

SAFE

SAFE AND ACCOUNTABLE FUTSAL
ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN



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SAFE FINAL BROCHURE





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REGIONE LAZIO

SAFE partnership

LAZIOcrea S.p.A. (capofila)

Italy



Regione Lazio

Italy



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Executive summary

The present document – prepared within *Communication and Dissemination Activity (WP5)* – contains the main results achieved by the project through the comparison among the administration of Initial, Intermediate Final Tests and training submitted to different target groups of Futsal Clubs in order to facilitate its dissemination.

Finally, another important goal achieved by the project has been the realization of the "SAFE -POLICY MODEL UPDATED" that represents the most important final output of the project, updated and integrated following its validation.





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SAFE FINAL BROCHURE

Introduction to SAFE project

"SAFE - Safe and Accountable Futsal Environment for Children" project aims to code and standardize, in line with the EU "Keeping Children Safe" Standards, and test an innovative Model of Child Protection Policy applied to the sport sector, more specifically in the field of five-a-side football.

This sector, indeed, requires special attention to be paid: sport environment is particular susceptible because of the peculiar tightness of the relationship between coaches and children. This could imply a strong idealization of coaches by children (which invests coaches with enormous powers and corresponds to a greater vulnerability of children to unsuitable acts) and a potential physical proximity, functional to teaching of the specific sport activity but also needing to be regulated to keep children safe. Moreover, sport environments are often lacking in standardized safeguarding children procedures, and coaches are generally trained mainly in sport subjects, with the consequence that children may be victims of abuse (especially emotional) also in cases of good faith behaviours by staff members with good intentions but not properly trained. The lack of an adequate policy leads, thus, into leaving children safety to the possible specific personal preparation of each coach and, therefore, to fortuity.

The first EU legal instrument establishing minimum rules on the definition of offences and penalties in the area of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography was the European Child Sexual Abuse Directive (2011/93/EU), which covers the prevention, investigation and prosecution of offences, and the assistance and protection of victims. In addition to substantive and procedural criminal law, the directive also required member states to implement broad administrative (i.e., non-legislative) measures, such as the exchange of criminal records between member states through the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS) as part of pre-employment screening for positions involving direct and regular contact with children, or training for professionals who may come into contact with child victims of sexual abuse.

In Italy, the Italian Legislative Decree No. 39 of March 4, 2014, implementing the aforementioned directive, has been issued, so that employers who intend to employ a person to carry out professional activities or organized voluntary activities involving direct and regular contact with minors, will have to acquire the criminal record certificate, in order to verify the existence of convictions for any of the offenses that have to do with minors, or the imposition of disqualification sanctions for the exercise of activities involving direct and regular contact with minors.

In addition, Directive 2012/29/EU seeks to place the crime victim at the center of the criminal justice system, which traditionally tends to focus on the rights of the accused. The purpose of the directive is to strengthen the rights of victims of crime so that they have the same level of rights, regardless of where the crime occurred or the nationality of the victim. It defines procedural provisions such as the right to be heard, understood and understood, the right to receive information, express distress and access support services.





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In Italy, the decree implementing Directive 2012/29/EU integrates and restructures in a broad and organic way the framework of guarantees already provided by the legislator, taking an important step towards the recognition of a status of victim (and vulnerable victim) and towards the improvement of the forms of protection provided to them, inside and outside the criminal process. With Legislative Decree No. 212 of December 15, 2015, published in the Official Gazette No. 3 of January 5, 2016, Italy implements this directive on the rights, assistance and protection of crime victims. The European source establishes minimum standards to ensure adequate levels of protection and assistance to crime victims, both in the stages of access to and participation in criminal proceedings, and outside and independently of them.

Furthermore, within sport environments there may be the presence of children with intellectual disabilities, who are particularly vulnerable. Thus, the Model will be provided with a specific section with particularly targeted rules safeguarding rules for intellectual-disabled children.

Briefly, SAFE project aims (a) at developing, designing and testing an innovative Model of Child (6-18) Protection Policy applied to Futsal Clubs' environment, and (b) at forming their staff members.

LAZIOcrea S.p.A., Coordinator, will handle all management issues, Model's design activities and will take care of Futsal related issues.

Lazio Region will take care of promoting the Model at local, regional, national and European level.

SAFE Objectives are:

- ✓ Child (6-18) Safeguarding Policy Model applied to Futsal sector, designed and validated, for preventing child from being abused and/or harmed
- ✓ Sports organizations, relevant stakeholders and Public Institutions sensitized on the need for more effective child protection measures, offering a new replicable Model Activities
- ✓ Design and testing of the Model (including a special part tailored on intellectual-disabled children)
- ✓ Training of Futsal Clubs' staff members
- ✓ Dissemination, Advocacy and Networking activities

The overall work plan consists of the following five work packages:

WP1 – Management and Coordination of the Project

The aim of WP1 is to provide the internal project management and the overall coordination of activities with technical and financial planning and control, to achieve project's expected results effectively.

WP2 – Preparatory Activities and Design of the Model

The aim of WP2 is to focus on the preliminary activities to realize "SAFE-Policy" Model and to allow its implementation.





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WP 3 – Testing and Validation of the Model

The aim of WP3 is to apply and validate “SAFE-Policy” Model in Futsal Clubs and Special Teams through formative activities for Futsal teams’ staff and the Model testing.

WP4 – Networking and Advocacy

The aim of WP4 is to promote “SAFE-Policy” Model as a good practice to protect children from abuses within Futsal Organizations’ environments.

WP5 – Communication and Dissemination Activity

The aim of WP5 is to disseminate “SAFE-Policy” Model and project results in order to allow it to be replicated and to guarantee visibility to this significant initiative for children protection.





1 FINAL CHECK TESTS RESULTS

The SAFE project's final Check Tests have been administered to the various target groups involved in the project to find out their level of well-being before and after the training, in order to verify any improvements and changes produced by the activities carried out and measure the progress realized.

Below are the results obtained:

Staff Final Results

In the first block of questions, the highest result is found on the first question that scores the highest (very); this indicates that staff members recognize the importance of the topic presented. In the second block, 94% indicate that they have never had to deal with the abuse issues described by the project.

Finally, 88% indicate that the activities carried out have provided valuable support both in terms of the ordinary management of normal sports practice, and in organizing the daily activities of training among the players and improving the relationship with them.

Families Final Results

In the first block of questions, number 10 collects the highest result, highlighting how satisfied parents are of how the sports club addresses the issue of child abuse. This is also important because it appears that they have never had to deal with situations related or inherent to the risk of abuse addressed by the project (second block of questions number 12), in which they answer no to 100%.

The second block of questions also highlights the importance of intervening with rules of conduct in both categories 6-10 (50%) and 12-18 (50%).

Minor's Final Results

PMQ The TEAM motivation is the value that obtains the highest score 6,5; this indicates that the relational sphere is placed as primary. The choice of the phrase they liked the most also confirms this finding: number 2, **(I WANT TO BE WITH MY FRIENDS)**. Question number 2 is part of the AFFILIATED motivational category. The motivational category with lower value is STATUS / SUCCESS also confirmed by the choice of item number 21 **(I LIKE TO FEEL IMPORTANT)**.

Relationship with the coach

The most felt values with coaches are "RESPECT" and "ACCEPTANCE" respectively with average values of 4.6 and 4.5; the least felt values are DISGUST (1.1) and DISPREACTION (1.5).

Relazione con il Team

The most felt values are SAFETY (4.7) and SERENITY (4.6), while the least felt values are INSECURITY (1) and DISGUST (1).





2 COMPARATIVE DATA ANALYSIS OF ALL CHECK TESTS RESULTS

Final remarks Families Check tests

In the first block, the protection of children's rights in sports is considered an important issue by parents, in fact, in both administrations they answered "very much" to the first question. In the question number 9, in both administrations the values are on "very much"; they feel confident in entrusting their children to the respective schools of futsal. In question 10 there is an improvement from "quite" to "very" in the degree of satisfaction with the Club's participation in a project on this topic. In question 11 there is an increase in motivation from "enough" to "a lot" in continuing their children's participation activities at their soccer school. In the second block, question 13 shows an important difference: in the first administration, parents considered it more important to intervene with rules of behaviour in the 6-10 age group, while in the final administration equal importance was given to both categories 6-10 and 11-18.

Final remarks Minors (11-17)

Comparing the two tables it is possible to highlight how the first motivation has changed; from Motivation SKILLS to Motivation TEAM; the area of relationship is also confirmed by the higher position of the motivation AFFILIATION. Further confirmation of this can be seen in the choice of the "positive" item: from question number 1) "I WANT TO IMPROVE MY SKILLS" (SKILLS category) to question number 2) "I WANT TO BE WITH FRIENDS" (AFFILIATION category). It is possible to hypothesize that, due to the isolation related to the covid-19 health emergency, the participation of minors in 5-a-side soccer sports activities may improve the motivational factor of belonging to a team. Question 21) "I LIKE FEELING IMPORTANT," falling into the SUCCESS/STATE category, is confirmed as a "negative" item for both the initial and final control tests.

Final remarks Minors (6-11)

The children participated with a lot of interest. They expressed their thoughts about violence in sports. Their messages addressed the importance of play and fun.

Due to the health emergency Covid 19 the Intermediate Check tests have not been administered to the children (6-10).





Staff Final remarks

In the first block there is an improvement in "Question 3", where there is a change from "don't know" to "enough", indicating a perception of greater protection of child safety. Another interesting finding is in "Question 8," where the data indicates an improvement from "quite a bit" to "very much." This indicates an improvement in serenity between staff and players. Finally, in "Question 10" there is a gradual improvement (4.4-4.5-4.6), which could indicate an increasing level of satisfaction with the degree of attention paid to this issue during the project. It is also possible to highlight "Question 10" in which the scores between initial, intermediate and final has an increasing value; satisfaction with how the Club deals with the issue of child protection increases from the beginning to the end of the project. In the second block, "Question 14" is highlighted, in which personnel indicates that emotional abuse is the most frequent problem among those proposed; this statement is repeated for all three control test administrations.

3 EVALUATION TESTS FINAL RESULTS

Comparing the initial and final assessment test (before and after the training events), there is an improvement in knowledge on 9 questions (1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10). There are 4 responses where the percentage worsened (6,11,12,13). The best results in terms of improvement can be seen in question #1 (52%). The worst results in terms of decrease are in question 12 (23%). In 4 cases of the final administration the results reached the percentage of 100% correct answers (3,5,8,10). The psychological aspects of abuse were well learned, only question #6 had a slight percentage decrease (7%) due to some legal aspects not being clear even after the training.

This was due to the complexity of Italian laws and various difficulties due to online learning of this topic due to the pandemic emergency.

4 ASSESSMENT TESTS FINAL RESULTS

In general, after the training, all the teams of the six participating clubs have significantly improved the application of almost all the standards related to the procedures for the protection and safeguard of minors, including those with disabilities in sport, and have shown balance and homogeneity with respect to the four standards examined. It emerges that all Clubs have significantly improved the standard related to Procedures and Responsibility, very important aspects related to the regulation and protection of minors in sports following the training carried out by the legal expert. The scores of each team, in general, are homogeneous between the various standards applied, unlike the pre-training where they were very different from each other even within the same Clubs.





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5 TRAINING SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRES RESULTS

All staff responded that the strengths outweighed the weaknesses; the content of the training was considered overall to be useful for professional purposes, congruent with the initial objectives of the project, and applicable at a practical level in the workplace. The degree of staff involvement and interest in the project topics was high. The training portion was considered more than satisfactory and characterized by clarity of presentation and content.

In conclusion, the project was evaluated positively and the strengths outweighed any weaknesses. The topics covered were considered interesting and allowed staff members to enrich their knowledge and increase their communication and interpersonal skills with the children.

Overall, the initiative proved to be very useful and interesting for all clubs participating in the project in the future.

6 FINAL CONCLUSIONS ABOUT PROJECT RESULTS

This document has analyzed all the data that emerged during the course of the project. From the results available we can indicate that the perception of well-being and the perception of safety has improved. In particular, there has been an improvement in the following aspects: - knowledge of the topic of child abuse - perception of safety resulting from participation in the project - relationships between adults and minors - greater well-being in participating in sports activities.

Staff

Staff members gained extensive knowledge on the topic of child abuse of which they initially had little expertise related to personal experiences. They particularly recognized the topic of emotional abuse and bullying as a major recurring issue. Coaches' on-court behaviour has undergone some observable changes and there is an increase in feedback, particularly encouragement to their players. In addition, the number of rewards/reward has also increased. This could facilitate an increase in children's self-esteem. Coaches also acknowledged a lack of expertise on managing children with disabilities by requesting further study on this topic. Overall, staff members benefited from a model that allows them to anticipate and intervene on the issues under consideration.





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Parents

From the results that emerged from the data about the parents we can say that the parents stated from the beginning that they were very interested in the topics of the project and at the end of the experiment they felt very satisfied, we can also add that they are very interested and happy to have their children continue their activities in their current futsal academy.

Parents at the end of the project feel very safe and have finally understood the importance of protection from abuse in both age groups (6-10 and 11-18).

Players (Minors)

From the data that emerged from the brainstorming and testing we can say that the children (6-10) have participated in a collaborative and interested in the project, expressing their point of view on the theme of violence and aggression. For them it was useful to have the opportunity to express themselves. The players (11-18) who participated in the project had an improvement in the area of relationships and motivation. In particular, the main motivation has become that of the "Team" also supported by the increase in the value of "affiliation motivation". Initially the motivation was identified as "improvement of skills".

Limitations of the surveys conducted

The data collected from the cognitive surveys conducted have limitations related to the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 health emergency, in particular the restrictions and prohibitions on in-person meetings did not allow some of the activities originally planned for the project to take place, while others were conducted at different times than planned.

Some of the classroom trainings were replaced by online trainings and some tests were not administered, while others were administered at different times than planned.

The greatest difficulty was due to the impossibility of concluding the project during the same sports season as planned; in fact, for this reason, it was divided between the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 seasons, which is why a large number of participants had to interrupt their participation in the project.

7 RESULTS DERIVING FROM CONCRETE APPLICATION OF THE MODEL

Some important results emerged from concrete application of the Model: it is important to underline, in fact, that within sport environments there may be the presence of children with intellectual disabilities, who are particularly vulnerable.

After the administration of different typologies of tests to different target groups, what emerged was that it would be important to deepen a specific section with particularly targeted rules to safeguard for intellectual-disabled children; the **SAFE POLICY MODEL UPDATED**, in particular, dedicated a special section to the Autism Spectrum Disorder and Down Syndrome; in fact, cause of the delicacy and complexity of the topic, as expressed by the Managers and Instructors of the Teams participating in the project, it needed further





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investigation in order to provide Staff Members the appropriate tools to face the problem of Autism Spectrum Disorder and Down's Syndrome.

For the abovementioned reasons, in addition of offering minors a protected environment where they can benefit from sport and learn important values such as tolerance, fair play, social inclusion, another important result of the "SAFE-Project" was to ensure that anyone who interacts with minors in sport environment acquires the ability to deal with and know how to best face all the problems related to children with these disabilities and to better protect them in the interaction with other "normalized" children in sports.

