

<b>Programme's name:</b>	<b>A local sports project for young offenders in Copenhagen</b>
<u>Organisation / Country:</u>	Social Services Administration, City of Copenhagen, Denmark
<u>Website:</u>	n. a.
<u>Contact:</u>	<a href="mailto:policy@esn-eu.org">policy@esn-eu.org</a>
<u>Summary:</u>	<p><b>Context:</b>          In the Municipality of Copenhagen, the social services administration took the lead in establishing the sport project (SP) specifically targeting young offenders. It was designed as a project to increase the participation of disconnected young people in society, notably by offering diversionary routes away from risky and/or criminal behaviour.</p> <p><b>Target group:</b>          The young people involved with the programme may be involved with risky or criminal behaviour. Examples of these kinds of behaviour are alcohol consumption or drug trading. Some of them have criminal records and might have been sentenced in the past.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b>          At its core, SP seeks to provide positive social and emotional experiences through sports activities. This happens through jointly undertaking sports activities, be that in peer groups or in individual training sessions with professionals. Some young people have only little experience in participating in formal sports frameworks and have difficulties coping with the social and emotional demands of intense group activities. SP offers diverse sports activities on a weekly basis.</p> <p>Coaches assume key roles in the project. Some of the coaches are volunteers or (former) participants of the project. The project is open to people from the community. In particular, young people's family members are encouraged to become involved. Involving family members is seen as positive in terms of developing healthier and closer family relationships.</p> <p><b>Pathways during and after the project:</b>          In the course of the young people's involvement, they grow more and more into the project and develop closer relationships with other young people, the volunteers, and the professionals.</p> <p>The project can lead disconnected young people to become engaged with other forms of volunteering, for example, to assist older people in care homes or young people with disabilities.</p>

<p><u>Issues:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The young people are engaged through sport. the young people's family and friends are encouraged to participate in the sports activities and, through that, create a stronger relationship to the young person. Ordinary citizens of Copenhagen are also invited into the project as volunteer coaches or as participants in the different sports activities</li> <li>• SP involves some young people with severe criminal records, which makes the work particularly challenging.</li> <li>• The project invests significant effort into pursuing public and private donors to continue the funding of the project.</li> <li>• It is difficult to measure the preventative value of SP, which hinders the evaluation of the project.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Resources:</u></p>	<p>Varied groups are involved with SP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• volunteers,</li> <li>• social workers,</li> <li>• young people.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Objectives:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening young people's social skills</li> <li>• Increasing young people's health, well-being and quality of life</li> <li>• Improving their relationships with parents, family members, and friends by including them in the sports activities</li> <li>• Including young people in society through participation in organised sports, e.g., in sports associations, clubs and training centres</li> <li>• Educating young people to assume active roles in the projects (e.g., coaches, referee, mentors)</li> </ul>
<p><u>Outcomes:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SP has engaged 791 young people, including their network, in sports and other leisure activities</li> <li>• Young people strengthen their social skills, and 83 per cent of the training takes place outside the young people's institution, e.g., in a sports club or gym.</li> <li>• SP has increased young people's health, well-being and quality of life and has held 26,867 training sessions with young people.</li> <li>• 38 per cent of young people have been established in an ordinary sports club or fitness centre.</li> <li>• 47 per cent of the 791 young people who have been part of the project currently coach other young vulnerable people</li> <li>• 24 young people have received an education as an instructor themselves.</li> </ul>

Evaluation:

In 2014, SP was evaluated in 2014 by the University of Aarhus after four years of implementation. The evaluation tools were:

- surveys, youth and volunteers;
- interviews, both individual and group-based;
- observations.

A quantitative report included figures about the young people's participation rate. These figures underlined satisfactory participation rates from the youth involved. It can be concluded that sports activities can be a successful tool to integrate disconnected young people into society and to achieve individual behavioural change for a target group, an otherwise difficult process.