

ATHLETES4SOCIETY PROJECT

EMPOWERING THE PUBLIC VALUE OF SPORT THROUGH ATHLETES AS ROLE MODELS



RESULTS REPORT: INSPIRATIONAL PRACTICES

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WORK PACKAGE 3:
**DETECT, EVALUATE
AND SHARE
INSPIRATIONAL
PRACTICES**



RATIONALE

Sport policy research (e.g., De Rycke & De Bosscher, 2019; De Rycke & De Bosscher, 2021) demonstrates the societal impact that can flow from elite sport. De Rycke & De Bosscher (2019) developed the Mapping Elite Sports' potential Societal Impact (MESSI) framework that summarizes and maps the potential positive and negative impacts of elite sport on society into 10 categories: (1) Social equality and inclusion; (2) Collective identity and pride; (3) Ethics and fair play; (4) Feel good and passion; (5) Fans and (media) attraction; (6) International prestige and image; (7) Athletes' ability and quality of life; (8) Sport participation and health; (9) Sponsors and commercial activity; and (10) Local consumption and living conditions.

However, for sport organisations, it remains **difficult to develop successful practices or campaigns** that exploit the potential leveraging power of athletes for their sport and society (Grix & Carmichael, 2012; Taks et al., 2015). This relates to the **difficulty to identify 'what works'** in their particular context and how, when and to what extent certain mechanisms and conditions determine the sought-after societal impacts (Coalter, 2012; Mutter & Pawlowski, 2014). Moreover, there is a **clear need for inspiration and peer-learning** (Backer, 2001; Blumenthal, 2003). As such, the **Athletes4Society** project aims to **identify, investigate, and share inspirational practices of sport organisations** across Europe that actively put their athletes to good use in order to increase the positive and diminish the negative impacts of their sport.

To achieve this aim, this work package consists of three objectives:

- A. Detection of inspirational practices
- B. Evaluation of inspirational practices
- C. Sharing of inspirational practices

Figure 1: Athletes4Society overview



OBJECTIVE 1: IDENTIFICATION OF INSPIRATIONAL PRACTICES

RESEARCH QUESTION & AIM

The main aim of the first objective was to obtain an **overview** of athlete role model practices across Europe. Such an overview can inform sport organisations, athletes and political or public bodies about which areas could be prioritised to increase the overall public value of sport, both country-specific and on a European level.

METHOD

A template was developed that provided guidance for the project partners on the type of inspirational practices and characteristics that needed to be identified.

Based on a literature review, the UNESCO (2012) template for identifying programmes addressing education for sustainable development in early childhood was found suitable as a starting framework to develop our template. In order to align the starting framework with the objectives of the current study, an expert discussion with all project partners was set up and adaptations were made where necessary (e.g., the category 'educational / learning setting and level' was changed to 'athlete role model'). The final template included a variety of elements to adequately collect inspirational practices. The elements included: geographical coverage, actors & stakeholders, target beneficiaries, context, objective, methodological approach, athlete role model, results, impact, success factors, constraints, sustainability, replicability, testimony, related resources and contact details (see appendix A for a detailed example).

Using the template, the partners' collected **national and international inspirational practices**. In a first phase, project partners identified European practices within their respective countries. In the second phase other European countries were also considered, as well as practices outside Europe.

RESULTS

Overview of athlete role model practices

In total, **24 inspirational practices** were collected. Below you can find an overview of the main characteristics of the inspirational practices grouped by country as well as the overall main characteristics of the national and international inspirational practices. The scope of the project entailed that each partner, involved in this work package, identified at least 2 inspirational practices, preferably and if possible, in its own country. This implies that the aim was not to create an exhaustive list of inspirational practices, rather it aimed to explore key success factors of sport organisations using role models to create social impact.

Athlete role model practices across Belgium

In the first practice, the Jan Vertonghen Foundation uses the inspiring nature of elite sport to lighten up children's time in a hospital and to distract their attention from their illness. The foundation stimulates expression of children in hospitals, in multiple ways (e.g., in sports, arts or play). In the second practice, former athlete Thomas van der Plaetsen uses his experience of recovering from cancer and returning to elite sport to inspire other people who are recovering from illness.

ATHLETE ROLE MODEL PRACTICES ACROSS BELGIUM

Jan Vertonghen Foundation

Goal	The objective of the foundation is to give sick children in hospitals a chance to express themselves through themed activities (art, sport and play). The foundation helps them in their revalidation process and to have fun. In addition, they want to enhance sport participation among children in Belgium through the development of 'playgrounds'.
Target audience	(sick) children
MESSI Theme	Sport participation & health
Involved elite athlete	Jan Vertonghen (football player)
Range	Belgium
Success factors	The success of the project depends on the willingness from hospitals and cities/towns to participate and invest time in the project.
Website	https://janvertonghenfoundation.com/

Back on Track Fonds

Goal	The Back on Track Fonds wants to help (former) cancer patients in their revalidation process. The fund aims to give the (former) patients and their families access to a platform of experts who inspire, challenge and support them mentally, physically, socially and emotionally to realize their personal comeback.
Target audience	(former) cancer patients
MESSI Theme	Sport participation & health
Involved elite athlete	Thomas van der Plaetsen (decathlete)
Range	Belgium
Success factors	Success factors were not given by the organisation
Website	https://www.backontrackfoundation.com/

In general, the inspirational practices identified in Belgium both have a medical perspective, albeit in quite a different way. Both practices revolve around hospitals and diseases, but the practices are different in nature, and the role of the athlete is also quite different. In the first practice (the **Jan Vertonghen Foundation**), Jan Vertonghen represents the organisation, as he makes use of his international fame as a professional football player. The other practice (the **Back on Track Fonds**) fits the athlete like a glove, as Van der Plaetsen used sport as a means to (further) recover from illness.

Athlete role model practices across The Netherlands

The inspirational practices that were chosen for the Netherlands are examples of foundations of former athletes. In these foundations, there is a difference between the athletes that use their reputation for the good cause in a more general way and athletes that have a special connection with their target group. In the first case, the **Johan Cruyff Foundation** and the **Dirk Kuyt Foundation** use the personality of world-famous-footballers to promote physical activity amongst vulnerable groups. The Dirk Kuyt Foundation focuses on people with a disability. This is also partly the case in the Johan Cruyff Foundation, but this organisation is also well-known for establishing sports courts around the world.

The other organisations, the **Mentality Foundation**, **Bas van de Goor Foundation** and the **Edwin van der Sar Foundation** are built around a special connection of athletes with diseases. The foundations organise sport activities or facilitate information around diseases that they dealt with in their personal life.

All examples from the Netherlands profit from the reputation of the organisation that organises the practice. In the above examples, well-known athletes provide their name and fame to the organisation, helping the good cause. In the final example, **Football Memories**, the reputation of a professional football club (Willem II from Tilburg) seems to be a success factor in attracting beneficiaries. The project helps people who suffer from dementia or loneliness to relive football games from the past, stimulating their brain.

ATHLETE ROLE MODEL PRACTICES ACROSS THE NETHERLANDS

Bas van der Goor foundation

Goal	The objective of the project is to help people with diabetes to become more physically active by organizing certain events that promote sports, to give information about the positive effects of exercise and share information about how to combine physical activity with their condition.
Target audience	Diabetic patients who are not physically active enough
MESSI Theme	Sport participation & health
Involved elite athlete	Bas van der Goor (former volleyball player)
Range	The Netherlands
Success factors	A very visible role model
Website	https://www.bvdgf.org/

Johan Cruyff Foundation

Goal	The aim of the foundation is to help children all over the world to stay healthy and to work together to help them hold their own in this often complex society. The goal is to increase physical activity amongst children with disabilities or illness and to help them improve their quality of life.
Target audience	Young children with mental or physical disabilities or chronic illness
MESSI Theme	Social equality & inclusion ; Sport participation & health
Involved elite athlete	Johan Cruyff (former football player) initiated the programme. Besides, there are over 500 elite football players that have collaborated with the foundation.
Range	Spain, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Asia, North and South America, South-Africa
Success factors	The name of the role model (i.e., Johan Cruyff), a strong organisation, the sports of soccer and the willingness of many stakeholders to support the foundation.
Website	https://www.cruyff-foundation.org/

Edwin van der Sar Foundation

Goal	The aim of the foundation is to improve the life of patients suffering from brain injury through the positive impact of sports. They focus mainly on revalidation, prevention and participation. More concretely, the foundation guides patients to new jobs by having them helped by specialists. They have several projects to help people in revalidation and they work on prevention by launching a traffic education program and making them wear helmets.
Target audience	People with brain injuries
MESSI Theme	Sport participation & health
Involved elite athlete	Edwin van der Sar (former football player)
Range	The Netherlands ; United Kingdom

Mentality Foundation

Goal	The foundation aims to help people with disabilities towards sport participation by removing boundaries and promoting sports.
Target audience	People with disabilities
MESSI Theme	Sport participation & health
Involved elite athlete	Bibian Mentel (former para-snowboarding athlete)
Range	The Netherlands
Success factors	A very visible, strong and inspirational athlete in a time with very much attention for the Paralympic games and a very successful team performance.
Website	https://mentalityfoundation.org/

Giovanni van Bronckhorst Foundation

Goal	The goal of the foundation is to give children confidence and help them build their future through an education- and sports programme.
Target audience	School children between the age of 10 and 12 years old with learning disabilities.
MESSI Theme	Feel good & passion
Involved elite athlete	Giovanni van Bronckhorst (former football player)
Range	The Netherlands
Success factors	Success factors were not given by the organisation.
Website	https://vanbronckhorstfoundation.com/nl/giovanni-marieke-over-foundation

Football Memories

Goal	The project is aimed at bringing together former soccer players and elderly football fans who are often suffering from dementia at a soccer club to relive soccer games from the past. Their goal is to collectively recalling (shared) memories to address the loneliness that often accompanies dementia.
Target audience	(dementing) elderly
MESSI Theme	Social equality & inclusion ; Feel good & passion
Involved elite athlete	Former soccer players (no names were given)
Range	The Netherlands
Success factors	The look and feel of the clubs made it a very strong experience for the participants.
Website	https://www.footballmemories.nl/

Athlete role model practices across Finland

Both Finnish examples are directed towards improving sports itself. The projects both make use of athletes who are role models and icons. In the first project, **Älä riko urheilua** (Don't break the game) athletes are encouraged to speak out on the following topics: children's rights in sport, racism in all areas of sport, people with disabilities in sport, gender equality, sexual and gender minorities in sport, violence and harassment in all areas of sport, athletes' freedom of speech and opinion. The involvement of elite athletes is quite large: A diverse group of eight athletes serve as role models for the project. The second practice, **Seurasydän** (My Club, My heart) also makes use of well-known Finnish athletes. However, here they serve as icons to promote the power of sports rather than preserving the integrity of sports.

ATHLETE ROLE MODEL PRACTICES ACROSS FINLAND	
Don't break the game	
Goal	The "Don't break the game" campaign boldly highlights human rights issues in sport in Finland. We embolden and encourage sportspeople, fans, and the wider audience towards a better sporting world, where we can all play sports safely and as our true selves.
Target audience	Sportspeople, fans and the wider audience
MESSI Theme	Social equality & inclusion
Involved elite athlete	Finnish athletes (no names were given) with a diverse background who have previously worked for human rights.
Range	Finland
Success factors	The visibility of athletes.
Website	https://alarikourheilua.fi/en/
My club, My heart	
Goal	The aim of this organisation is to give public attention to the community building potential and social significance of sport clubs. Furthermore, the project aims at just giving praise to sport clubs and raising public appreciation of their function.
Target audience	Sport clubs as organisations and all the people involved (e.g., athletes, coaches, volunteers and administration)
MESSI Theme	No specific MESSI theme mentioned. The campaign highlights the sense of community and social significance of sport clubs.
Involved elite athlete	Finnish elite level and young talented, well-known athletes (no names were given)
Range	Finland
Success factors	The visibility of the athletes.
Website	No website available

In both examples, visibility of athletes is key. Media and social media are used as platforms for athletes to act as motivators. The first project seems to have a more active role for athletes, because they can speak out, making use of their own experiences. The second project sees the athletes take on a more non-active role, posting about their former amateur clubs.



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Athlete role model practices across Poland

Three of the five practices that were selected in Poland are publicity campaigns that use the societal position of Polish athletes to promote different objectives. The first campaign is an anti-doping campaign organised by **POLADA**, the Polish anti-doping organisation. Athletes play a role in promoting a running event. This event is aimed to raise awareness about doping in general society. An important societal issue in Poland is doping among amateurs, especially in fitness and bodybuilding. Challenging this issue is beyond direct POLADA tasks, nevertheless, the practice seems to be aimed also at this group. However, athletes (especially younger) might also be considered a beneficiary. The second practice uses professional athletes that are sponsored by the city of **Kielce** to promote that city. It's an example of using athletes for achieving success in city marketing and commercial objectives. The third campaign, **#SzczepiMysię** (We will vaccinate!) uses sports to reach other governmental objectives. However, this project is focused on a health perspective amidst the global pandemic.

The other Polish examples are practices that promote physical activity. **Mistrzynie w Szkołach** does so for young women. Athletes conduct classes in order to inspire and show value behind participation, and to show that sport participation might impact motivation, self-esteem and self-respect. **Kumulacja Aktywności** (Activity Accumulation) aims to challenge the physical inactivity crisis among adolescents by organizing attractive local sport practices coordinated and conducted by former high-level athletes and trainers.

ATHLETE ROLE MODEL PRACTICES ACROSS POLAND

Athletes involved in anti-doping education

Goal	The project is aimed to raise awareness about doping in general society.
Target audience	Recreational athletes and young elite athletes
MESSI Theme	Athletes' ability & quality of life
Involved elite athlete	Elite athletes from Poland (no names were given)
Range	Poland
Success factors	To ensure broad reach of the event it is important to have a diverse portfolio of athletes and ambassadors with a lot of followers on social media. Next, it is important to ensure that the ambassadors are actually into anti-doping and are willing to promote it.
Website	https://www.ceado.org/en/members/articleshow-polada-poland2

Activity accumulation

Goal	This project aims to boost physical activity among adolescents by offering interesting sport programmes with popular elite athletes involved. This could lead to benefits in terms of physical and mental health among citizens of Poland.
Target audience	Adolescents
MESSI Theme	Sport participation & health
Involved elite athlete	Former Polish athletes (no names were given)
Range	Poland
Success factors	The main factors leading to the development of the project are consistent funding, building recognition and bringing trainers/coaches attention to the project, and the ability to attract a decent number of quality applications.
Website	https://www.fundacjalotto.pl/kumulacjaaktywnosci/

Kielce Municipality

Goal	The objective of the project is to promote the city through marketing and building an international prestige status for Kielce. At the same time, athletes receive funding that can help them in their career and, in turn, promote local elite sport.
Target audience	City of Kielce and athletes hailing from Kielce.
MESSI Theme	Prestige & image
Involved elite athlete	Polish elite athletes (no names were given)
Range	Kielce municipality (i.e., a large city in Poland)
Success factors	It is important to have athletes with sufficient media reach and athletes with successes that allow for more media appearances. Another success factor is the willingness of athletes to engage in promotional activities.
Website	No website available

We will vaccinate

Goal	The goal is to increase the willingness to get vaccinated.
Target audience	Polish citizens
MESSI Theme	Sport participation & health
Involved elite athlete	Piotr Małachowski (former discus thrower), Paweł Fajdek (hammer thrower) and Maria Andrejczyk (track and field athlete)
Range	Poland
Success factors	It was important that involved athletes had to be recognised. Next, the general perception of the athlete, the trustworthiness of the athlete and the quality of the relationship between an athlete and their followers were important. Another success factor was that the campaign was wide-spread and reached several communities.
Website	gov.pl/szczepimysie

Master female athletes at schools

Goal	The project aims to increase the physical activity of girls by participation in gym classes organised by current and former elite female athletes.
Target audience	Polish female adolescents
MESSI Theme	Social equality & inclusion; Sport participation & health
Involved elite athlete	Current and former elite female athletes (e.g., Otylia Jędrzejczak – former swimmer)
Range	Poland
Success factors	Highly recognised female athletes with sufficient personal contacts.
Website	No website available



Athlete role model practices in other countries

To further broaden our insights in the key ingredients creating public value in elite sports successfully, we expanded our analysis to a number of good practices from all over the world. Within the European Union, the **#BeActive** campaign and the **No to racism** campaign are examples of substantial publicity campaigns, organized by big international organisations that feature well-known athletes. Another inspirational practice from the EU comes from the Estonian Olympic Committee and is called **Release the Tiger Within**. It is an annual event for young athletes from Estonia (age between 14-20). In the event, elite athletes are involved at the inspiration day to inspire their younger counterparts and to inform them about eating disorders.

Outside the EU, practices in the classroom inspire youngsters to perform better in schools or to develop life skills. The **My Olympic Friend** programme in Guatemala brings Guatemalan athletes face-to-face with youth in schools to inspire and motivate them. It is an Olympic Education programme where athletes are used as mentors in schools. The project **Classroom Champions** serves in North America, where it contributes to motivation and the development of skills. Former athletes are brought into the classroom to mentor and to inspire young people.

In Canada, the Canadian Paralympic Committee has developed a social media campaign to inspire children with disabilities to get involved in sports. The **It's more than sport** campaign features paralympic athletes in short video commercials where they show their skills and encourage youth with disabilities to discover their own capacities in sports.

Finally, two projects in the UK and Australia promote the inclusion of women and girls in sports. **#GETONSIDE** is a project in which knowledge and expertise are shared by the Women in Football organisation, with the objective to support and encourage more women to get involved across all levels of football. The **#Changeourgame** project in Australia promotes and advocates for more female involvement in leadership roles in sports and to fight against the societal problem of stereotyping and traditional gender roles within the world of sports. In both projects women with an established position in sports serve as role models and ambassadors.

ATHLETE ROLE MODEL PRACTICES IN OTHER COUNTRIES	
Scaled Mentorship	
Goal	The objective is to inspire and motivate young people to believe in themselves and develop social, academical, and emotional skills that are 'necessary' to thrive and succeed.
Target audience	Students between the age of 5 and 14 years old
MESSI Theme	Social equality & inclusion
Involved elite athlete	Olympian and Paralympian athletes from North America (e.g. Brigette Lacquette – ice hockey player ; Sophia Herzog – Paralympic swimmer ; Christian Taylor - track and field athlete)
Range	North America
Success factors	Success factors were not given by the organisation.
Website	https://www.classroomchampions.org/impact
My Olympic friend	
Goal	The main objective of the program is to tackle the high crime rates and sedentary levels among the Guatemalan youth. The project aims to share and inspire students to be better people and seek a better world using sport through the voice of the athlete, providing support and mentoring throughout the school year.
Target audience	Guatemalan school students
MESSI Theme	Ethics & fair play ; Sport participation & health
Involved elite athlete	Guatemalan athletes
Range	Guatemala
Success factors	It was important to have a signed agreement between the Guatemalan Olympic Committee and the Ministry of Education in Guatemala. Next, it was essential to present the program to the regional directors that are in charge of several schools. Other success factors were that the program runs with very little budget which makes it very replicable in other NOCs and the use of athletes were kids look up to.
Website	No website available

Be active	
Goal	The campaign tries to raise awareness about the unhealthy effects of inactivity, creating a social culture that values sport and physical activity more and to change people's activity behaviours.
Target audience	Society from the European Union and the participating countries from Eastern Europe
MESSI Theme	Sport participation & health
Involved elite athlete	Athletes from all over Europe (e.g. Olympians, Paralympians, record-breaking athletes, national icons)
Range	European Union and some Eastern European Countries
Success factors	Success factors were: having clear communication between all the partners and ambassadors to make sure the objectives are clear, everyone needs to promote the campaign in the most effective, to reach the most people possible and sufficient social media coverage and technology.
Website	https://sport.ec.europa.eu/initiatives/beactive-awards

It's more than sport	
Goal	The aim of the campaign is to encourage children with disabilities to play sports and encourage them to believe in their own abilities.
Target audience	Children with disabilities
MESSI Theme	Social equality & inclusion ; Sport participation & health
Involved elite athlete	Paralympic athletes (no names were given)
Range	Canada
Success factors	No success factors were given by the organisation.
Website	https://paralympic.ca/

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Range	Canada
Success factors	No success factors were given by the organisation.
Website	https://paralympic.ca/



No to racism	
Goal	The objective of the campaign is combat racism in football by using several communication tools to express anti-racism statements.
Target audience	Football players, football fans, football clubs, national federations members of UEFA, UEFA, and sponsors.
MESSI Theme	Social equality & inclusion
Involved elite athlete	Elite football players from teams that are part of the top UEFA's competitions (e.g., Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi)
Range	European Union
Success factors	Football clubs engage their fans to be actively part of this campaign by motivating and inspiring them to participate in creative and passionate ways.
Website	https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/sustainability/activities/0254-0d7efc2ee434-29566ecc-d8a0-1000--uefa-says-no-to-racism/
Change our game	
Goal	The objective of the programme is to promote and advocate more female involvement in leadership roles in sports and to fight against the societal problem of stereotyping and traditional gender rolls within the world of sports.
Target audience	Teams from AFL Women's League, Women's Big Bash League, Women's National Basketball League and Victorians in general.
MESSI Theme	Social equality & inclusion
Involved elite athlete	Women athletes from many Australian sport teams (e.g. Emma Carney – Triathlon ; Madeleine Hogan – paralympian ; Mel Jones – cricketer)
Range	Australia
Success factors	The sport clubs engages their fans to be actively part of this campaign by motivating and inspire them to participate in creative and passionate ways.
Website	https://changeourgame.vic.gov.au/
Get on side	
Goal	The goal of the campaign is to tackle gender discrimination, the lack of female representation in all levels of football and the negative attitudes against females in (high) positions in the football industry.
Target audience	The football industry in the United Kingdom and all women connected to it
MESSI Theme	Social equality & inclusion
Involved elite athlete	Athletes from United Kingdom football clubs (no specific names were given)
Range	United Kingdom
Success factors	The football clubs should be able to engage their fans to be actively part of this campaign by motivating and inspiring them to participate in creative and passionate ways.
Website	https://www.womeninfootball.co.uk/get-onside/get-onside/
Release the tiger within	
Goal	The project aims to educate young athletes through exemplary elite athletes about the off-field and on-field challenges they may face in their careers and to help them develop skills to handle these challenges with success.
Target audience	Young athletes from Estonia between 14 and 20 years old
MESSI Theme	Athletes ability & quality of life
Involved elite athlete	Estonian athletes (e.g. Allar Raja – rower, Epp Mae - wrestler, Robert Rooba – hockey player)
Range	Estonia
Success factors	Equal distribution between boys and girls who are participating
Website	https://www.anocolympic.org/noc-highlights/estonian-olympic-committee-hosted-the-annual-tiger-training-for-young-athletes/



Overarching analysis

Objective

Overall, a number of key themes can be identified among the identified inspirational practices. First, a number of practices that combine **sport and health** can be identified. There is indeed greater awareness regarding the role of sport and physical education in promoting education and health awareness (Beutler, 2008). Sport can be used as a means to overcome a disease, or sport plays a role facilitating special services or delivering information to people who have to deal with illness. Athletes who have a special connection with a disease (e.g., if they have overcome that illness or are related to someone who deals with that disease) are committed to improve the quality of life of patients or former patients.

The second category of practices contains athletes or sport organisations that have committed themselves to **promoting physical activity and sports**. The inspirational nature of seeing or experiencing elite sport is being used here to convince people to get more active. Indeed, literature on sports policy indicates that elite athletes can be an inspiration and motivation for people to develop an active lifestyle (De Rycke & De Bosscher, 2019). Examples of this category include the Dutch foundations in which (former) athletes provide sport opportunities or sport facilities.

The third category is concerned with practices that are aimed at **improving the sports world itself**. Some practices are committed to promoting integrity in sports, aimed at themes as match fixing or doping, as corruption and the use of performance enhancing drugs are still a widespread problem within the world of (elite) sport (Bojsen-Møller & Christiansen, 2010; Frenger et al., 2019; Schneider & Hong, 2007). Furthermore, the sports world is still predominantly male dominated (Eime et al., 2022). Other practices in this category aim to address this by promoting the participation of women in sport, both in sport participation as well as in leadership positions.

In the fourth and final category elite athletes are committed to economic or marketing objectives. Their image and reputation are used to promote economic development. Sport policy literature refers to a 'showcase effect', as countries use sport to gain international recognition and prestige (De Rycke & De Bosscher, 2019; Jennings, 2013; Merkel, 2013). The Polish Kielce project is a good example of this category.

Success factors

An important success factor in most of the practices is the athlete him or herself. According to our data analysis, it seems that athletes act often as the face of their organisation, which enables the organisation to raise funds or to cooperate with other organisations. A different way in which the athlete can play an important role is when athletes have a great number of followers on social media.

Another success factor which was regularly cited, is support from national or local authorities. Contrary to the examples where the operational capacity and the legitimacy are secured by the organisation itself, the projects are backed by authorities. Some projects bring governmental and sporting objectives together, for example to preserve the integrity of sports (e.g., anti-doping).

Constraints

The most important constraint that organisations or athletes face in their projects is the fact that the objective of their programme or organisation is not always shared by the (direct) environment. This could be the case because the topic is a niche (e.g., brain injury, Edwin van der Sar Foundation). Moreover, it can be difficult to pursue people of the programme's goal because reaching a positive impact for a wider societal problem might be complex (e.g., UEFA's No to racism campaign). For instance, social desirability may withheld people from supporting the campaign or a proportion of the population feel that the campaign or goal does not apply to them (e.g., when there is a campaign around fair play, the population might assume that the campaign is only aimed at the athletes). Another form of this constraint is the fact that sometimes the objectives are hard to share with enough beneficiaries. Some projects require, for instance, applications from beneficiary projects or enough visitors to an event.

Another possible constraint is the opposite of the first success factor. If the athlete does not show enough commitment (e.g., shares little about the project on his/her social media) or is not trustworthy on a specific topic, the project is less likely to succeed. It is therefore important that the expectations of elite athletes and the organisation are sufficiently aligned. Organisations thus need to ensure an optimal fit between the athlete and the programme's aim.

Finally, some organisations struggle to collect resources. This constraint could be connected to the first constraint, where organisations struggle to convince others regarding their societal objective. Otherwise, projects in an early stage also sometimes struggle to find the right resources to upscale the project.

OBJECTIVE 2: EVALUATION OF INSPIRATIONAL PRACTICES

RESEARCH QUESTION & AIM

The aim of this second objective was to explore the underlying programme logic of the identified inspiring practices. As similar mechanisms were expected to occur in several practices, the goal was to develop a generic programme logic and guidelines.

METHOD

The identified European inspirational practices were evaluated using a **grounded theorizing** approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This approach involves an **inductive** process as well as a **deductive** approach: 'At the heart of theorizing lies the interplay of making inductions (deriving concepts, their properties, and dimensions from data) and deductions (hypothesizing about the relationships between concepts)' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.22).

Inductive approach

An **inductive approach** was carried out to gain a deeper understanding of possible patterns, categories or themes the inspirational practices entailed (Patton, 2015). Concretely, **template analysis**, a flexible method that involves the identification of conceptual themes that are clustered into broader grouping, was used to further analyse the data (King, 2004; Symon & Cassell, 2012).

Deductive approach

Once patterns, categories or themes emerged using inductive template analysis, the second phase of the analysis was approached deductively to examine **the underlying programme logic** (Patton, 2015). Deductive research involves the development of a theory, model or framework from an existing theory or framework which can then be tested through the collection of data (Gratton & Jones, 2004). Hence, as similar mechanisms are expected to occur in the identified athlete role model practices, this process aimed to **develop a global programme logic and guidelines** using two theoretical frameworks were combined: (a) a logic model and (b) the public value triangle (Moore, 1995; 2013).

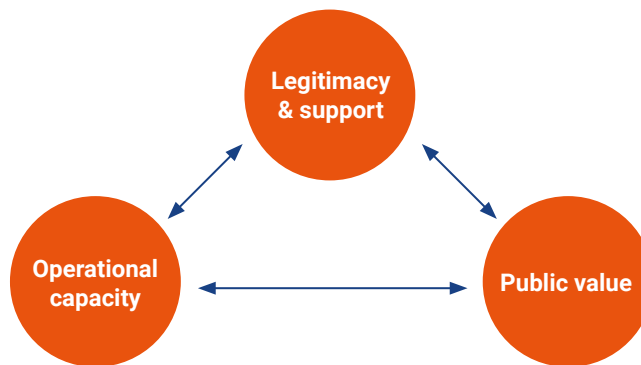
The use of a logic model was chosen as it allows clarifying programme goals and objective, helping stakeholders and programme staff see how programme inputs will lead to the overall strategic objective (Chen et al., 2013). Furthermore, logic models are useful for visually illustrating the logical flow of the programme, which helps linking the theory to practice (Alter & Murty, 1997) and increasing the common understanding of the concepts and approaches adopted (Chen et al., 2013).

Furthermore the public value triangle is used, as it is a simple strategic concept to guide and discipline value creating management (Moore, 2021). Meynhardt (2009) indicates that "public value promises a more realistic perspective for current public sector challenges" (p.194). Moreover, the public value triangle seems to be valuable as it helps programmes who are highly dynamic (i.e., programmes that regularly change) as well as very heterogeneous (i.e., programmes that have different and unique expectations and challenges) (Moore, 2021).

The public value triangle

The public value triangle (see figure 2) shows that public value is created when a programme, policy or campaign has: (a) **legitimacy** (e.g., the community supports it), (b) the **support of the authorizing environment** (e.g., actors/management within elite sport) and (c) **operational capacity** (e.g., role model) to implement the strategy or action effectively. Those three strategic components provide a tool to assess organisations capacity for change as well as an outline for leading the strategic change (Weinberg & Marsha, 2009). The lines in the triangle represent a **feedback system**. Concretely, when public value is created, so is greater legitimacy and support (e.g., citizens and elected officials have greater trust in the government), and the operational capacity is increased (e.g., financial and other resources could be easier to obtain). It is found that a **strong programme has a clear balanced triangle** (Weinberg & Marsha, 2009).

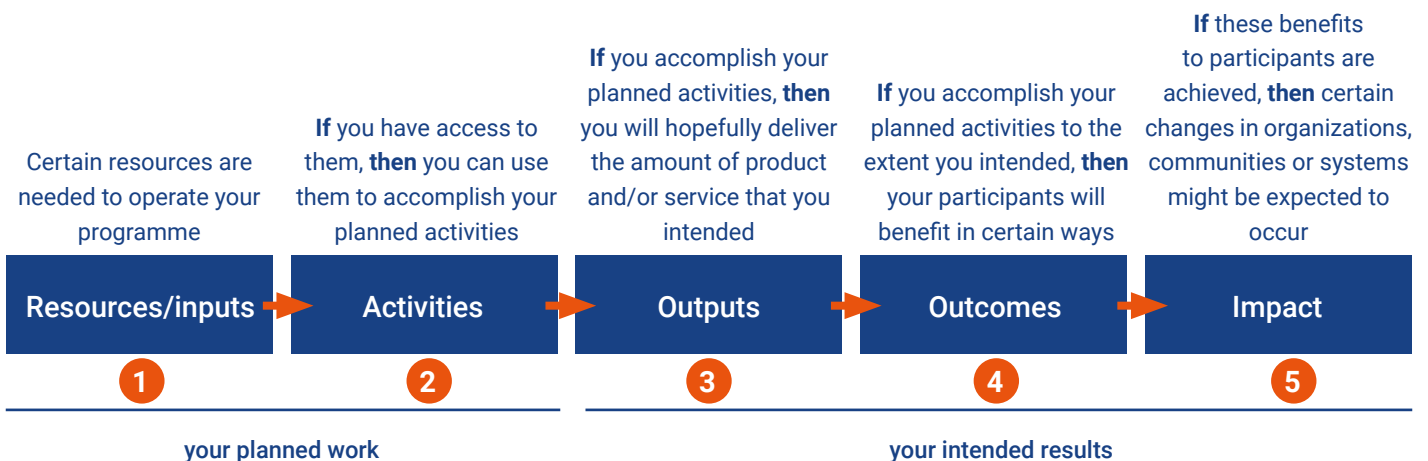
Figure 2
Public value triangle



A logic model

A logic model (see figure 3, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004) is a "graphic representation of a programme that describes the programme's essential components and expected accomplishments and conveys the logical relationship between these components and their outcomes" (Conrad et al., 1999, p.18). In other words, a logic model is a more formalised way for organisations to structure their programme, policy and/or campaigns. Logic model theories can often be captured in a series of "if-then" statements; 'if' something is done with or for the programme participants, 'then' something should change. Chen and colleagues (2013) indicate that there are six elements required to make a logic model: (a) the context or the environment (i.e., the size and nature of the problem), (b) input or resources (i.e., the financial, human and organisational resources), (c) activities or throughputs (i.e., the kind of actions which have been taken by (policy) implementers, (d) outputs (i.e., the direct and immediate results of inputs and activities), (e) outcomes (i.e., subsequent short-term and long-term changes in behaviour triggered by delivering the programme), and (f) impact (i.e., the broader intended and unintended changes which occur in organisations as a consequence of the programme).

Figure 3
A Simple Logic Model





RESULTS

Inductive analysis: Practices targeting direct impact vs. practices targeting awareness raising.

The inductive analysis showed that a distinction between the inspirational practices can be made based on the role an elite athlete adopts within the programme or practice: (a) **inspirational practices targeting direct impact** (i.e., the elite athlete is the initiator and plays a critical role in setting up/developing the practice. The elite athlete outlines the initiative. For example, the athlete goes out to encourage others and serves as a role model in person) and (b) **inspirational practices targeting awareness raising** (i.e., the elite athlete is used by the programme to achieve their goal. The athlete is a resource, rather than the initiator. The elite athlete has no influence on the core, design and development of the programme. The organisation outlines the initiative. For example, the athletes' images are being used for societal objectives).

Depending on whether a programme targets direct impact or awareness raising, the programme differs according to **origin, target beneficiaries, role model** (i.e., on what characteristics was the athlete chosen as a role model for the project), **management** and **impact** of the project. Table 1 provides a detailed overview of how the two types of athlete role model practices differ.

Table 1
Inductive approach of the inspirational practices

	Practices targeting direct impact	Examples	Practices targeting awareness raising	Examples
Origin	Start from an idea or interest of the athlete. The athlete is actively engaged in the implementation of the practice. Often a narrow and specific subject (at least at first).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity accumulation • Back on track foundation • Jan Vertonghen foundation 	Start from an idea of an organisation. Athlete is used as a medium. Often a larger societal problem/subject.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't break the game • My club, My heart • Athletes involved in antidoping education
Target beneficiaries	Smaller and more select group of people often with specific characteristics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bas van der Goor foundation 	Larger group of people, they try to represent a segment of society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kielce Municipality
Role model	Athletes are namely chosen based upon knowledge and leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dirk Kuyt Foundaton 	Athletes are namely chosen based upon popularity and following.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will vaccinate
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athlete is actively engaged in the day-to-day management • High level of commitment from the athlete • Specific goals and programmes/ events • Impact will result out of actions/ events/... • Higher level of funding necessary (definitely if they intend to grow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edwin van der Sar Foundation • Johan Cruyff Foundation • Mentelity Foundation • Giovanni van Bronckhorts foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletes' role is to spread a certain message, to be an ambassador • Lower level of commitment from the athlete • Impact will result out of messages on social media/ media/charisma of the athlete/... • Effect is expected due to popularity of the athlete • Lower level of funding possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master female athletes at schools • Football Memories • Be active • It's more than sport • No to racism • Change our game
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on an individual level • Easier to measure due to smaller group of participants • Before and after studies are possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaled Mentorship • My Olympic friend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on a societal level • Difficult to determine the definition of impact and how to measure this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get on side • Release the tiger within

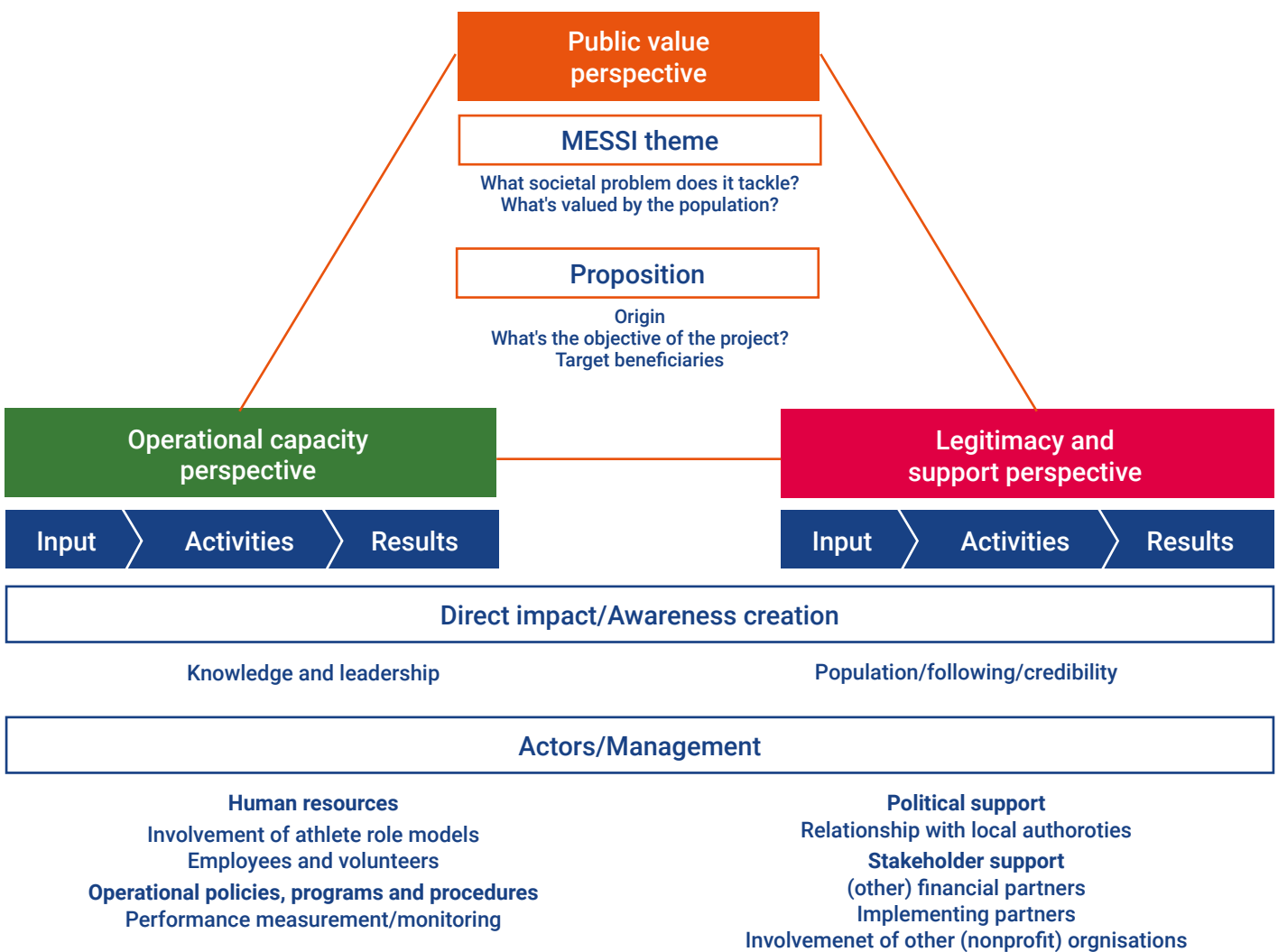
An example of an **inspirational practice targeting direct impact** is the 'Back on Track Fund'. The origin of the programme started from the interest of the athlete himself. Namely, in 2014 Belgian decathlete Thomas Van der Plaetsen was diagnosed with testicular cancer. Although the verdict hit hard, the goal was very clear: To be back on the track as soon as possible and resume life as an elite athlete. From that experience, Thomas wants to help other (former) cancer patients in their revalidation process. In order to achieve this goal, he founded the Back on Track Foundation. Thus, the subject of his foundation is narrow and specific as it relates to revalidation after cancer diagnoses. This programme therefore targets a small and more select group of people with specific characteristics, namely (former) cancer patients. Within this example, the athlete is chosen upon his knowledge. Thomas himself has experienced what it was like to be confronted with a cancer diagnosis and how to overcome this disease. Thomas is actively engaged in his foundation, and he shows a high level of commitment. He watches over the philosophy and vision of the foundation and is responsible for the photo and video content as well as design and multimedia. The foundation has specific goals and events planned, such as talks regarding mindfulness and chronic pain. The fund aims to give as many (former) cancer patients and their families as possible access to a platform of experts (e.g., Björn Prins (psychology), Filip Beyaert (exercise), Wim Van Hove (sport and mindfulness)). Furthermore, they organised a 'back on track challenge' where cancer patients will take on the challenge of walking, running, or cycling themselves back into shape, alone or with a buddy. As it targets (former) cancer patients, this athlete role model programme mainly has an impact on an individual level. Therefore, it is easier to measure the impact of the programme on the patient's life.

An example of an **inspirational practice targeting awareness raising** includes the 'We Will Vaccinate!' campaign. Due to relatively low vaccination rates against Covid-19 in Poland, the Polish government launched a campaign to increase the willingness to get vaccinated. The campaign thus started from an idea of an organisation and relates to a larger societal problem. The Polish government reached out to Polish athletes as trusted personalities, who are considered the medium to convey the message. The campaign is aimed at a larger group of people, in this case Polish society and in particular people seeking information about vaccination and people who are unsure about vaccination. The latter represent a segment of society. The Polish athletes are chosen based upon their popularity as they are widely recognized, have a positive image, and are strongly connected with their fans (such as spectating, following their content on social media and watching their media appearances). The athletes are ambassadors who promoted the campaign by sharing it on their own social media, participating in outdoor campaigns, informing the public that they were vaccinated, or simply enabling the use of their image. The impact of this campaign is challenging to examine because no causal link can be established (i.e., it is not clear if people get vaccinated because of the campaign or for other reasons).

Deductive analysis: The Athletes4Society framework

Based on our deductive analysis, using the two theoretical frameworks, we developed an **underlying programme logic model** with the aim to achieve societal impact. The logic model highlights causal relations between the inputs, activities, outcomes, and impact (Chen et al., 2013). This model identifies potential problems that could emerge in the programme, provides a rationale for a project, and helps in selecting the most relevant strategies and activities (Chen et al., 2013). The framework is seen as the **Athletes4Society framework** (see figure 4) which helps organisations to build effective practices, policies or campaigns with societal impact and public value. The Athletes4Society framework, that is based on Mark Moore's (1995; 2013) public value triangle and a logic model, can help athletes and sport organisations to live up to the societal expectations surrounding elite sport.

Figure 4
The Athletes4Society framework



Public value, operational capacity, and legitimacy & support

In the Athletes4Society framework, sport organisations and elite athletes are encouraged to think of their societal project as being a **public value** proposition, paying attention to three perspectives: Public value perspective, operational capacity perspective, and legitimacy & support perspective. According to Van der Roest and Dijk (2021) these perspectives can be seen as tests that any societal project should pass: First, the organisation should focus on something substantively valuable. The MESSI framework (De Rycke et al., 2019; De Rycke & De Bosscher, 2019, 2021) can assist organisations in determining what contribution to society the project should make. When the societal problem is determined and the theme for the societal project has been chosen, the proposition can be developed. The proposition can be compared to the development of a business case for public purposes.

Second, sport organisations should make sure that their **operational capacity** is sufficiently equipped for creating public value. First, they need to control enough resources to deliver the value. This can either be accomplished by making use of the organisation's own resources or by cooperating with public and private partners. Van der Roest & Dijk (2021) note that the sports sector has a lengthy history of cooperation between these sectors.

Within the framework, human resources play a pivotal role. The athlete role model or the supporting organisation must possess enough knowledge and vision on the societal challenge they want to tackle. Second, the organisation should ensure that the (human) resources are deployed thoughtfully. Ideally, the operational policies, practices and procedures are well-designed and well-described. Next, they need to monitor their activities and results and make them public. This can help organisations in strengthening their legitimacy and support.

The possibly most important corner of the framework is '**legitimacy and support**'. An important assumption in the theory of Moore (1995; 2013) is the assumption that legitimacy and support is not guaranteed when organisations have an appealing idea to create public value. Instead, organisations should actively seek authorization and support for their proposition (Van der Roest & Dijk, 2021). It is therefore of great importance that the athlete or athletes within the societal project are credible in their role and that they have some form of popularity or following. Yet, it is of equal importance that the organisation ensures the support of political stakeholders and other stakeholders. It goes without saying that athletes can play an important role in finding stakeholder support as well.

The distinction between input, activities and results in the legitimacy & support perspective might not be as clear as it is in the operational capacity perspective. Yet, it seems sensible to come up with a plan for ensuring legitimacy and support: Who does the organisation deploy to convince political and financial stakeholders of its good cause (input)? What activities are needed to manage the support of different kinds of stakeholders? And what are the intended results of these efforts? Again, organisations that are to develop a public value proposition and want to create public value using the power of elite sport need to plan, document, and evaluate their work.

What societal problem do we want to tackle?

First, sport organisations should map all the potential values that their sport could have. The MESSI-framework can assist in inspiring them in the potential values. It is important to be as broad as possible in this stage, as different values can be values differently by different audiences.

Second, survey results can guide the sport organisation to what values are seen as important in their specific country. For example, if concerns about doping use by elite athletes have been raised among the population, societal projects on this theme can become relevant. If survey results show the potential impact of economic growth by elite sports (for example organizing large events), this could also be a consideration. The first and second step together thus form the societal **need**. The European, as well as national results of our survey on values which are seen as important can be consulted [here](#).

What is a good proposition?

As was shown, the Athletes4Society framework consists of three perspectives to which sport organisations should pay attention when they are to develop societal projects that use the power of elite sports. In short, the framework shows that any societal project in elite sport should be “valuable, authorized and do-able” (Turbitt, 2013, p.3). The framework pays attention to the elements that should be considered by manager within the authorizing environment and operational capacity perspectives. Yet, the question to be answered is what can be seen as valuable.

To answer this question, Moore (1995) introduced the idea of the **public value proposition**: The idea of the private sector ‘business-case’ used for public purposes. In the Athletes4Society framework, we use the idea of the proposition to encourage sport organisations to think about the different values that elite sport can have for multiple audiences. This is important, because “intrinsically, elite sport is neither beneficial nor harmful” (De Rycke & De Bosscher, 2019, p. 486). If sport organisations are about to use elite sport for making societal impact, they thus need to be very explicit about what value they want to enlarge. In doing so, sport organisations should be encouraged to be creative and to think ‘outside the box’, as “current elite sport policy documents tend to be focused on the same relatively narrow range of impacts (most often there are references to the stimulation of community sport participation and national pride or economic impacts” (De Rycke & De Bosscher, 2019, p. 487).

There are a few steps to be taken for sport organisations to develop a good public value proposition:

Preparing the proposition

It is crucial to understand the **possible unique selling points** that the sport organisation can deliver. For example, a national athletics federation has different values to offer than a foundation that was initiated by a professional basketball player. Again, survey results can assist sport organisations in the potential meaning that their sport or athlete has for the population. Based on this, the organisation can describe what they have to **offer** to society.

Building the proposition

Now it is time to finally build the proposition. All the previous steps should be considered when the proposition is defined. This means that the proposition should describe how the project fulfils the needs of (specific target beneficiaries in) society, and in what way the sport organisation aims to do this. The proposition thus has different elements:

- (1) A description of the identified societal need
- (2) A description of the way the project answers to that societal need
- (3) The target beneficiaries that are intended to profit from the project
- (4) The ways in which these target beneficiaries will profit from the project

Testing the proposition

The proposition should be tested among different audiences. It should be noted that this is not to be done in a one-off brainstorm session, but it is rather a reiterative process in which the idea for a societal project should be tested among different audiences to see what suits them best. As Van der Roest & Dijk (2021) have shown, the proposition can have different meanings and different value for different audiences. It is up to the sport organisation to present the proposition in such a way that it fits the needs of the respective audience. For example, in the article by Van der Roest and Dijk (2021) the sport organisation in question was able to fit the needs of the political audience by underlining possibilities to broaden personal development opportunities in the region, while they presented their offer to sport clubs as better opportunities for talent development. What can be taken from this example is that the proposition needs to be clear and recognizable, yet flexible.



OBJECTIVE 3: SHARING OF INSPIRATIONAL PRACTICES

RESEARCH QUESTION & AIM

The aim of the third objective is to widely disseminate inspirational athlete role model practices in order to **stimulate knowledge and creativity** across elite athletes, sport federations and sport organisations. With this process we also aim to expand the **international learning networks** and support athletes, sport federations and sport organisations in building their own programme or campaign generating public value through (elite) sport.




METHOD

The relevant outputs (e.g., research findings, inspirational practices) of the Athletes4Society project are widely shared in different formats, using multiple dissemination channels: (a) the Athletes4Society website, (b) the Athletes4Society LinkedIn, and (c) the Athletes4Society Instagram. Moreover, to enhance the dissemination process, all output deliverables are also widely disseminated across the communication channels of the Athletes4Society partners.

Each dissemination channel has its own specific purpose. Complete reports (e.g. [population survey report](#), [athletes and federations survey report](#)) can be accessed on the Athletes4Society website. Furthermore, the LinkedIn page is used to share and highlight the most striking results of the reports through infographics. In this manner, people are informed about the important results, in a way that is not time-consuming. Although the Instagram page shares posts about new reports, the purpose is rather to inspire. In addition, research results and other outputs of the project are presented at national and international conferences as well as they are implemented in practical tools (e.g. the Athletes4Society toolkit).

Kinetic Analysis is responsible for building and managing the Athletes4Society website, as they have relevant expertise on this area and because their team includes graphical and software designers that are capable in designing visuals and an appealing, interactive online platform. However, there is an open call to all project partners, including the project coordinator (i.e., Vrije Universiteit Brussel) to provide relevant content.

General A4S channels

	Athletes4Society website	https://www.athletes4society.eu
	Athletes4Society Instagram	@athletes4society
	Athletes4Society LinkedIn	/company/athletes4society

Athletes4Society website

All intellectual output deliverables are accessible via the Athletes4Society interactive online platform (i.e., Athletes4Society website). The website contains more information about the project and the Athletes4Society consortium, reports, and newsletters.



Athletes4Society LinkedIn

The LinkedIn page is mainly used to disseminate the scientific output of the project. Amongst other things, the results of our surveys (i.e., population survey and athletes & federation survey) are published using infographics. Furthermore, the LinkedIn page is used to promote upcoming events.



Info

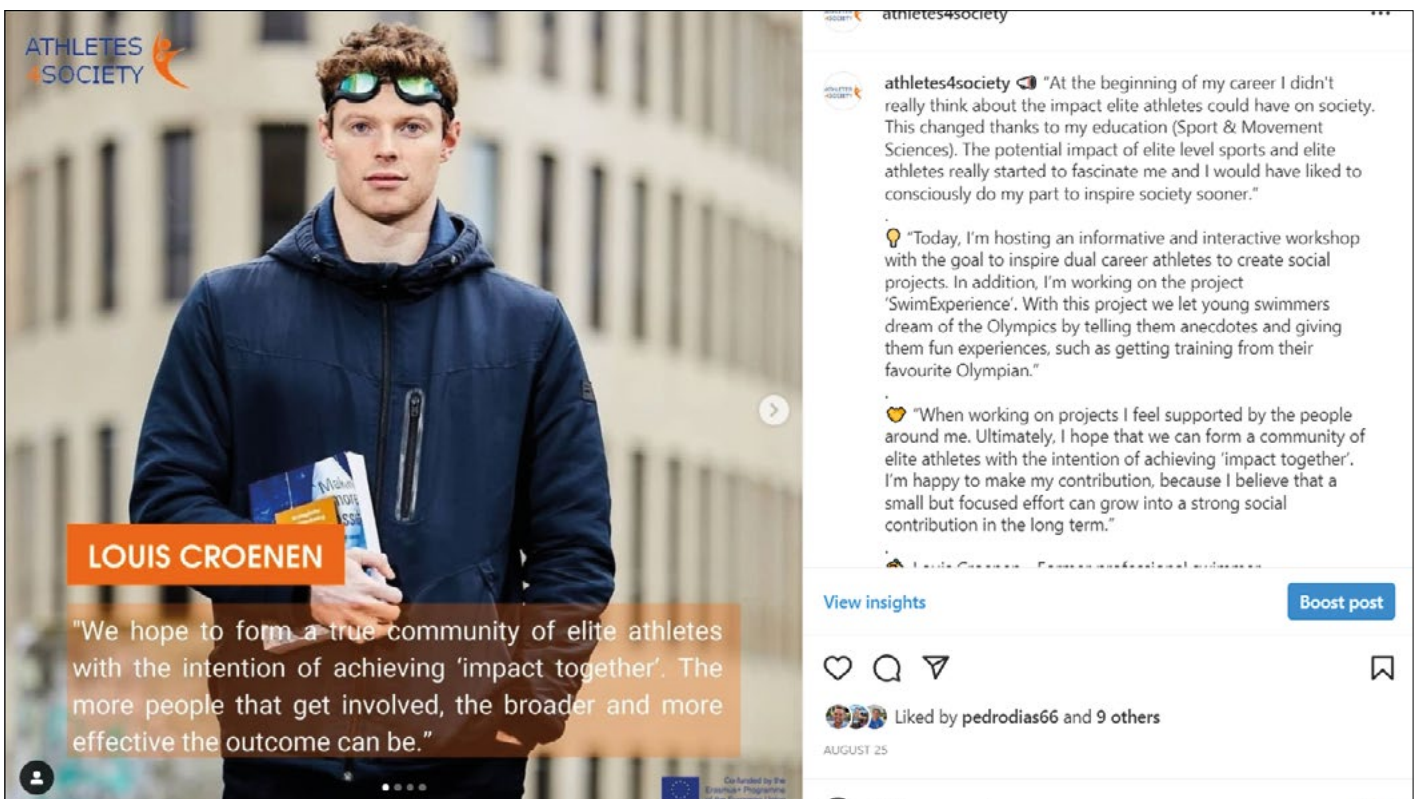
The objective of the ATHLETES 4 SOCIETY project is to inspire, support and stimulate sports organisations to increase the public value of sport. Specifically, by empowering sports organisations to develop policies, campaigns or programmes that successfully put elite athletes to good use towards positive societal impact. Hence, the running title

Athletes4Society Instagram

An inspirational **Instagram feed** was created with the aim to disseminate inspirational practices of athletes and federations across Europe. The main objective of the Instagram page is to create an inspirational page rather than a scientific/academic page. Although the main focus is on the dissemination of the inspirational practices, it also contains post about events worldwide (e.g., world mental health day, pride month) and events within the project (e.g., team meetings, conferences).

To collect the inspirational practices, an email template (see Appendix B) was created to address the athletes, sport federations or sport organisations in Europe. Specifically, the following 3 questions were asked: (a) Why do you want to have an impact on society?, (b) How do you create an impact?, and (c) Do you feel supported by your environment? Based on the answers given on the questions an Instagram post was written. Before posting the inspirational practice on our Instagram page, a preview of the post was given so that the athlete or sport federation/sport organisation representative had the change to provide feedback if necessary. After confirmation, the inspirational practice was posted on the Instagram page. Besides, it was asked to send some pictures of the programme and to repost the Instagram post of the inspirational practice on their own Instagram story to create greater visibility for both parties. To collect as many as European practices as possible, all partners widely promoted the mail through their networks, within their own country or beyond, aiming to reach out to a diverse and wide community of relevant athletes, sport federations and sport organisations.

Do you want to inspire to? We are still looking for inspirational practices to share on our social media. Please contact us (athletes4society@vub.be) if you want to share information regarding your practice by answering the questions above. Thank you!



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APPENDIX



APPENDIX A: TEMPLATE FOR IDENTIFICATION OF INSPIRATIONAL PRACTICES

Title [Short title to describe the practice]	
Date [Month and year]	Organiser [Name, organisation, email]
Element	Guiding questions
 Geographical coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In which country and/or region the good practice has been implemented and replicated?
 Actors and Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who are the financial partners? Who are the implementing partners?
 Target beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who are the target beneficiaries (direct, indirect) of the practice? How many are they?
 Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was the initial situation/ specific context? What are the specific challenges the practice is trying to address?
 Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the aim/objective of the good practice? (e.g. situate on the MESSI framework)
 Methodological approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the methodological approach step-by-step so that it can be easily understood and replicated by others (listed as bullet points, if relevant) Specify time frame and implementation cost (if available) Describe how the approach has been participatory and inclusive
 Athlete role model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the specifications and personal characteristics of the athlete role model used? Specify what role did the athlete play? To what extend was the athlete actively involved with the practice?
 Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the results/ outputs of this practice? This section reflects the level of evidence of your practice, so results should be presented clearly and, if possible, supported by data (with sources).
 Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the impact (positive and negative) of this practice on the beneficiaries? (e.g. what dimension of the MESSI framework) How was it monitored and evaluated?
 Success factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were/are the conditions (institutional, economic, social and environmental) needed for the practice to be successful?
 Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What constraints/challenges were encountered when implementing the practice? How were they addressed?
 Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent the practice is sustainable? (e.g., institutionally, socially, economically and environmentally)? What are the key elements to put in place for the practice to be sustainable?
 Replicability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has this practice been replicated, in the same context? In different contexts? What are the required conditions to replicate and adapt the practice in another context/geographical area?
 Testimony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect stakeholders' testimony and use this anecdotal evidence of a man or a woman to show the benefit of the practice (with name and dates).
 Related resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of sources and links about the practice (pictures, video, websites, etc.)
 Contact details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person to be contacted for more information (name, email).

APPENDIX B: DO YOU WANT TO INSPIRE TO?

Do you want to inspire others or give your inspirational practice more visibility? Then join our **Athletes4Society community**. Fill in the template below and provide it to us (athletes4society@vub.be) if you wish to be included as a good practice on our website and Instagram page!

Dear XXX,

For our research project Athletes4Society, **we are looking for inspirational sports practices and athletes to feature on our project's Instagram**. In our search we came across your *practice/organisation*. Do you want to inspire others, create more awareness for your project and contribute to creating an societal impact, read on!

What is Athletes4Society?

The objective of the Athletes4Society project is to inspire, support and stimulate sports organisations to increase the public value of sport. Specifically, by empowering sport organisations to develop policies/campaigns/programmes that successfully put athletes to good use towards positive societal impact. Hence, the running title of the project is: "Empowering the Public Value of Sport through Athletes as Role Models".

The Athletes4Society project is coordinated by the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium) and has 8 partners: (1) Utrecht University (the Netherlands), (2) Institute for Sport Governance (Poland), (3) Sport Evolution Alliance (Portugal), (4) Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen (the Netherlands), (5) Czech Olympic Committee / Czech Coaches Academy (Czechia), (6) KIHU – Research Institute for Olympic Sports (Finland), (7) Kinetic Analysis (the Netherlands), (8) Bilendi SA (France).

The project is supported by Erasmus+, an initiative of the European Commission.

How can you help us?

We want to actively support the dissemination of inspirational practices by creating an Instagram feed where people, athletes and sport organisations can learn from and be inspired by peers. How can you contribute?

- 1. Send us a picture/some pictures of yourself in context of your project**
- 2. Tell us about your project by answering the following three questions:**
 - a. Why do you want to have an impact on society?**
 - b. How do you create an impact?**
 - c. Do you feel supported by your environment?**
- 3. Repost the Instagram post on your inspirational practice on your own Instagram story.**

Your picture will be placed on the Instagram feed of Athletes4Society with a text based on your answers on the three questions. Before posting the Instagram post, we will send you a preview of the post and you can provide feedback if necessary. After your agreement, we will post your inspirational practice on our project's Instagram. To create greater visibility for both parties, we ask you to repost the post on your own Instagram story.

If you want more information, do not hesitate to contact us.
We would like to thank you in advance!

Sincerely,