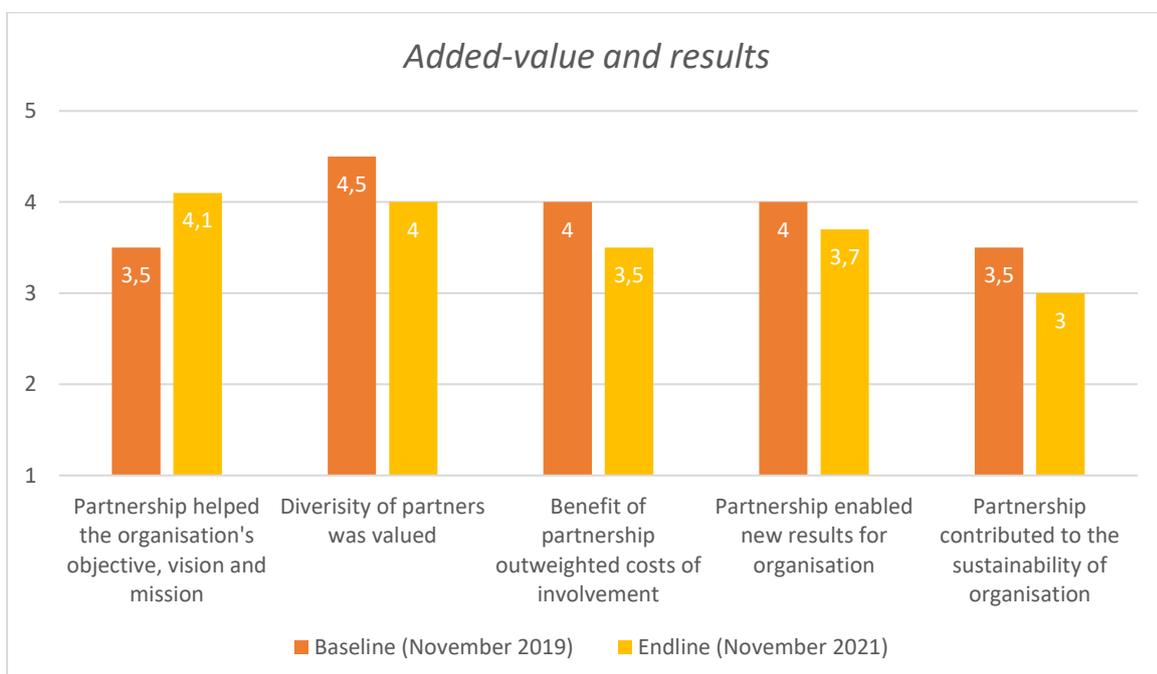
The responses to the specific questions reveal that the partners were happy with the partnership objectives and were most critical of their own organisation's resource to participate in the partnership because of their organisation's position. The partners collectively acknowledged that some organisations had a more limited capacity than others, however their perception on this improved during the project. In addition, the responses suggest that roles and responsibilities within the partnership became clearer and more transparent with time. Although partners indicated that they were content with the openness to adapt the programme design according to their needs, they did not fully agree with the statement that their organization was equally involved in the design of the programme and felt that the design lacked crucial reflections.



Overall, the pillar daily operations were perceived to have improved in every aspect as depicted by the improved scores. This pillar clearly presents challenges that communication issues brought about in the partnership, the responses indicated that the communication was better in the second phase but there is still a lot of room for improvement. Interestingly, this pillar holds the lowest score and one of the highest scores. In addition, at the beginning of the project the daily operations was scored the lowest and the end it became one of the highest scored pillars. The partners' scores imply a positive change in how they perceive the collaboration on the organisational level in relation to teamwork, openness and decision-making.



The responses related to the pillar synergy and collaborative mind-set indicate that partners overall perceived equity, power dynamics and participation in the partnership as appropriate. However, power dynamics and conflict management seemed to be key concern points for partners. Interestingly, while at the project start partners were confidently agreeing to the statement that they felt a sense of pride in what this partnership can accomplish, in the endline they expressed that they continue to agree with the statement but not as convincingly as previously. In addition, it is noteworthy to mention that the partners continue to be invested in the partnership, also in the future.



As previously mentioned, the first three pillars scored higher at the endline and scored on average between 4 or 4.1 from 5, while the pillar on added value and results was scored lower. This pillar has also the lowest score from the four at the endline which indicates some dissatisfaction with the results of the collaborative partnership. One partner explained that this multi-layered project could have benefited from an implementing

strategy and even a more formulated hierarchy to create a more solid structure to rely on and guide the overall partnership.

The results show that the partnership helped with the organisations' own objective, vision and mission, more than previously anticipated, however, the other four aspects of added-value and results of the partnership was scored lower than at the baseline. In particular, the last three aspects of this pillar were scored low. Regarding the balance of benefit of the partnership and cost of involvement in the partnership, one partner raised concerns about the success of the project in the eyes of the EU and what this means for the funding received. Challenges faced during the project definitely brought about unplanned work that also gave rise to the uncertainty about the partnership's contribution to organisations' sustainability. Interestingly, the partnership's effect on the organisations was scored relatively low compared to the reflection conversation that accompanied the assessment. Several partners claimed that the outputs helped the organisations work and they perceive the partnership as "a huge learning lesson". In addition, the partnership expanded their networks and exposed them to potential new opportunities.

## Successes

Aligned with the assessment, partners indicated that from the start the design, set-up and the objective of the project were clear and partners were aligned and committed. They also agree that the project for the start was great and ambitious but could do with some refinement in general for the future. The project has shown that there is space for further cooperation and future projects as they continue to believe in the relevance and importance of the chosen topic. The participation in this project was a big learning opportunity for some partners and their organisation. One partner explicitly mentioned that without their participation in this partnership they would not have been able to really open a structured discussion on the topic of women's leadership and they want to implement this internally in their own organisation as well. The partners all agreed that it provided them with a lot of insight and networking opportunities, they were introduced to new approaches and triggered the internal discussion on which direction the organizations are going in the future.

Although the dissemination of IO1 and IO2 were delayed, the reports were available internally in timely matter and the access to data and findings of these two IOs enabled partners to deduct internal learnings for the training development (IO4). Overall, the partnership faced several challenges, but it survived and delivered most of what it promised at the beginning. The partnership in general has overcome the most severe challenges after the lead partner changed. Alice took big part in mediating between partners when necessary. This shift has improved the relationships and respect between partners as well as it provided more clarity and new motivation to continue with the project. The scores from the assessment also highlight that the partners find the partnership valuable as they are still invested in continuing the partnership.

## Challenges

The nature of this collaborative partnership was from the beginning demanding and some issues were exceptionally concerning and required deliberate attention as they were threatening the project. The partnership was built on partners that come from different backgrounds, do not share common experiences and with limited resources. These factors to an extent limited their communication and required more frequent interactions. The partnerships management was given to an organisation that in hindsight did not have the capacity to lead. The changes linked to the coordination issues brought about changes that affected the performance. The project started with expertise, but during the project there were several staff changes and in the later phase the communications department for example was lacking knowledge in some specific areas. Communication issues were also highlighted by the partnership assessment; in addition, they were also brought up in the reflection session between the partners. Coordination of parallel running tasks was found difficult; it was mentioned that dedicated meetings were used to cover also the partnership which decentralised the meetings.

The partners mentioned several processes that involved more time- and labour-consuming tasks than foreseen in the project design phase. Most of the partners affirmed that they were struggling internally in terms of finance, management and coordination. In particular, the complex translation process was brought up several times in the reflection session as it led to extra work, missing information and additional communication. The shared language of the partnership was English and the outputs were created in English, but the materials needed to be translated to and/or from four partner languages (Swedish, Italian, German and Polish) for data collection, analysing and dissemination. This issue was explicitly highlighted as a challenge in two of the reflection reports because the extra time, effort and communication that it required was not anticipated in the design phase. In several cases this tedious process slowed down and delayed the entire planned process. In addition to the translation process, the partners also mentioned a prolonged data analysis phase. Particularly, conducting and coordinating the analysis of participant data in five different languages proved to be a very challenging task, which required effective collaboration between all partners in order to make sure that tools and delivered products are universally applicable through context specificity. These examples indicate that task were more demanding than anticipated because it required the collaboration of all partners that was time consuming and labour intensive, and at the end the partnership required the more resource allocation from partners than anticipated.

On top of all these challenges that the partnership faced, COVID-19 also deeply affected this 3-year project. Several events were delayed, such as the third Multinational Partner Meeting and the first training stations needed to be postponed in all partner countries. Due to COVID-19 the partners and project in general were faced with uncertainty and this was amplified when the lead organiser dropped out of the project in June 2020. In addition, the work of the partnership was slowed down by staff availability and communication processes. In addition to this, one of the organisations is volunteer based and had no allocation for this project, there were times when they needed to make

sacrifices and commit to full-time in order to deliver. With regards to the project completion, a partner raised concerns, more on an individual level, over the report on the project's achievements and that it will not be accepted by the European Commission. The partnership building and forming needed a lot of time, effort and consideration that in some cases interfered with the delivery of outputs.

## Recommendations

### *(1) SUE Partnership – partners' (internal) learnings & recommendations*

This project is one step in the women's leadership learning trajectory. The individual learning started before the partnership and hopefully the partnerships' collective learning trajectory continues after the completion of the project and extends beyond the partnership. This collaborative partnership has not only led to several intellectual outputs but it also created new opportunities for the participating organisations. The previous sections have outlined the most important factors that have enabled or hindered the project.

With regard to the project planning, design and processes, there are main aspects to take into consideration.

- *Achievability* – Good practice is to keep in mind the reality of a complex and multi-layered project while designing a new project and during the project. The nature of a multi-layered partnerships calls for a more feasible planning that allows room for flexibility regarding lengthiness of processes. It is important to start small and scale up step by step to allow the partners to develop effective relationships with each other, build up trust within the partnership, and adjust the partnership's operational and governance arrangements before moving to more ambitious plans as some steps need to be perceived as more than technical step and take into account how it is political- and content-related.
- *Reflect and adapt* - A conscious choice to periodically reassess the project design, specifically regarding feasibility, is necessary in order to remain responsive and attuned to contextual realities. As reality unfolds, the partners need to collectively review choices and determine what is achievable in the given context. Adjust where necessary, realigned to all as much as possible and make sure to keep the project interesting and valuable for the stakeholders. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) is a big part of this by helping to identify challenges in order to learn from them and improve the project. Most partners indicated that they would have liked more frequent check-in on the functioning of the partnership and taking into account what challenges were faced by the partnership, a midline could be really insightful for such a long project. It would allow for a continuous reflection on outputs and frameworks used and if necessary, the implementation of an extend framework. Midline with an accompanied reflection would allow partners to track progress of goals set as well as show the partnership's value-add to each partner. In addition, dividing the end line into two parts could also be helpful in order to (1) reflect on phase two

and (2) assess the overall project from beginning to the end as well as reflect on next steps.

- *Accountability* – The partners felt that the deliberate investment in written strategy on conflict solving and for achieving a sound understanding of expectations in all aspects of the project could have guided them in challenging times. Therefore, partnerships can benefit from a co-created partnership agreement that outlines clear roles and responsibilities as well as objectives and a decision-making structure. If necessary, an independent partnership facilitator can be involved to help to take partners more efficiently through the process of strengthening the partnership. In addition, clearly define meetings and their objectives and partners should support the coordinator to keep each other accountable. Actively seek to allocate time and effort into the sustainability of the partnership for the future, because it needs to be a collective effort.

A crucial aspect of the partnership is its deliverables (IOs) and to prompt further innovation in the field:

Two important aspects were mentioned regarding tools and approaches; firstly, to mobilise alternative approaches to gathering cases studies through an open and public nomination process in order to choose from a bigger pool and diversify, and secondly, to take the deliberate decision to put the time and effort into finding and choosing the right tools and methods.

Furthermore, the reporting template used for the IOs also needs to capture the learnings along the project and implement them. The reporting of the IO should be continuous and can be declared final at the end of the project. By taking into consideration the timeliness of the reporting template and any other documentation, the risk of information gap and extra work can be avoided. For example, as the reach is crucial for the reporting it could be reported in the template close to the project ending for transparency and quick data sharing. For the future endowers of the partnership, it would be advantageous to collect the deliverable (IOs) in one document as staff changes have previously affected information sharing processes.

## *(2) Sustainability*

The SUE partnership has a lot of future potential, but it is important to keep in mind that in cases it is inevitable that the partnership is terminated, but this should be perceived as a sign of achievement rather than failure, and it is important for all those involved in the partnership to acknowledge and celebrate achievements.

In this specific case, the partnership needs to be perceived as a journey and ensure that partners continue to co-create the partnership in order to move on. It can take advantage of the partners' willingness and investment to continue. The SUE partners already exhibit a high level of attachment and have naturally started to re-structuring the partnership during the project, if they continue to collaborate by re-scoping and re-planning the

partnership and its future activities then the project period can be seen as a building block instead of a final product. The topic of gender equality in grassroots sport across Europe addressed by this project has further great potentials, but in order to continue the partners need to reflect on their commitment, capacity, resources and expectations for the future and collectively have an open discussion on their own drivers, value and limitations. Another important element for sustaining the partnership is the consideration of long-term resourcing. The partnership needs to reassess the dependency on external funding and explore possibilities of local and renewable resourcing arrangements.

The partners, both individually and collectively need to follow good communication practices that should ensure that they address in their strategy (1) how the insights and learnings from the project period can and will be internalised and built on, and (2) what kind of opportunities does the partnership provide to the partners. It can be facilitated by the following element; open, if applicable, acknowledgement of achievements and contributions. More specifically, the Moving On Toolkit provides some key questions to be asked when re-negotiations are in place:

- What is the main focus and what are the new partnership objectives?
- Do any of the operational and/or management arrangements need to be changed?
- Are there any new resource requirements? If yes, what and how will they be identified / agreed /secured?
- What are the outputs and review processes?
- Will all of the current partners be involved and, if so, in what way(s)?

By encouraging the partners to share these different aspects of the partnership will help them understand what they may need to do differently in the way they work together in future. This so-called 'moving on' strategy could be articulated in the reassessed partnering agreement by an appointed individual.

## Appendix A. IO1 Reflection

IO Number & Name	IO1 Best practice handbook
IO Lead	Girls in Sport
Organisation	
Date	June 3rd 2020
Filled out by	Lucy Rist

### Process

How did the collaboration go with the partners throughout the process of producing this IO?

Girls in Sport as the lead organisation on IO1 led the development, coordination and sourcing of all case study material through all the partners as well as development of the criteria for assessment and the final presentation process. The sourcing process focused on identifying case studies through the data collection process (connected with IO2) as well as from partner networks across Europe. The main challenges were finding sufficient external documentation on some of the case studies - much of the information was only available via word of mouth without external references.

To support the process, Girls in Sport developed and shared with the project partners a common set of criteria for identifying and documenting best practices. The research analysis process in relation to IO2 also fed into this. The partners Discover Football, Democracy in Sport, GEA/Assist FARE and Women Win all sourced and wrote up case studies. Additionally, Girls in Sport systematised these into a scheme of best practice options in order to facilitate the use of information in this handbook by future users. The partners also contributed by giving feedback regarding the process and scheme designed by Girls in Sport - in particular Women Win and Discover football as organisations in a supporting role for this IO, as defined in the kick-off meeting in Sweden.

What did you learn from the process of working on this IO?

Working on the IO1 of the SUE project was a great experience, the chance to cover a wide ranging territory of how other organisations and individuals have been working with removing the barriers to leadership already was very motivating. We were able to deepen our existing knowledge on the research results connected with IO2 and really focus on what was the most important context to place these case studies and examples of best practice in. This gave the chance to expand on the more political and strategic needs and give a bit of a motivating push in how the handbook was presented to the reader. During this process and through extensive collaboration, we learned about the experiences of our partners and the challenges in their specific contexts. For example, in sourcing english language background information, in accessing particular people or networks for information on previously implemented projects or change initiatives. The whole process also his furthered our understanding of the situation across Europe and the very large differences in working contexts for those attempting to implement projects or initiatives to remove barriers to women's leadership.

## Successes

What was the biggest success in regard to this IO? Please explain why.

The biggest success is the handbook itself and the valuable resource that we have been able to create. This feels like quite a novel and valuable tool to be able to share with the wider sports community in Europe. It also feels like something really with the potential to inspire, motivate and support other organisations in implementing their own activities and projects towards supporting women's leadership.

What advice would you give others to accomplish the same success?

We give quite a solid structure that someone else could replicate in a few years' time to provide an expanded or updated version of this output. Factors to consider would be an extended framework for categorisation and perhaps even some form of selection tool to help users identify measures or a chain of measures that might best meet their needs and context. In terms of those wanting to use the handbook we have clear guidelines emphasised in the handbook. Specifically: that it is important to measure progress and stick to tangible changes rather than nice ideas and visions. In doing so we need to stay mindful when old norms and ideals are inadvertently reinforced. Remembering to not be too eager to consider the job done but to continually reflect on structures, outcomes and the behaviours and actions they encourage.

## Challenges

What was the biggest challenge in regard to this IO? Please explain why.

Problems regarding the different translation processes were a major challenge that occurred. The English surveys and interview guidelines needed to be translated into German, Polish, Italian and Swedish and the responses later on back into English, in order to be evaluated in qualitative content analysis for the European resume report - many of our tips on case studies to follow up were part of this process which took time and also meant there were many connections in the communication chain from the initiative we were interested through to the one writing up the case study to put it forward in our collective process. Then the handbook when final was translated back into the national languages. The translation process did not only require extra work, but also a lot of additional communication and project management of timelines. Every partner works in a different cultural and organisational context and we had to ensure that the case study selection process would be universally applicable to what might be available and relevant in each of these contexts. The long communication chain also meant that more time was needed to source missing pieces of information, sources images or fill in extra details. There were also some challenges with the interpretation of "barriers to leadership", both survey participants and partners had a tendency to place this in a broader context and suggest other initiatives working to improve women's participation in sport but not those specific to leadership. We were able to finish the draft of the Handbook by January 2020, ready for the design and dissemination stages of this output. In the following months of March and April 2020, the Corona epidemic affected the project and this IO, by significantly slowing down staff availability and communication processes in the partnership. Hence, the partnership disseminated the report to a wider audience in May and June 2020, and will continue to do so after the termination of the project.

How would you recommend mitigating this challenge?

To mitigate this challenge, it is important to not only see the translation processes as a technical step in the realisation of the needs analysis, but to understand the political and content-related questions that come along with it, as well as very different situations with regard to formal or informal initiatives and the documentation of projects or initiatives aiming to remove barriers to women's leadership. Consequently, more time has to be attributed to these processes in the development of the project timeline in advance.

### **Recommendations**

What would you recommend to someone or an organisation, who would want to produce a similar IO?

We might try an alternative approach to gathering case studies, perhaps setting up a more open and public nomination process, this might generate an even larger pool of examples to choose from. Certain aspects of data collection could be streamlined this way and even a larger database of examples generated with the ability to search or categorise in different ways. Then those really noteworthy examples could be lifted according to the factors contributing to their success and degrees of innovation.



## Appendix B. IO2 Reflection

IO Number & Name	IO2 Research and Needs Assessment
IO Lead	Discover Football
Organisation	
Date	June 02 2020
Filled out by	Paula Klinger and Johanna Small

### Process

How did the collaboration go with the partners throughout the process of producing this IO?

DISCOVER FOOTBALL, as the lead organisation on IO2, was responsible for the development, coordination and evaluation of the analysis during work phase three. The analysis focused on identifying the main challenges and difficulties for women to reach equal level of professional opportunities as leaders in sports and the creation of a European resume report: “Why we need structures to change – an analysis of the barriers for women in sports leadership in Europe” (IO2).

To support the process, DISCOVER FOOTBALL developed and shared with the project partners a common framework and timeline for the needs analysis and report writing process. The partners Girls in Sport, Democracy in Sport, GEA/Assist and DISCOVER FOOTBALL, which planned to hold trainings in their country, were responsible for translating the data collection tools into their respective local languages. Additionally, they collected data through online surveys and face-to-face or phone interviews, conducting and evaluating their own national needs analysis and creating and creating a country summary sheet. Data evaluations were translated by the partners back again into English, so that DISCOVER FOOTBALL could write the European resume report on this basis. Women Win and Fare Network shared the English surveys with their European members and analysed the data they collected through a common framework. The partners contributed by giving constant feedback regarding the tools that DISCOVER FOOTBALL provided for their use - in particular Women Win and Girls in Sport as organisations in a supporting role for this IO, as defined in the kick-off meeting in Sweden.

What did you learn from the process of working on this IO?

Working on the IO2 of the SUE project was a very enriching process. We were able to deepen our existing knowledge on research design and were given the opportunity to apply our experience of gender relations in sports on the development of the needs analysis. During this process and through extensive collaboration, we learned about the experiences of our partners and the challenges in their specific contexts. This learning helped us combine these different perspectives in the design of the needs analysis and the creation of a European resume report. Further, this improved understanding of the situation and the differences for women in leadership across Europe will have a positive impact on the tools and projects we hope to develop in this area going forward. Further, the strong partnerships we have built by working on this project and IO will allow us to better collectively address this topic.

## Successes

What was the biggest success in regard to this IO? Please explain why.

The biggest success of the IO2 has been that we were able to fill the gap of insufficient data concerning women in leadership positions. The SUE research clearly shows that there is a need in all partner territories to improve the access to leadership for women in sports, address the unsupportive environment and gender-based discrimination. Whilst most existing research focuses on the elite level, the SUE report adds useful insights into the experience of women at grassroots level and across sports. The feedback we received from the Polish partner organisation in particular shows us, that the process itself has created much needed debate on the issue of gender discrimination in sport at a local level. We hope to have contributed with the European resume to a shift in thinking and an evidence-driven approach to change for women in leadership in the partner countries.

What advice would you give others to accomplish the same success?

When conducting a needs analysis, it is of key importance to be certain about the areas that are of interest and to exclude the areas, which are not. Defining these areas accurately in advance - before starting with the assessment - will secure the efficiency of the research process. Further, it is vital to ensure that participants feel safe to provide honest responses, in particular to sensitive questions. Especially in regards to sharing their personal experiences of gender discrimination in sports, we experienced women telling the researchers that they feared negative repercussions from their employers or associations for speaking out. This is why it was paramount for us to carefully consider the collection, use and storage of personal data in consent forms and online surveys, as well as the way in which the information is presented in the reports.

## Challenges

What was the biggest challenge in regard to this IO? Please explain why.

Problems regarding the different translation processes were a major challenge that occurred. The English surveys and interview guidelines needed to be translated into German, Polish, Italian and Swedish and the responses later on back into English, in order to be evaluated in qualitative content analysis for the European resume report. Then European report was then translated into the national languages. We felt it was important to collect qualitative data on this subject, to better understand the underlying factors and mechanisms that prevent women from obtaining and holding leadership positions in sport. The translation processed did not only require extra work, but also a lot of additional communication. Every partner works in a different cultural and organisational context and we had to ensure that the needs analysis would be universally applicable, while at the same time fitting into different contexts. Since those are not merely technical, but political questions, they could not always be discussed bilaterally, but had to be brought into the partner meetings, which took place periodically. Hence, these processes took longer than expected and put us under time pressure since the work phase had started two months in delay and the needs analysis had to be completed in order to develop the following IOs. Nonetheless, despite a prolonged data analysis phase, we were able to finish the draft of the English European resume report by February 2020 and were able to use it within the partnership to inform the development our training methodology. In the following months of March and April 2020, the Corona epidemic affected the project and this IO, by significantly slowing down staff availability and communication processes in the partnership. Hence, the partnership

disseminated the report to a wider audience in May and June 2020, and will continue to do so after the termination of the project.

How would you recommend mitigating this challenge?

To mitigate this challenge, it is important to not only see the translation processes as a technical step in the realisation of the needs analysis, but to understand the political and content-related questions that come along with it, especially when conducting qualitative research. Consequently, more time has to be attributed to these processes in the development of the project timeline in advance.

## Recommendations

What would you recommend to someone or an organisation, who would want to produce a similar IO?

To develop and conduct a centrally coordinated needs analysis with multiple organisations coming from different European regions, it is of key importance to consider sufficient time for the communication processes. Discussing and deciding on the areas of focus for the needs analysis, the areas to leave out and how ask the right questions is a time-consuming task. Expectations, which can vary widely based on the settings and experiences of the organisations, may vary widely and have to be managed carefully from the start. However, these are very important and enriching processes, which need to be emphasised in order to fully exhaust the richness of experience and expertise that meets in such a multi-partnered project.



## Appendix C. IO3 Reflection

IO Number & Name	IO3
IO Lead	GEA
Organisation	
Date	May 27 2020
Filled out by	Alice Bruni

### Process

How did the collaboration go with the partners throughout the process of producing this IO?

GEA has coordinated the development of the “Step Up Equality” online training application - IO3. Partners contributed by giving feedback in regard to the possible tools proposed by GEA after a first research that filtered the most feasible and adequate option. A simple “pros & cons” document evaluating main aspects of different tools was shared among partners, who all commented and contributed to the discussion. During TPM2 in Amsterdam, a final decision has been jointly taken by partners, confirmed after a couple of weeks. Once the tool was confirmed and active, partners all started testing it, creating profiles and starting testing functions and capacities of the app, also allowing a more effective analysis of what to improve before opening the access to project’s beneficiaries (athletes).

What did you learn from the process of working on this IO?

We have learned a lot about interesting online tools that can offer a mixed combination of functions to participants and also to partner organisations, that could be particularly interesting and useful in the upcoming post-pandemic period, where many activities will have to go online. We have learned a lot from partners’ feedback, and specifically useful was the exchange with a member of the staff of Fare to find out the most adequate and best cost-effective option. We definitely had confirmation that working in a group and cooperating with EU experienced partners brings an added value to our work.

Unfortunately, since the training activities will only take place online and the event SUE Camp won’t be transnational as planned, we weren’t able to use and populate the online community as much as we would have liked or we could if Covid19 did not stop all the grassroots sport activities, denying contacts and meetings with athletes and leaders to introduce the tool, but we will surely use it for other project. To prove this, we as coordinator have already used the online community to promote social and recreational activities for the group of young refugees that GEA works with: the online community, in fact, was used during the lockdown by our social worker referent for the social & educational activities with refugees to share with them educational resources and opportunities online during this hard period for them. She had attended some SUE activities, and therefore tested the tool, and understood that it could represent a good tool for this purpose too. So we definitely gained an added value from this activity.

### Successes

What was the biggest success in regard to this IO? Please explain why.

As mentioned, the process of joint decision shared among partners proved to have a positive impact on the final decision on the app, since partners' knowledge and shared analysis of elements enriched the final choice and allowed us to reach the most cost-effective tool. Also, the other use of the app in GEA’s activity of social inclusion of refugees, as mentioned above, it can be considered a success, proving that the tool, despite it could not fulfil its full potential in the

SUE project, due to the stop of grassroots sport activities caused by the pandemic, will be still use in other projects and activities that we run.

What advice would you give others to accomplish the same success?

Do not go for one option only when choosing online tools. There is an entire galaxy to check and evaluate, so a wide and joint evaluation among partners can bring unexpected better results.

## Challenges

What was the biggest challenge in regard to this IO? Please explain why.

The biggest challenge in regard to this IO was the engagement of participants in using the app without the possibility to meet and involve directly athletes and leaders, nor having international participants in the SUE Camp MSE1. Nevertheless, partners tried their best to engage some participants in the training sessions to allow a first test of this tool.

How would you recommend mitigating this challenge?

The main activities that we thought to ensure a direct engagement of one of the athletes (that we had identified already) as referent for animating a group of locals (team mates, coaches, etc) so that it would not be all on partner the task to ensure that people would actually connect and use the online community, but ensure some local support from direct involved girls. Definitely the impossibility of meeting athletes and potential users during the planned activities of training and events in person affected the effectiveness of this approach.

## Recommendations

What would you recommend to someone or an organisation, who would want to produce a similar IO?

Check online for free good tools before going directly to a “pay” option or a tailored app. There are already thousands of good products, it might be more effective to put time and work in testing them and choosing the most adequate for your project.