



# Social Inclusion Games 2018

Evaluation of the meaning and social impact

Contactgegevens

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# 1 Introduction

From 9 July until 4 August 2018, the Social Inclusion Games took place in Enschede, the Netherlands. In total, 1711 participants, from 7 different European countries took part in the event. Besides this, 200 professionals, 130 volunteers, and 23 local sports clubs were present to support the participants. According to the project description of the Social Inclusion Games (Erasmus+ proposal), the project objectives of the Social Inclusion Games the Netherlands (SIGN), were two-folded:

*“1. To successfully organise the European Social Inclusion Games in which more than 1,500 socially marginalized people from more than 15 European countries will come to The Netherlands in the summer of 2018 and get empowered and facilitated in their re-integration into society by means of physical enhancement activities and sports.*

*2. By bringing together Social Inclusion Professionals and other staff and volunteers of the sending organisations, the project also aims to promote sports as an effective instrument of rehabilitation, re-integration and empowerment of socially marginalized people back at a national/local level. As such, it envisages promoting sports and other physical enhancement activities at a national and local level in the rehabilitation, re-integration and empowerment of socially marginalized people.”*

The SIGN project team specifically targeted these goals. Not only by focussing on organizing a successful edition of the Games, but also by organizing additional activities and workshops to realise and contribute to societal aims including enhancing sports activities among socially vulnerable groups. In that way, the Social Inclusion Games aimed to promote sports as an effective instrument of rehabilitation, re-integration and empowerment of socially marginalized people.

This report is the result of the monitoring and evaluation study conducted among the different target groups of the Social Inclusion Games. The target groups included participants (also referred to as ‘socially marginalized people’), professionals (social workers and policy makers), volunteers, local sports clubs, and the project team that was in charge of organizing the event. The monitoring and evaluation study focussed on how these different target groups experienced the Games, in order to get an indication of the social impact of the Games.

Central questions included: What impact did the Social Inclusion Games have in terms of contribution to the personal lives of participants? What impact did the Games have in terms of a further belief in the power of sports for socially marginalized people? Did the Games trigger specific plans or intentions to integrate sport more into the daily life’s of clients?

Investigating the social impact of a sports event such as the Social Inclusion Games, contributes to more knowledge on the meaning and power of sport for people in socially marginalized positions, and to advocate for the inclusion of sports in the day-to-day program of organizations working with socially marginalized

people. Furthermore, insight into the experiences of the different target groups may benefit the organizers of the future Social Inclusion Games, especially the Berlin 2020 edition.

This report shows the results of several questionnaires that were set out among the different target groups, during and after the SIG. These quantitative results are illustrated by information and quotes from interviews held during (and after) the SIG. See attachment 1 for a short overview of the respondents and data collection methods used.

In chapter 2 we present some general characteristics of the different target groups of the SIG. Chapter 3 zooms in on the sports participation characteristics of the target group 'participants' (socially marginalized people who have participated in the SIG). The fourth chapter describes how the different target groups rated the SIG. Chapter five focuses on the social impact of the SIG. Chapter 6 focusses on the 'legacy' of the SIG. In chapter 7 we look at bottlenecks and opportunities and tips for social inclusion professionals to further promote sports activities among socially marginalized people. In chapter 8 we conclude with a few tops and tips for the local organizing committee(s) of future editions of the Social Inclusion Games.

## 2 Who has joined the Social Inclusion Games 2018?

### 2.1 General description of target groups and respondents

- In total, 1711 participants joined the Social Inclusion Games in Enschede, about 200 more than the local organizing committee had estimated. In total, 7 countries were represented.
- Based on the questionnaire responses, age ranges of participants varied from 18-24 (27%), 25-34% (16%), and 35-44 years old (32%). A small group (almost 13%) was older than 55. All professionals were between 25 and 54 years old.
- Most participants who filled in the questionnaire came from the Netherlands (30%), and also Denmark and Germany were very well represented. Other countries that were present with a team included Scotland, UK, and Lithuania. The majority of professionals came from the Netherlands (67%), Denmark, and the UK.
- In general, more men than women participated (in all target groups).

Table 1. Personal characteristics of the different target groups

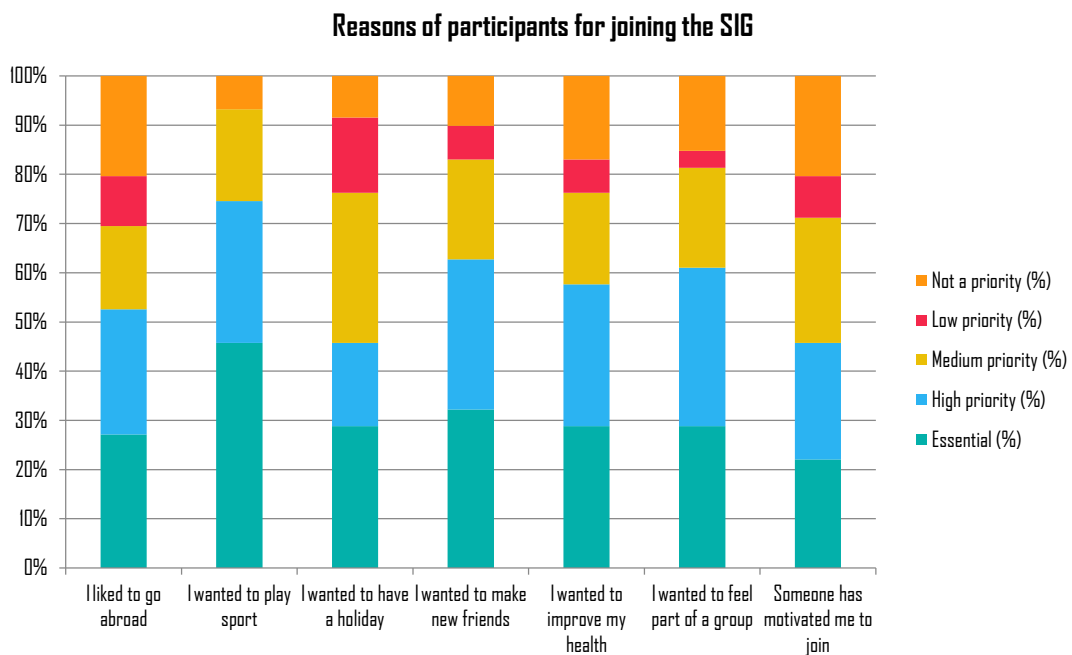
	Participants (%) (N=63)	Professionals (%) (N=15)	Volunteers (%) (N=37)	Sports clubs (%) (N=9)
<b>Age</b>				
<18	0	0	5	0
18-24	27	0	11	11
25-34	16	33	22	33
35-44	32	33	8	11
45-54	13	33	24	0
55-64	8	0	19	22
> 65	5	0	11	22
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	65	53	57	78
Female	36	47	43	22

- All participants came to the games with an organization that works with socially vulnerable people. Professionals of organizations such as Humanitas Onder Dak and Leger des Heils (the Netherlands) and organizations such as LVS, GEBEWO, NEUE Chance, Diaconie (Germany), Caritas, RIBW, The Rock Trust, DePaul UK, etc., signed in.
- Almost half of the participants (48%) had participated in the SIG or a similar event before. For the majority of the professionals (67%) this was the first time they joined the SIG or a likewise event.

## 2.2 Reasons for signing up for the Social Inclusion Games

Why did people sign up for the Social Inclusion Games? Most participants had several reasons for signing up. The top 5 reasons mentioned were:

- 1 To play sport (75%)
- 2 To make new friends (63%)
- 3 To feel part of a group (61%)
- 4 To improve my health (58%)
- 5 Liked to go abroad (53%)



Most professionals (87%) joined SIG to make it possible for marginalized people to participate in a sports event. Others signed up because they wanted to gain knowledge about sports and inclusion (20%) and/or to meet new people (13%).

*"I joined the Social Inclusion Games and wanted to promote sports activities, in order to gain understanding that socially marginalized people can participate in sports too." (A professional.)*

Most volunteers wanted to volunteer during the SIG because they wanted to do something meaningful for others in a disadvantaged position (84%), to meet other people (41%), and/or to learn new skills (32%).

Sports clubs signed in for the SIG in order to do something meaningful for other people (33%), or to get more publicity for their sports (33%).

*“We joined the Social Inclusion Games because it’s so special to see how happy people are with these kind of small things. If our contribution gains something for our club then that is just a nice extra, not a purpose.” (A sports club representative.)*

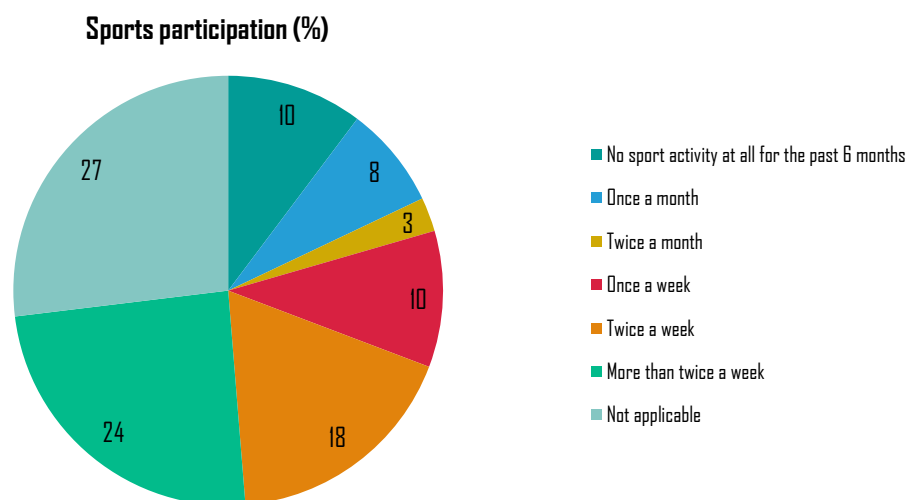


# 3 Sports and socially marginalized people

## 3.1 Sports participation among socially marginalized people

In the survey, we asked the participants questions about their actual sports participation in day to day life: if they liked to engage in sports activities, what their motives and barriers are regarding sports participation, and if they are aware of their daily amount of physical activity.

- Most participants (56%) liked sports (very) much. However, there was also a group of respondents who answered 'neutral' (17%), or not so much/not at all (6%). Another 20% answered 'not applicable'<sup>1</sup>.
- Most participants did participate in a sport back home, during the past 6 months. At least 53% participated at least once a week in a sport. Of the participants, 10% did not participate in any sport (and another 27% answered 'not applicable').



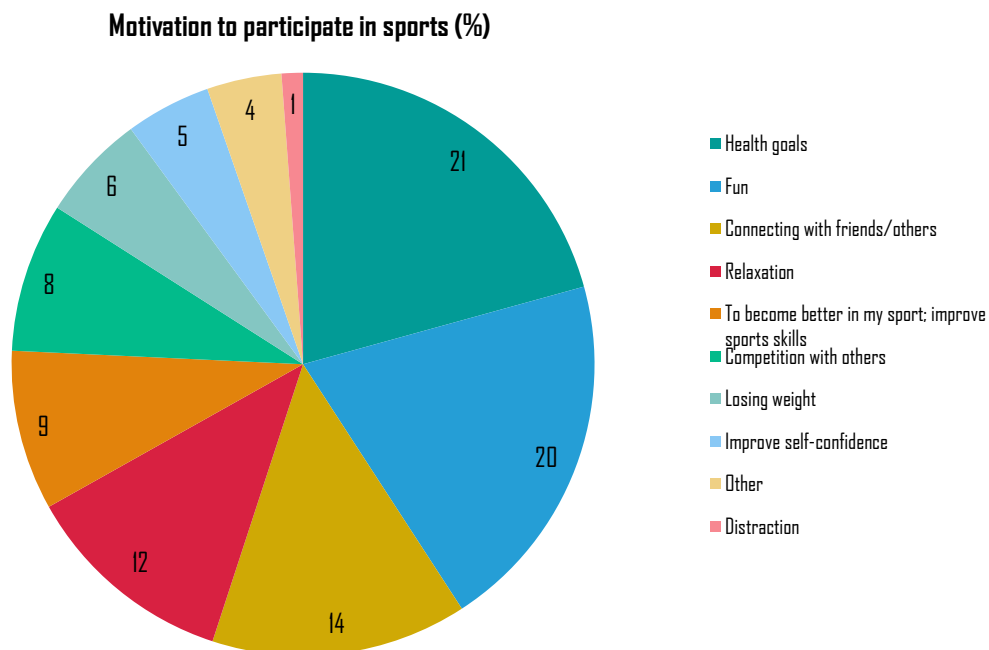
- Popular sports among the participants (back home) were: 1) football (22%), running (17%) and fitness/gym (14%).
- Most participants participate in sports with friends (43%), 25% participate individually, 21% with other members in a group lesson and almost 5% with his/her social worker. Sport locations most frequently visited are the public space (33%), the gym (23%), or other official sports facilities (20%).
- A small but significant group of participants is hindered by their physical (16%) and/or mental (13%) health and is therefore not able to participate in (regular) sports activities. Another 21% of the participants reported to be mentally hindered to participate in sports sometimes, but is able to join regular sports activities. The majority of participants is not hindered at all physically (68%) and mentally (60%) and can participate in sports.

<sup>1</sup> It is not sure if they answered this because they do not participate in sports at all.

## 3.2 Motives and barriers for sports participation

The main goals of participants to participate in sports are:

- 1 Health goals (20%)
- 2 Fun (20%)
- 3 Connecting with friends/others (14%)
- 4 Relaxation (12%)
- 5 To become better in my sport; to improve sports skills (9%)



- Most respondents are satisfied with their amount/frequency of sports participation back home (64%), whereas 28% would like to practice more frequently, and 8% do not practice regularly but would like to start practicing sports regularly.
- Reasons why participants would like to participate more frequently or start with practising regularly included: to feel better/to clear my head, for health/healthy lifestyle, to meet other people, to lose weight, to have a better chance to get work, to recover from injury, for distraction and to integrate or to learn the language.
- Most participants experience barriers to participate in sports to some extent. Barriers mentioned most frequently were the related to costs. For 30% this makes participation in sports hard/impossible, and for another 54% costs sometimes are a barrier. Lack of time was for 44% of the participants 'sometimes' a barrier, but makes participation for 23% hard or impossible.
- To get an impression of the daily physical activity/exercise rates (other than sports) of participants we asked how many minutes one exercises (walking/cycling) during a day. Most participants answered they exercised 30-60 minutes (46%), and 22% was active more than 60 minutes a day.

In contrast, 32% was less than half an hour physically active during a day, which is below the guidelines for physical activity during a day. These figures show that many participants have difficulties to reach the 'norms' of healthy physical activity and are less physically active than average in Europe.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization (2018). Factsheet physical activity: <http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity>.

# 4 General evaluation of the Social Inclusion Games

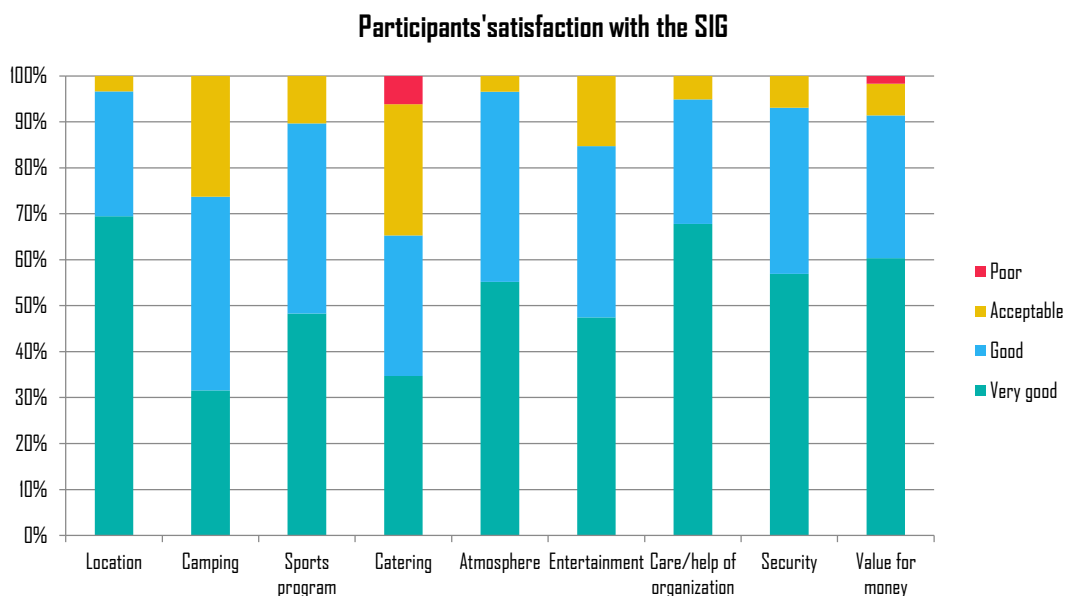
## Games

In general, the SIG have been rated very positively by all groups of attendants. Both participants and volunteers rated the SIG with an 8.6 (out of 10), and professionals and sports clubs rated the SIG with an 8.5 (out of 10). The majority of attendants are willing to participate in the next Social Inclusion Games: 93% of participants and 87% of professionals.

### Participants

In general, participants were very satisfied with various aspects of the SIG. Especially the location (70%), the care and helpfulness of the organization (68%), and the value for money (59%) were rated very positively (with 'very good'). Aspects that were rated rather low included catering (29% evaluated this with 'acceptable' or 'poor'), and camping (25% answered 'acceptable').

*"The Social Inclusion Games were a great experience for the young people that came with me and a good opportunity for them to learn so many different skills. It was a very worthwhile experience. The Social Inclusion Games has been amazing. The staff and organisers have been so helpful and friendly, they were a great team." (A participant).*



## Professionals

For almost all professionals the SIG were (more or less) what they expected it should be like (93% definitely or tended to agree). Most professionals got satisfaction from participating in the SIG, for instance because of helping others (60%) and seeing the results (40%). The majority of the professionals experienced that the SIG gave a sense of personal achievement (60%), it gave chances to learn new skills (60%), and it gave them even more belief in the power of sports for socially vulnerable people (60%).

Professionals were satisfied with different aspects than the participants. Most professionals were highly satisfied with the design/decoration of the event (83%), the security (67%) and the competence of the volunteers (60%). They were less positive about the catering (27% evaluated this aspect as 'poor', and another 27% as 'acceptable'), and the provision of information beforehand (7% evaluated this aspect as 'poor', and 20% as 'acceptable').



Professionals who responded to the questionnaire a few weeks after the SIG especially rated the atmosphere (100%), the care and helpfulness of the organization (86%), the location (71%), the competence of the volunteers (71%) and the entertainment (71%) very highly.

*"It is not winning that matters but having fun!" (A professional.)*

## Volunteers

In general, volunteers were very satisfied about the SIG and their contribution to the Games. Of the volunteers, 97% was very satisfied or satisfied. They especially were very satisfied about the support they got from the staff.

Most volunteers got satisfaction out of helping others (73%), and by seeing the results (65%). Most volunteers (68%) are (even) more satisfied about the positive influence of sports on people in a socially vulnerable position. In addition, for the majority of volunteers the work did not meet their expectations fully, based on the information they received beforehand (38%).

## Sports clubs

Sports clubs were positive and satisfied as well about the SIG and their contribution to it. Sports clubs representatives liked the way everybody was involved in the event (89%), and found themselves to be useful (89%). Most respondents from sports clubs found that their sport was suitable for people in socially vulnerable positions (78%).

# 5 Meaning and social impact of the Social Inclusion Games

## Inclusion Games

This chapter discusses the personal meaning and experiences of each of the target groups regarding the Social Inclusion Games. (5.1). In addition, it focusses on indications of (social) impact of the Games during the event (5.2), and after the event (5.3).

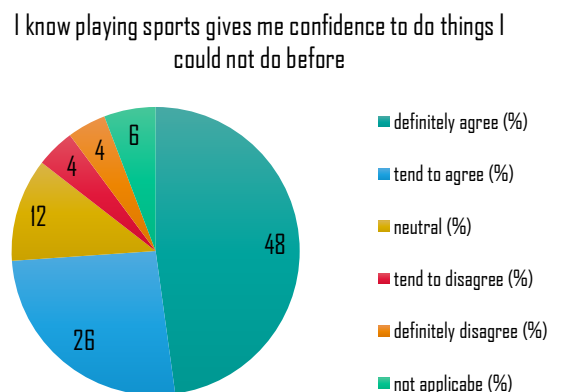
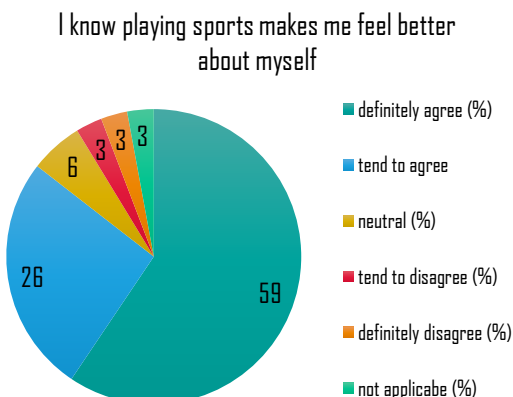
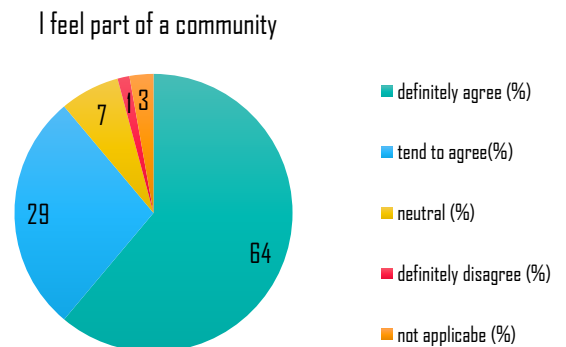
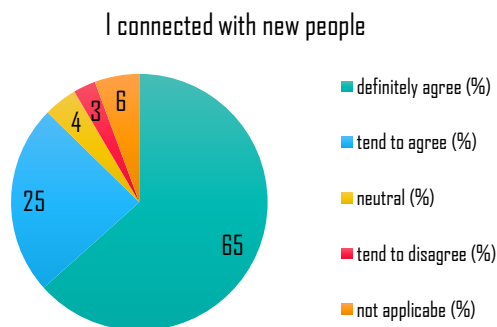
### 5.1 Meaning and experiences of the Social Inclusion Games

#### Participants

The previous chapters showed that the participants are very positive about the SIG. What about their personal experiences and what the Games meant for them?

Some statements that indicate what the SIG meant to the participants are shown below. Most participants definitively agree with the statements. Below the top 5 of highest rated 'impact indicators'.

- 1 I connected with new people (65%)
- 2 I feel part of a community (64%)
- 3 I know playing sports makes me feel better about myself (59%)
- 4 I know playing sport gives me confidence to do things I could not do before (48%)
- 5 I know I am not the only one who does not take part in a sport frequently (44%)



These items indicate the effects on a social level (connecting with other people, feeling part of a community), and a personal level (feeling more satisfied/secure about themselves, gaining more confidence). The perceived 'effects' were greater than the awareness of the importance and benefits of playing sports (22% definitively agreed). However, in general the social and personal benefits are related to this increase in awareness.

Some examples that illustrate the personal experiences and what the SIG meant to participants are shown below.

*"Sport is very important to me. Doing CrossFit is my outlet. Since a while I have started to join my social worker with CrossFit. We go three times a week together. At the terrain (at the Social Inclusion Games, red.) we started the day with our own CrossFit exercises. Just like we do normally. I always have liked sports, but I quitted due to my addiction. At the moment I participate very frequently in sports, because it distracts me from my problems." (A participant.)*

A man, about 40 years old, who is an ex-client, and (very proudly) has a job now at the organization he previously visited because of his addiction and other problems, explained:

*"I have never done any sports activities. At the Games I have joined CrossFit and softball. Now I feel very tired and exhausted, after a couple of days of sports activities and sleeping in a tent."*

To the question if he is planning to participate in sports more frequently now, having participated in the SIG, he answered:

*"I don't know why I should. I don't have overweight, so why should I do sports"?"*

This example shows that although participants like to join the SIG, it is not necessarily a reason for them to continue playing sports in their daily life. For them, the meaning and impact of the SIG is, for example, the social connection with people and being 'part of a bigger picture'.

Another participant explained that for him the SIG meant that he gained more confidence and that made him step out of his comfort zone:

*"I had never travelled abroad and travelled very rarely at home, as I was very anxious and have the fear of getting judged and a fear of flying. This is my first time abroad and it has been a new experience. I have still been anxious but I have still gone out to do things, so I feel my confidence has improved. I have been able to speak to new people and to people from other countries, which has*



*been difficult and I have been nervous. I have definitely felt that I have pushed my boundaries. I am now considering going abroad again with a friend.” (From a personal note of a participant.)*

## Professionals

Participating in the SIG was a valuable experience for many professionals. A few examples of personal experiences from professionals:

*“The Social Inclusion Games showed me how helpful and amicable people from different countries and cultures can be when working towards the same goal.” (A professional.)*

*“It was an experience that has brought me a lot of energy. All week long, I have actively participated in sports, and had laid-back contact with each other. I am not a sporty person, and played softball. Just the yell and cheering gave me a boost. The team feels as one, whether you win or lose.” (A professional.)*

*“It was great to meet so many different organisations. I am so impressed by the scale and professionalism of the event. It made me motivated to try more and become bigger and better with activities.” (A professional.)*

## Volunteers

Volunteers had many positive experiences during the SIG as well. The social contribution is mentioned most frequently as the best experience. For instance, having contact and personal conversations with participants, the ‘we feeling’, or feeling of togetherness or equality, team work, meeting others and connecting to others (including with those in the ‘work field’), making others happy, meeting people from abroad, and the positive atmosphere. Some volunteers also valued gaining experience, having responsibility, and surpassing their own abilities.

Stories of volunteers showed that they got much satisfaction from seeing socially vulnerable people participating in the Social Inclusion Games.

*“The way in which people achieve something, try new things and to overcome their selves. That’s worth gold.” (A volunteer.)*

*“The encounters with other people were the most special part of the Social Inclusion Games. You can see that it is very special for these people to stand on a podium, to be good at something, to be seen, to have contact with others. The open atmosphere was what I liked most, that’s what energizes me.”*  
(A volunteer.)

*“For many participants, it’s the first time that they meet others. The sports activities make that your defence disappears. It makes that people get in contact easier. They are less suspicious on the first sight. Their attitudes are changing, boundaries are blurring. People really change after such a week.”*  
(A volunteer.)

## Sports clubs

The positive experiences of the sports clubs involved reflected the social impact of the SIG as well. They were, for instance, touched by the fanaticism and enthusiasm of the participants, and the mutual connection between everyone: young, old, wherever they came from.

A sports club member/volunteer said about his best experience during the SIG:

*“(…) that a couple which gained the second place in badminton rejected their medal and gave it to two young boys!”* (A sports club representative.)

Another volunteer explained that these young boys were good in the match, but got into some mutual troubles and had to quit the game because of the ‘fair play rules’. This example shows that the Games were not only about the competitive character of sports, but the ‘social’ aspects of the Games (and sports in general) were maybe even more important.

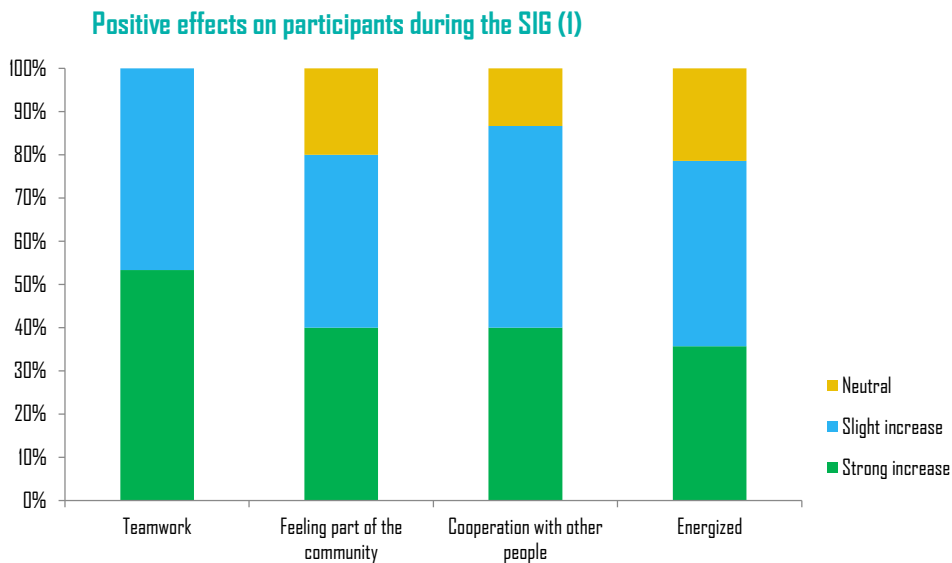
## 5.2 Social impact of the Social Inclusion Games

### Indications of social impact during the event

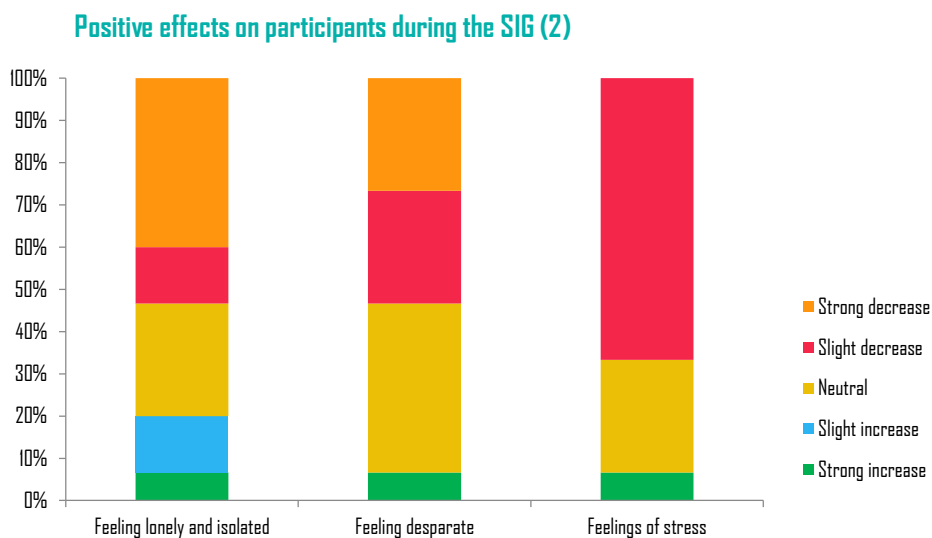
During the SIG, professionals gave many examples of positive social impact of the Games on their participants/clients. The most frequently mentioned examples included effects on both the personal and social level:

- 1 Participants felt motivated, enthusiastic.
- 2 Participants got feelings of being important, worthiness, and being part of a bigger picture.
- 3 Participants cooperated with other people, had contact with foreigners, and were helping others.

As shown in the figure below, professionals especially saw a strong increase in teamwork (53%), participants feeling part of a community (40%), cooperation with other people (40%) and participants getting more energized (36%) during the Games.



Furthermore, a strong decrease was experienced in participants' feeling lonely or isolated (40%) and feeling desperate (27%). Professionals mentioned a slight decrease in feelings of stress (67%) among participants (see figure below).



Professionals also saw some indications of positive changes in the behaviour of participants. Most of these changes occurred during the SIG week (according to 73% of the professionals), whereas some professionals (also) mentioned behaviour changes before the SIG has started (33%). At least one professional did not notice any behaviour changes among participants.

***“It’s very special for our clients that ‘normal’ people speak to them and pay attention to them. That does not occur in normal life. Even for professionals working with these target groups, that impact on clients is special.” (A professional.)***

## Indications of social impact after the event

Four weeks after the Social Inclusion Games, we asked the same questions again in a survey among professionals. When looking at their participants who joined the SIG, professionals noticed the greatest increase in:

- 🕒 Eating more healthy
- 🕒 Teamwork
- 🕒 Self-esteem

Furthermore, professionals noticed a strong decrease among clients regarding:

- 🕒 Use of substances (alcohol, cigarettes, drugs)
- 🕒 Complaining
- 🕒 Feelings of anxiety
- 🕒 Being marginalized

After these weeks, professionals noticed some indications of positive behaviour change among clients.

One professional reported that a client has kicked off from drugs during the SIG, and has not used substances since the SIG. Another professional mentioned that communication and relationships between clients and staff has been improved. In addition, professionals reached more goals with clients during the SIG, than ‘normal’. These goals were related to increase of self-confidence of clients, joining group activities and getting clients involved, and communication.

A professional reflected on the impact of the Games on his clients:

*“Them actually getting involved and coming was a massive achievement and each and every one tried something new, which again is huge for this group.” (A professional.)*

Regarding prejudgements about marginalized people and sports, most professionals (88%) believed the SIG contributed to a positive change of these prejudgements. The quote below shows a reflection of a professional on what the SIG brought to him and his organization. It illustrates that professionals themselves also have prejudgements about their clients, and that the SIG made him realise that. He explains that sports activities may be very beneficial in the rehabilitation and supervision of clients, as it requires another approach of clients.

*“We have learned from the conversations with other professionals from other countries. We underestimate our clients sometimes. Normally, social work in our country is counselling. ‘Tell me your life, I’ll tell you how it should be.’ I have learned here, with the sports games, that besides the cognitive aspects other ways of communication can help as well: feeling, the body, helping each other. You make another kind of connection with each other. **It touches a deeper layer of understanding and trust between the supervisor and the client.**” (A professional.)*

Another professional reflected on the contribution of the Social Inclusion Games for himself and his profession:

*“I gained confidence that I do the right thing. I learned a lot about motivating people, going to the core of the conversation.” (A professional.)*

Professionals told us many stories and examples that show the enormous impact the Social Inclusion Games have had on socially vulnerable people. The quotes in the framework on the next page show some of them.

## The impact of the Games on socially vulnerable people

“All the participants got already motivated by arranging tents, equipment and enhanced enthusiasm playing sports. It stimulates an inner drive to come in motion.”

“It has meant a lot to the clients. Many of them had the chance to present their story to the press and got positive reactions to these stories. Furthermore, someone who used to use drugs kicked his addiction.”

“Being somebody and it gave a boost to their self-confidence. One of our boys had never won a medal. He was so proud.”

“The Games posed new challenges and took them all out of their comfort zone.”

“The clients were incredibly enthusiastic about the welcoming culture. They felt very good. *As homeless people they were finally welcome.*”

“For nearly every client it was the first holiday of their life, or since a long time. It was great to see these guys doing things they never did before. They are still talking about it. A lot of clients want to join the next SIG. The event was a great success”

“One of the clients did not know any of the other clients or staff who were attending. Initially, she struggled to get eye contact and then by the end of the trip, she was getting and holding eye contact and smiling because of it.”

“*One of my clients (50 years old) started to cry after SIG. He came to me and told me that it was the best week of his life. He still comes to me to tell me how great it was and that he will join us next year.*”

“Clients told me: ‘I could forget everything around me and shut it out properly. I did not have to think about how bad I feel. I did not feel homeless for a week, that was great.’”

# 6 Legacy of the Social Inclusion Games

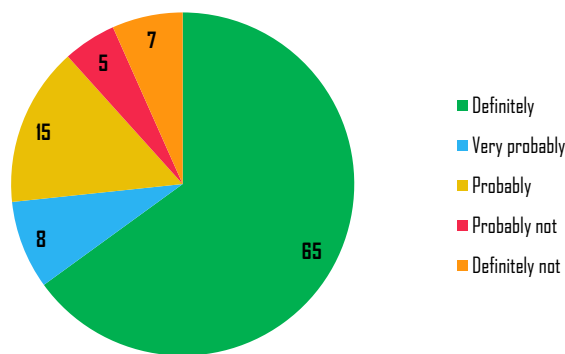
Whereas the previous chapter dealt about the meaning and social impact of the SIG, this chapter focuses on the legacy of the SIG, in terms of what the Games are leaving behind. This includes plans, intentions, and thoughts of the different target groups, related to undertaking or organizing (sports) activities and events.

## Participants

One of the indicators of the contribution of the SIG to the daily lives of participants is if participating in the Games has led to intentions to participate in sports more frequently after the Games. If the Games indeed have led to behaviour change – change toward behaviour that is more positive and active –, is hard to say. However, we asked participants if they were planning to participate more in sports after the SIG, or to become involved in sports. One could say that having an intention to continue sporting after the Games is an important indicator of behaviour change. Without setting an intention or goal, change will generally not take place.

At least 65% of all participants reported that they 'definitely' wanted to continue sporting after the SIG, 8% answered 'very probably' and another 15% 'probably'. In total 12% of the respondents were less likely to continue participating in sports, which is probably partly the same group as the group of participants (10%) who do not participate in sports regularly.

Intention of continuing sports participation after the SIG (%)



Most frequently mentioned reasons why participants want to continue sports participation are: 'I like sports', 'it makes me happy', 'it feels good', 'it helps to clear my head', 'for my health/stamina', and 'it is a way of therapy'. Others mentioned inclusion or integration with other people and society.

Participants who are not likely to continue sports participation explained this with reasons related to their 'illness' or 'situation', 'being lazy', and/or because they 'don't like sports' ("I'm just not someone who likes sports").

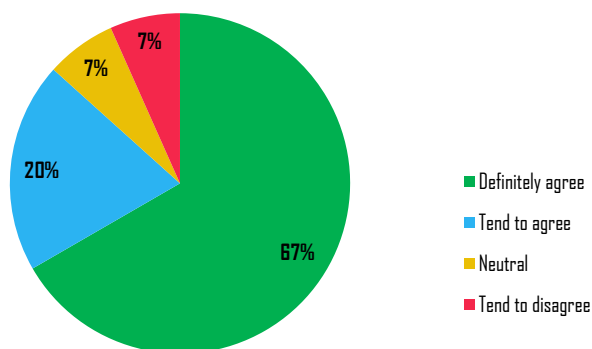
## Professionals

How do professionals reflect on the importance of sports for clients, and are they planning to do more sports activities with clients after the Social Inclusion Games?

First up, most professionals (93%) recognize the importance of sports for everyone, and 87% believe that marginalized people should not face barriers when participating in sports. However, marginalized people have to deal with prejudgements from other people. Most professionals agree (87%) that these prejudgements affect the possibilities of marginalized people to participate in sports.

Before the SIG, 67% of the professionals encourage socially marginalized people to participate in sports and 20% also tended to agree with this statement. After the SIG, the same amount of professionals was willing to advocate for policies that promote client wellbeing on several policy and organizational levels.

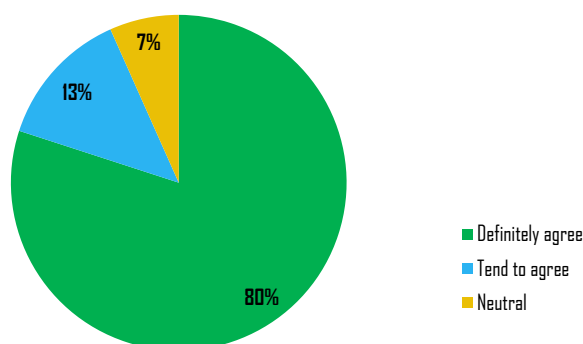
### Before the SIG, I encouraged socially marginalized people to participate in sports or physical activities



All professionals feel confident to continue playing sports with their clients after what they have witnessed during the SIG. All professionals, to a more or lesser extent, feel the importance of introducing sports into the rehabilitation process of their clients. In addition, 80% of the professionals declare that they definitely will use the gained knowledge to help introduce sports in their organization, and 93% will share experiences of the SIG with other professionals. They feel very committed to make sports/physical activities a part of the rehabilitation process, and to make it part of the lives of socially marginalized people.

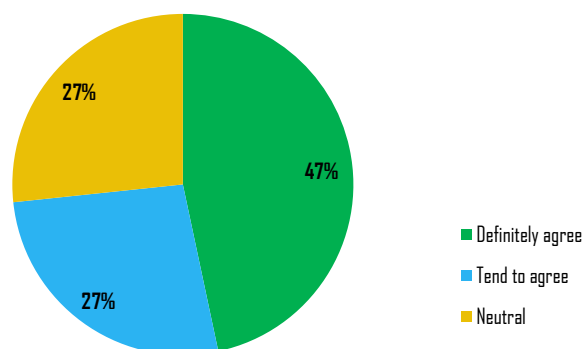


### I will use the gained knowledge to help introduce sports into my organisation



Making connections with local sports clubs/organizations to help introduce clients however is not directly on top of mind of each professional: 47% definitely agrees with this intention, 27% tends to agree, and 27% answered 'neutral'.

### I will connect with local sports clubs/organisations to help introduce my clients



The results show a great commitment of professionals to make sports an integral part of the rehabilitation processes and lives of clients. Some professionals explained that they already have been doing this (40%). They for instance motivate clients to participate in sports programmes, do research on sports opportunities, and offer sports themselves.

*"We already have a lot of sport activities for our clients, like fitness, yoga, swimming, walking, cycling etc." (A professional.)*

We asked professionals to formulate some intentions of activities related to sports promotion among clients that they can start doing 'tomorrow'. Intentions included varied practical activities such as looking for sports opportunities ("We need to find a badminton centre that is affordable and easily accessible"), and organizing team activities "to teach about the Social Inclusion Games and to find out how we can take sports further",

and “to enhance the team spirit”. Other professionals set intentions on a policy/organizational level and are willing to connect with people from different organizations to start planning.

A couple of weeks after the SIG 75% of the participants reported that they now encourage their clients to participate in sports and physical activities more than before the SIG. Some professionals already have seen examples that showed the impact of the SIG:

*“A woman of our department Talent Development painted at the Social Inclusion Games. Since there is a white wall at our facility, I asked her to paint it to give it some colour. She is still working on it, but the progress looks amazing. She is very enthusiastic about it.” (A professional).*

*“A few young persons have got back into their running activities as they missed being active. They took part in a 10K race recently and have expressed wanting to volunteer in a sport”.*

Other professionals told us that a couple of German clients also participated in a running event. Another professional declared that two clients joined a boxing programme because of the SIG.

Professionals who reported not to encourage their clients more to participate in sports after the SIG, explained this is due to a lack of time and lack of sports facilities or sport activities.

## Sports clubs

Most sports clubs representatives (89%) declared to have the intention to actively try to include socially vulnerable people at their sports club. One person found that his/her sports club was not suitable for this target group because they “*have too few members*”. Other sports clubs for instance have the intention to: “*try to give a Crossfit training on a regular basis for this target group*”, “*to better promote the sports activities offered among the target group*”, “*to continue the specific tournaments for socially vulnerable people*”, and to “*motivate them to participate in sports on a weekly basis*”.

## Project team

A project team believed that legacy of the SIG will follow through a continuation of the organization of activities for socially marginalized people:

*“We cooperated very well with the local sports clubs and organizations. We believe this will definitely contribute to a continuation of the organization of activities for socially marginalized people after the Games.” (A project team member.)*

# 7 Opportunities and tips for professionals to 'keep the spirit of the Games alive'

This chapter focuses on another important 'legacy' aspect of the Social Inclusion Games: the insights in and better understandings of how sports activities can be enhanced among socially vulnerable people, and how to overcome barriers for participants and professionals to engage more in sports (for example as part of treatment or rehabilitation processes).

This chapter first shows what some professionals already do to enhance participation in sports activities (7.1). Furthermore, it shows which barriers professionals faced in preparation of the Social Inclusion Games in particular, and by promoting sports activities among socially vulnerable people in general (7.2). Lastly, it zooms in to tips and opportunities for social inclusion professionals to 'keep the spirit of the Social Inclusion Games alive'.

## 7.1 Activities professionals undertake to promote sports

Some professionals are very familiar with organizing and promoting sports activities among their clients, while among some colleagues this is less well known.

Activities professionals already undertake to promote sports include organizing sports tournaments, sports workshops, connecting clients to sports clubs and gyms (for example by arranging discounts), or looking for other possibilities for clients to participate in low-key sports activities. Some professionals are already connecting with other organizations and professionals working for and with socially vulnerable target groups and organise local or regional sports tournaments together.

The framed text below shows the work of a professional working at the Dutch organization Leger des Heils (Salvation Army), whose job is fully attained to promote sports among socially marginalized people. A couple of weeks after the Social Inclusion Games, DSP spoke with him.

### Working as a sports coordinator at Leger des Heils

"I am appointed as a sports coordinator, coordinating sports activities for clients/participants on a daily and professional basis. We (Leger des Heils, red.) are very aware of the meaning of sports activities for socially vulnerable people. I got the opportunity to both organize sports activities at the day care centre for homeless and addicted people, as well as coaching participants on an individual basis. That means I work in an outreaching manner, to get in contact with socially vulnerable and often isolated people. I am also organizing sports activities for refugees (with a municipal status), in collaboration with a local sports club and with local community sports coaches.

Our method is focussed on empowering people, and to give them insight in their talents and problems in a way that they can work on them independently. For some people, activities such as work and education may help. Others are not ready yet to focus on work or education. It is important for everyone to experience what kind of activities they would like to do. But that's something that can be very difficult for people. People don't know what kind of things they like anymore. I believe that getting people more active and giving meaning to their lives is very important. A nice additional benefit of getting people more active is that they are able to talk more easily about their problems.

Methods that can be useful to integrate sports in the daily practice of care and guidance of socially vulnerable people are 'Krachtwerk' and 'Life Goals'. Life Goals has been developing an app that allows professionals to 'rate' targets and experiences of participants who join the (sports) activities. This instrument is very informative for both clients, professionals as well as for the municipality because it makes clear what has been achieved with our projects."

(An interview with a sports coordinator working at Leger des Heils, the Netherlands).

## 7.2 Barriers experienced by professionals to promote sports activities among clients

Before signing up for the SIG, some professionals experienced some barriers to promote participating in the SIG among clients. Most barriers were faced due to financial barriers for clients (37.5%), lack of enthusiasm among clients (27% of the professionals), not enough time to prepare (20%), and lack of travel documents for clients (20%). A professional mentioned to have had some difficulties in communication with the project organization, and another professional mentioned having had some safety concerns for high risk clients to participate.

The barriers faced by professionals in preparation for the Social Inclusion Games correspond largely to barriers faced in general when promoting sports activities among clients. The barriers most frequently mentioned by professionals include:

- ② Lack of enthusiasm among clients.
- ② Negative stereotyping and stigmatization of socially marginalized people.

Professionals gave different explanations of the lack of (initial) enthusiasm among clients. This may for instance be related to a low self-esteem, difficulties with authorities, rules, and obligations. People really have to want it themselves.

The quotes below show some reasons for the lack of initial enthusiasm among participants.

*“My clients are ‘care avoiders’. You cannot impose something on them. They do not allow you to make something mandatory. I try to promote sports among my clients. Now, I am busy arranging a fitness subscription for clients. However, participating in sports activities and an event such as the Social Inclusion Games is not appropriate for each client. Being a whole week away from home, camping, and all those social contacts all day, that just does not work for each client. People say they will come, but don’t show up. That’s always the thing when we try to organize activities. That’s maybe also the reasons why some teams had to unsubscribe themselves.” (A professional.)*

*“This may have to do with the fact that many socially vulnerable people have difficulties with authority. They don’t do things they don’t have to. Activities have to be very low-key. But when they participate in team activities, they learn how to make appointments etc.” (A professional.)*

*“They think they cannot act or behave among normal groups of people. However, by engaging in sports activities with these ‘other’ people they experience that they can do this. This is a real eye-opener for them. People definitely experience through sports they can be a more inclusive part of society.” (A professional.)*

*“People really have to want to do it themselves. If they want to, and finally are into the sports club they have reached an enormous step forward. However, sports do not suit everyone. Some people better fit in low-key physical activities, without a club-environment.” (A professional.)*

Regarding the negative stereotyping, a social worker explained that this negative stereotyping/stigmatization could be a barrier for people to join sports activities. She sometimes faces difficulties to

connect clients that want to participate in sports with local sports initiatives, because of the financial barriers and the fact that she has to explain why the client cannot afford to pay the full price:

*"If you were not told in prior someone is marginalized, you sometimes wouldn't even know they are. But because it's too expensive for my client to join this sports activity, I have to arrange something special and then everyone knows. That's a pity. But in the end, it doesn't matter and people enjoy sporting together. It's definitely worth the effort." (A professional).*

This negative stereotyping also relates to personal barriers clients experience to participate in sports. A professional (social worker) explained she had difficulties with motivating clients to sign up for the Social Inclusion Games. Especially young clients, for instance those addicted to gaming, were difficult to convince to join:

*"Especially young people were hard to convince to join the Social Inclusion Games. They didn't want to be associated with the target group. But you have to experience this event once! I just continued promoting them very enthusiastically and asked people who had joined a previous edition of the SIG to help me promote." (A professional.)*

## 7.3 How to keep the spirit of the Games alive?

According to many professionals keeping the spirit alive is a challenge. Professionals DSP has spoken to after the Games undertake different activities to keep the positive energy of the SIG and sports activities in general alive. For instance, they speak about (memories of) the Games with clients. A professional told us to also pay attention to the Social Inclusion Games in magazines provided by the organization.

*"For me, the biggest challenge is that we, both you and I, can see and notice that sports and the Games has positive effects. But how can we show this to others? Even to our own colleagues and organization? Let alone outside our organization..." (A professional).*

A few weeks after the SIG most professionals (88%) declared that they have shared their experiences of the SIG with other professionals and friends, including direct colleagues working at other organizations.

Some professionals have already planned to organize sport tournaments in order to continue the spirit of the Games. Those sports tournaments take place within the organization, but also outside of the organization. They are organized with other partners including sports clubs and local community sports coaches.

*“We were very happy with the design or structure of the Social Inclusion Games. Within the coming sports tournaments we are organizing, we are maintaining this structure. People can sign up for different workshops. We already have more registrations for these tournaments compared to the amount of registrations before the Social Inclusion Games. This shows the effect that emanates from the Games. People now know what to expect and that they like it. That’s why they sign up.” (A professional.)*

## Opportunities and tips for professionals to promote sports after the Games

Professionals gave some tips for their colleagues promoting social inclusion and sports after the SIG.

A selection:

- ③ Organize and promote sports activities or tournaments always in such a way that socially vulnerable people can join sports clubs or undertake sports activities individually as a follow-up, on a structural basis.
- ③ Cooperate with local sports clubs, health care organizations and the local municipality and local (community) sports coaches.

*“Local sports clubs – especially the bigger ones who sometimes have appointed professionals – are increasingly open and willing to contribute to societal goals. When you open the conversation, municipalities increasingly make opportunities possible. For instance, by making sports fields or sports facilities which are empty outside of training hours available for our target groups. (A professional.)*

- ③ It helps a lot if the management is pro-sports, and propagates physical activities and sports as an integral part of the rehabilitation and the guidance of socially vulnerable people.

*“It is nice if sports coordinators can be appointed, but it’s even more important to focus on increasing the awareness of the potential of sports and leisure activities among all professionals working with these groups.” (A professional.)*

- ③ Use and designate sports ‘ambassadors’ among colleagues, and among regular clients, who can motivate people to join the sports activities organized and to bring their clients to these activities.
- ③ To remove (financial) barriers for clients to participate in sports, focus on finding funding and look for alternative sports opportunities and ways to reduce costs (for instance by asking for discount for clients).

*“Sports clubs for instance may let our clients sport in exchange for carrying out weekly maintenance of the sports field. Another club made it possible for a woman who was not able to pay the member fees to join a basketball club. She gives training in exchange for free sports participation.” (A professional.)*

- ③ To help keeping the spirit of the Games alive it may help to organize a night to get clients to reminisce on the Social Inclusion Games and show photos.

*“For some people, the effect of the Games will only last for a while, whereas others will talk about it a year long. Some will experience a relapse after the Social Inclusion Games, like the feeling of a warm bath is falling away” (A professional.)*

- ③ When time pressure is hindering social workers to join sports activities with clients, a professional wanted to advice his colleagues to be more flexible.

*“Some professionals are too focussed on getting indications, which is hindering them to join sports activities with clients. You can also do one or two hours of sports together with a client, as a part of your 3 to 4 hour weekly indication for that client.” (A professional.)*

- ③ To decrease negative stereotype about socially marginalized people, it may help to give others more insight in the target group. A professional explained: *“you can work together with students when organizing sports activities for socially vulnerable people. However, it is important to first introduce the target group to the students, for instance by giving a lecture. In that way you can prepare the students and other people before they start working with the people.”*



# 8 Lessons learned for future Social

## Inclusion Games

This chapter concludes with some lessons learned according to participants, professionals, volunteers, sports clubs, and project team members. The chapter is divided by 'tops' (things that went very well (8.1), and 'tips' related to the organization of the SIG, and creating social impact (8.2), and closes with a general concluding note (8.3).

### 8.1 Tops of the Social Inclusion Games 2018

Attendants mentioned the following things that went very well and could be 'copied' to the next edition of the SIG.

- ③ The spirit of the project team.
- ③ The nice mix of social workers and clients, and mixed teams of different organizations.
- ③ The good day and night rhythm. Well-structured with (motivating!) meetings every morning and night, fixed breakfast, lunch and dinner times, night's rest.
- ③ The variety of the activities offered, including creative activities ('one cannot sport for five whole days').
- ③ The friendliness of the safety guards, who were happy to do their job.
- ③ The hardly noticed incidences that happened.
- ③ The medal ceremony!
- ③ The cooperation with local sports clubs and initiatives.
- ③ The cooperation with the Province.
- ③ The open and positive atmosphere.
- ③ Team sports made it possible for people to connect, instead of only stand up for yourselves.
- ③ The attendance of the conference (about 100 guests), which was open to the public including students as well.
- ③ The inspiration professionals gained from each other.

*"Against our expectations there was not a lot of 'hanging around' by participants. The program was not too full or too long. People were busy all day with organizing themselves. Taking a shower, eating, going to a meeting and joining the sports activities. They even had difficulties finding a break to smoke. This week was a great contrast with their normal daily lives. Back home, they have time all day to watch TV, smoke and drink. It took most of them two days to adjust to the rhythm." (A professional.)*

*"I saw the effects of a good security team in the sense of feeling safe. Also the medical team enhanced the feeling of safety. Especially because they worked from a well-recognized central point." (A volunteer.)*

## 8.2 Tips for the local organizing team of SIG Berlin

### Tips for the Social Inclusion Games program

- ③ About the sports programme: keep sports such as archery in the program, and maybe exclude sports with rules people are not familiar with (e.g., ultimate Frisbee). Include more activities and sports for younger children.
- ③ For less experienced or less well trained participants and new teams or countries joining the SIG it may be more low key to have half a day of sports activities instead of a full day sports programme.
- ③ Spread the rules of the sports games beforehand or on the terrain so people can prepare.
- ③ Do not include solo sports where social workers/professionals compete against participants.

*"The only negative aspect of the Games was that social workers could do solo sports and win the event. If they want to win they should go to a sports club. It would have been OK if a social worker supported a client team. But a team without any clients should be disqualified." (A professional.)*

- ③ The 'inclusiveness' between supervisors/professionals and participants could be increased. For instance same colour wristbands for both professionals and participants, and opening the panel symposium for participants too, as not doing so may have led to feelings of exclusion among participants.
- ③ Improve catering: healthier food, better quality, more choice, and less use of plastics.

*"The many plastics used were even noticed by our clients." (A professional.)*

- ③ Try to organize the campsite more sustainable, for instance by providing camping stuff instead of asking teams to bring it with them.

*"The cost of travelling with camping supplies was too much and wasteful. Would have been cheaper to have items sent straight there." (A professional.)*

- ③ Add some extras to the program: physiotherapists, massage-therapists.

### Tips to improve volunteering

- ③ Communicate earlier about targets, tasks, planning, and confirmation of participation.
- ③ Improve the task division between volunteers (working on planned time schedules).
- ③ Increase information beforehand among volunteer organizations.

## Tips to improve the impact of the SIG

- ③ Start earlier with the promotion of the Social Inclusion Games, as well as with the recruitment of participants and professionals.

*"Some departments of our organization were approached just three weeks before the event." (A professional.)*

- ③ Communicate more information and program details with professionals beforehand.
- ③ Get more publicity out about what you can achieve with sports activities, and try to gain more (local, national and international) media attention.
- ③ Focus on making the impact of sports for socially vulnerable people visible. Illustrate/report/show the meaning of sports helping getting people out of depression and other troubles. Propagate this among professionals working with socially vulnerable groups. But also broader in society, as it may contribute to remove the negative stigma.

*"Let an ambassador travel along different organizations and facilities for socially vulnerable people throughout the country. Someone who can propagate and transfer the energy what the Games can do for you and that you 'have to be there'." (A volunteer.)*

*"Next time I will train with my clients for the Social Inclusion Games and become as good as the Danish!" (A professional.)*

## 8.3 Concluding note

In general, this study has showed that the organization can reflect very positively at an very inspiring and socially meaningful event and edition of the Social Inclusion Games. The SIG has energized a lot of people including participants and professionals working with socially vulnerable target groups. Many of them have set intentions - and already have brought their intentions into practice -, to participate in sports more frequently, or to advocate and promote sports and physical activities among the target groups. Sports matters and can be very meaningful for (the feeling of) inclusion of socially vulnerable people. However, this does not happen automatically. Professionals and (the management of) organizations working with people in socially marginalized positions have to pay continuously attention to the importance of sports and physical activities in general, and the participation in (social) events like the Social Inclusion Games in particular.

# Attachment 1 – Data collection

SIGN has appointed a research team for monitoring and evaluation. Equipped with Ipads, volunteers investigated the evaluation and meanings of the different target groups. The table below shows the amount of participants, professionals, volunteers, and sports club representatives who have responded and completed the surveys. A follow-up (T2) online questionnaire has been sent to professionals. In addition, on-site face-2-face interviews were held with people from all target groups, and with 2 professionals (telephone) interviews where held a couple of weeks after the event.

## Data collection

	Surveys (N)	Response rate (%)	Interviews (N)
Participants	63	3.7	8
Professionals			
T1	15	7.5	8
T2	8	4	2
Volunteers	37	28.5	4
Sports clubs	9	45	2
Project team			3
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>		<b>27</b>

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#### **Dienstverlening**

Onze inzet is vooral gericht op het ondersteunen van opdrachtgevers bij het aanpakken van complexe beleidsvraagstukken binnen de samenleving. We richten ons daarbij met name op de sociale, ruimtelijke of bestuurlijke kanten van zo'n vraagstuk. In dit kader kunnen we bijvoorbeeld een onderzoek doen, een registratie- of monitorsysteem ontwikkelen, een advies uitbrengen, een beleidsvisie voorbereiden, een plan toetsen of (tijdelijk) het management van een project of organisatie voeren.

#### **Expertise**

Onze focus richt zich met name op de sociale, ruimtelijke of bestuurlijke kanten van een vraagstuk. Wij hebben o.a. expertise op het gebied van transitie in het sociaal domein, kwetsbare groepen in de samenleving, openbare orde & veiligheid, wonen, jeugd, sport & cultuur.

#### **Meer weten?**

Neem vrijblijvend contact met ons op voor meer informatie of om een afspraak te maken. Bezoek onze website [www.dsp-groep.nl](http://www.dsp-groep.nl) voor onze projecten, publicaties en opdrachtgevers.

