



# Monitoring discrimination and racism in sport



REPORT: Pilot Workshop “Monitoring Racism in Sports”

Liikkukaa – Sports For All, Finland, January 2024  
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### **Program:**

The piloting workshop in Finland, “ Monitoring Racism in Sports” was held at the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak) on the 24.01.2024 from 11:30 – 14:00. It was organized by Rasmus Ry and Liikkukaa Ry with coordinators, Jonna Metzker, Caroline Namae and Christian Thibault. The main objective was to pilot the workshop program of the MONITORA project in order to get feedback and input from the wider stakeholder field. Accordingly the program, exercises and presentations were designed closely around the Monitora plans and focused on the five steps in the upcoming online course:

- What are the forms of discrimination in sports
- Why addressing discrimination in sports is key
- Monitoring and reporting discrimination – Real life examples
- How to monitor and report discrimination in sports
- Evaluation and feedback

### **Participants:**

The pilot workshop/seminar had 28 participants. They were invited via facebook, email, whatsapp and through posters at the University of Applied Science. They were students of social science, media and sports as well as sports club managers, coaches, athletes, referees and activists in anti-racism. Many of them were from the international community in Finland.



### **Workshops:**

#### **Icebreaker**

Before the start, of the actual workshop we used the “mentimeter-tool” to ask the participants about the benefits they see in sports participation. Here is the result:



- **Social media:** Utilising technology or social media for effective communication and engagement on anti-discrimination matters.

**Lessons learnt:**

- **Comprehensive understanding of the past initiatives:** By listing all actions, stakeholders gained a clear overview of what has been done, allowing them to see patterns, strengths, and areas needing improvement. Understanding what didn't work or what could have been done better is a valuable learning opportunity, helping to avoid similar missteps in the future.
- **Identification of effective strategies:** Discussing the impact of past initiatives highlighted which actions were most successful in combating discrimination. This can guide their future strategies.
- **Recognition of gaps or shortcomings:** The reflective process revealed gaps in the organisation's approach or areas where efforts were less effective, providing an opportunity to develop and plan next time more targeted initiatives.
- **Improved team morale and unity:** Reflecting on their past successes also boosted some of the participants morale and unity, reinforcing a collective commitment to fighting discrimination.
- **Strategic planning for the future:** Insights gained from this exercise informed and gave ideas for the development of a more strategic and effective plan for future anti-discrimination initiatives.
- **Increased awareness:** The process itself was educational, increasing awareness among participants about the complexities of discrimination and the importance of ongoing efforts to combat it.

**Exercise 2:** Take some time to think through what you learned from watching the SENTRY video, did you identify any pattern? Is there something that you need to keep in mind for further action?

**Results:**

**A. Realisations:**

After watching the SENTRY video, participants realized that the intersectional effects of discrimination, micro-aggressions, racism and insensitive gate-keepers push many people away from sports and function as a glass-wall to keep diverse people out of the world of sports and exclude them from a sportive life-style and the benefits of exercising sports. Even those participants who had already experienced different forms of discrimination once more realised the impact and interconnection of different kinds of discrimination.

**B. Resolutions:**

Participants felt upset by the various forms of racism and discrimination they witnessed in the video, but also inspired and motivated to step up. They pledged to:

- **find out more** about specific instances and forms of discrimination in sports and to educate themselves on the experiences of affected individuals, and gaining a deeper awareness of the problem
- **actively participate** in initiatives and conversations that address discrimination, supporting organizations working towards inclusivity, and being part of efforts to create positive change
- **to be vigilant** about discriminatory behaviors within sports communities, staying informed about anti-discrimination measures, and actively challenging any biased attitudes or actions
- **become an advocate** for anti-discrimination policies in sports, speaking up against injustice, and promoting the importance of inclusivity and diversity within sports culture

- **find ways to actively support** victims of discrimination, whether through mentoring, providing resources, or participating in awareness campaigns to make a positive impact
- **collaborate** with like-minded individuals, sports organizations, and authorities to collectively address discrimination, emphasizing the need for a united effort to bring about systemic change
- **engage in allyship** by standing up against discrimination, using one's influence to promote inclusivity, and fostering a supportive environment for those who have been marginalized in sports

### C. Identified needs:

- **to seek out resources and support networks** that address discrimination in sports, connecting with organizations and advocates dedicated to combating such issues, and finding guidance on how to contribute to positive change

**STOP 2** *“Why addressing discrimination in sports is key”*: We presented the Finnish case study story:

Ice-Hockey is one of the most important sports in Finland. Children of immigrant families face several difficulties to join. For example their parents can not teach them the beginnings, the sport is quite expensive and there are no role models for them. Now the first children from immigrant families have joined nevertheless but they are already facing racism in the sports. The ice-hockey federation had no concept for how to deal with this. In November 2022, a 13-year-old junior player from the Lahden Pelicans icehockey club in Finland, reported racist insults during a game, prompting the coach to abandon the match as per a pre-established plan. The Ice-Hockey Federation's stern reaction, suspending the head coach and imposing a €3,000 fine on the club, initiated a nine-month struggle.”

**Following this we asked workshop participants to reflect about what they would have done:**

#### **Results:**

- **Developing inclusive programmes:** Participants suggested creating programs specifically designed to help children from immigrant families join and excel in ice hockey. These could include providing equipment, offering financial aid, or setting up beginner classes.
- **Anti-racism education and training:** Proposing mandatory anti-racism training for all players, coaches, and staff, emphasizing the importance of diversity and inclusion in sports. This training could also include conflict resolution and how to respond effectively to instances of racism.
- **Establishing clear policies and protocols:** Participants recommended the development and implementation of clear, well-communicated policies regarding racism and discrimination, including specific protocols for reporting and addressing incidents.
- **Community engagement:** Participants suggested initiatives to engage with immigrant communities, understanding their needs and challenges, and encouraging participation in the sport. This could involve community events, outreach programs, or partnerships with local organizations.
- **Mentorship programmes:** Setting up mentorship programs where experienced players or role models from diverse backgrounds mentor young players, especially those from immigrant families.
- **Promoting diversity in leadership:** Advocating for more diverse representation among coaches, staff, and decision-makers within the ice hockey federation and clubs to ensure varied perspectives and a more inclusive environment.
- **Financial support and accessibility:** Participants also proposed ways to make the sport more financially accessible, such as subsidizing costs, providing equipment, or organizing fundraising events to support players from less privileged backgrounds.
- **Creating awareness campaigns:** Launching campaigns to raise awareness about the challenges faced by immigrant families in the sport and promoting a culture of inclusivity and respect.

- **Enhancing report mechanisms:** They suggested improvements to the reporting process for discrimination incidents, making it more accessible and ensuring that reports are taken seriously and acted upon promptly.
- **Building partnerships:** Forming partnerships with anti-racism and human rights organizations to develop comprehensive strategies to combat racism in the sport.
- **Regular review and feedback:** There could be a system of regular review and feedback involving players, parents, coaches, and other stakeholders to continuously improve anti-racism efforts.
- **Celebrating diversity:** Organizing events or initiatives that celebrate cultural diversity within the sport, highlighting the contributions of players from different backgrounds.

The presentation of the story was followed by the resolution video from Finland:

<https://vimeo.com/900815475/9ab74a8b7b?share=copy>



Participants watching the Finnish resolution video

After watching the video we conducted the following exercises:

**Exercise 3:** Having watched the video – can you think of any similar stories you have experienced or witnessed?

Which forms of racism and discrimination have you experienced in sports? (max 2 words per answer)  
25 responses



Participants word cloud by: mentimeter.com

**Results:**

- **Personal experiences of discrimination:** Participants recounted their personal stories where they or someone they know faced discrimination in sports due to their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or other personal attributes. The examples ranged from verbal insults to exclusion from participating in sports teams or events.

- **Witnessing racism in professional sports:** Some participants referred to high-profile incidents of racism they have witnessed in professional sports, such as football players being subjected to racial abuse from fans, and some instances where athletes were discriminated against by coaches or team members.
- **Exclusion in youth or amateur sports:** Participants shared stories from school or local sports clubs where individuals were excluded or treated unfairly because of their background. These examples included not being picked for teams, receiving less playtime, or being subjected to stereotyping.
- **Inequities in sports opportunities:** Stories emerged about the lack of opportunities for certain groups in sports, such as limited access to facilities, resources, or training for players from less privileged backgrounds or specific communities.
- **Gender discrimination in sports:** Instances were recounted where individuals, particularly women and girls, faced discrimination due to their gender, including unequal pay, lack of media coverage, or inferior training and competition conditions compared to male counterparts.
- **Cultural and religious barriers:** Some participants recalled incidents where athletes faced difficulties due to cultural or religious dress codes not being accommodated in sports uniforms, or being stereotyped and marginalized because of their cultural practices.
- **LGBTQ+ discrimination in sports:** There were some stories related to the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ athletes in sports, ranging from homophobic remarks to systemic barriers in participating and excelling in sports.
- **Inadequate responses to discrimination:** Participants discussed instances where sports authorities or organizations failed to adequately address complaints of discrimination, leaving victims feeling unsupported and issues unresolved.
- **Positive examples of overcoming discrimination:** On a more positive note, there were also some stories that focused on how individuals or teams overcame discrimination, through resilience, support from allies, or successful advocacy for change in their sports environments.



*Discussing the different forms of discrimination in sports*

**Exercise 4:** What are currently the potential “facilitators” of discrimination in your organisation and/or local context?

**Results:**

- **Lack of awareness or education in this topic:** A common facilitator is the general lack of awareness or education about discrimination and its impacts. Without proper training or understanding, members of the organization might unconsciously engage in discriminatory practices.
- **Cultural norms and biases:** Deep-seated cultural norms and biases play a significant role in facilitating discrimination, especially when these biases are widespread within the organization or the local community.

- **Inadequate policies and enforcement:** The absence of strong anti-discrimination policies or the failure to enforce existing policies effectively create an environment where discriminatory behaviours are overlooked or normalised.
- **Leadership attitudes and behaviours:** The attitudes and behaviours of leaders or influential figures within the organization facilitate discrimination, especially if they exhibit or tolerate prejudiced behaviours.
- **Lack of diversity in decision-making:** Homogeneity in leadership or decision-making bodies lead to a lack of perspective on issues related to discrimination, inadvertently facilitating biased decisions.
- **Peer pressure and group dynamics:** Sometimes, the desire to fit in or conform to the majority leads individuals to participate in or tolerate discriminatory practices.
- **Ineffective complaint mechanisms:** If the organization lacks a safe and effective way for individuals to report discrimination, it can perpetuate a culture where such behaviour is tolerated.
- **Socioeconomic barriers:** In some contexts, socioeconomic factors facilitate discrimination, especially if access to resources, opportunities, or services is biased towards certain groups.
- **Media representation and stereotypes:** Media portrayal and societal stereotypes reinforce discriminatory attitudes and behaviours within an organization or community. Though in general, in Finland, there is more attention given to representation in media and advertising, still some sports e.g. like Ice-hockey, figure skating as well as other winter sports like skiing and alpine sports have still been portrayed very white.
- **Lack of accountability:** When there are no real consequences for discriminatory actions, it can facilitate a culture where such behaviour is seen as acceptable or without serious repercussions.
- **Communication barriers:** In multicultural settings, language or communication barriers inadvertently facilitate discrimination or misunderstandings.
- **External societal factors:** Broader societal issues like the current political climate in Finland (which is very far-right), as well as historical prejudices, and ongoing social conflicts influence attitudes and behaviours within an organization, facilitating discrimination.

**Task:** Reflect what was similar in my response, and what was new for me?

### Results:

#### Similarities in responses:

- **Common experiences:** Many found that their experiences or observations of discrimination in sports or organizational contexts are quite similar, reflecting common patterns of discrimination.
- **Shared challenges:** Participants identified shared challenges in addressing discrimination, such as resistance to change, lack of resources, or cultural barriers.
- **Recognition of systemic issues:** There was a consensus about certain systemic issues being at the root of discrimination, such as inadequate policies or entrenched cultural biases.

#### New insights or perspectives:

- **Different contexts:** Some participants had been exposed to discrimination in contexts or forms they hadn't considered before, broadening their understanding of how widespread and varied discrimination can be.
- **Innovative solutions:** Hearing about unique or innovative strategies adopted by others to combat discrimination provided new ideas or approaches they hadn't thought of.
- **Awareness of subtler forms of discrimination:** Discussions brought to light more subtle or systemic forms of discrimination that some participants hadn't previously recognized or understood.

#### Personal reflections:

- **Self-awareness:** Engaging in these discussions lead some participants to reflect on their own biases or assumptions, realising areas where they need to grow or change.
- **Motivation for action:** Learning about the experiences and strategies of others inspired participants to take more proactive steps in their own contexts to combat discrimination.



### Acknowledging differences:

- **Diverse experiences:** Participants realised that experiences with discrimination can vary greatly depending on factors like geography, sport, or the demographic makeup of an organisation.
- **Cultural sensitivities:** Some participants gained a better understanding of how cultural differences can impact the experience of discrimination and the effectiveness of various approaches to addressing it.

### Organizational strategies:

- **Policy and leadership:** Participants found commonalities in recognising the importance of strong leadership and clear policies and discovered new perspectives on how to implement these effectively.
- **Engagement and education:** Discussions reinforced the known value of education and engagement in combating discrimination while introducing new methods and tools to achieve these goals.

**STOP 3 “Monitoring and reporting discrimination – Real life examples”:** we presented a “missing word” text in order to test participants’ understanding of the expert presentations:

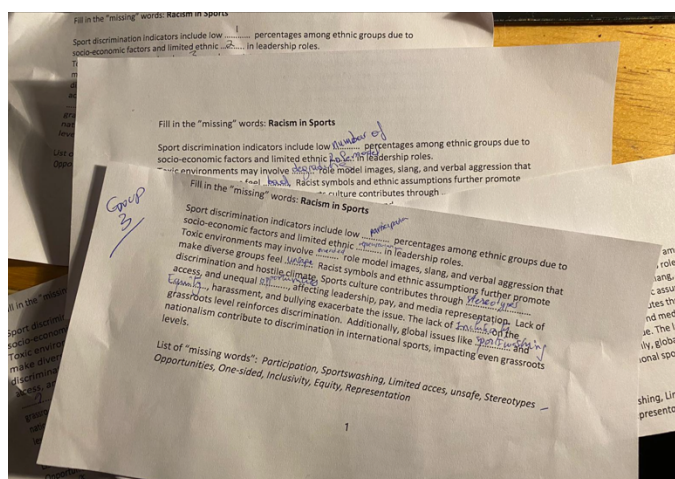
- **Exercise 5:** Testing understanding of some key takeaways

**Insert the missing words in this text:** Sport discrimination indicators include low ..... percentages among ethnic groups due to socio-economic factors and limited ethnic ..... in leadership roles. Toxic environments may involve ..... role model images, slang, and verbal aggression that make diverse groups feel ..... Racist symbols and ethnic assumptions further promote discrimination and hostile climate. Sports culture contributes through ....., ..... access, and unequal ....., affecting leadership, pay, and media representation. Lack of ....., harassment, and bullying exacerbate the issue. The lack of ..... on the grassroots level reinforces discrimination. Additionally, global issues like ..... and nationalism contribute to discrimination in international sports, impacting even grassroots levels.

### List of “missing words”:

Participation, Sportswashing, Limited access, unsafe, Stereotypes  
Opportunities, One-sided, Inclusivity, Equity, Representation

**Result:** Participants were largely able to fill in the correct words. Some discussions were held about where to place “participation” and where “representation” and also some discussion about the meaning of terms like “Equity” and “Inclusivity”. In general it can be said that this part helped to have a lively reflection on the different aspects of discrimination and inclusivity.



Five groups of five+ participants each discussed and filled the missing words.



- **Fostering diversity and inclusion:** Actively working towards creating a more diverse and inclusive environment within sports organisations, from grassroots to professional levels.
- **Building partnerships with external organisations:** Collaborating with NGOs, government bodies, and other organisations that specialise in combating discrimination and promoting equality.
- **Public awareness campaigns:** Running campaigns to raise public awareness about the issues of racism and discrimination in sports and the importance of inclusivity and respect.
- **Regular review and feedback mechanisms:** Setting up systems to regularly review the effectiveness of anti-discrimination measures and gather feedback from various stakeholders.

#### **STOP FIVE:** *“Evaluation and Feedback”*



*Participants filling in feedback forms...*

#### **A. Which new skills did you learn?**

##### **Results:**

- Participants mentioned learning effective strategies for identifying and addressing racism and discrimination.
- Skills in developing and implementing anti-discrimination policies and procedures.
- Enhanced understanding of cultural sensitivity and diversity.
- Improved communication and conflict resolution skills, especially in sensitive situations.
- Techniques for data collection, analysis, and reporting in the context of monitoring discrimination.

#### **B. Which of the necessary skills did you already have?**

##### **Results:**

- Some participants recognised that they already possessed skills like basic awareness of diversity and inclusion, empathy, and a general understanding of racism and discrimination.
- Existing skills in communication, teamwork, and community engagement.
- Prior experience in organising and leading initiatives, which can be applied in the context of combating discrimination.

### C. Which of these skills do you wish to develop further?

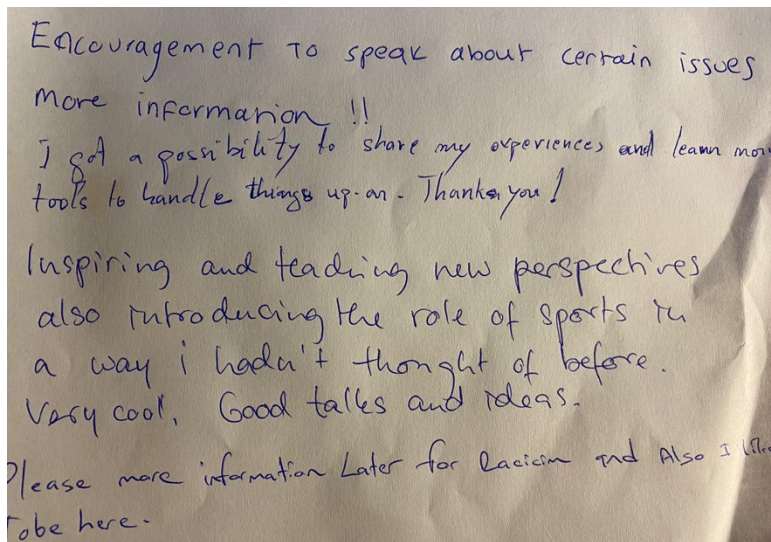
#### Results:

- Many expressed a desire to further develop their skills in handling sensitive issues related to discrimination and racism more effectively.
- There was a keen interest in enhancing their ability to create and implement impactful anti-discrimination policies.
- A wish to better understand and analyse data related to discrimination in sports.
- Strengthening skills in community outreach and building more inclusive environments.

### D. What did you like most?

#### Results:

- Participants appreciated the interactive and collaborative nature of the workshop, allowing for the sharing of diverse perspectives and experiences.
- Many valued the practical, real-world examples and case studies provided, which help in understanding the complexities of discrimination in sports.
- The opportunity to network with others in the field and to learn from experts or experienced individuals in combating racism and discrimination.
- The comprehensive approach of the workshop, covering various aspects from policy formulation to grassroots initiatives.



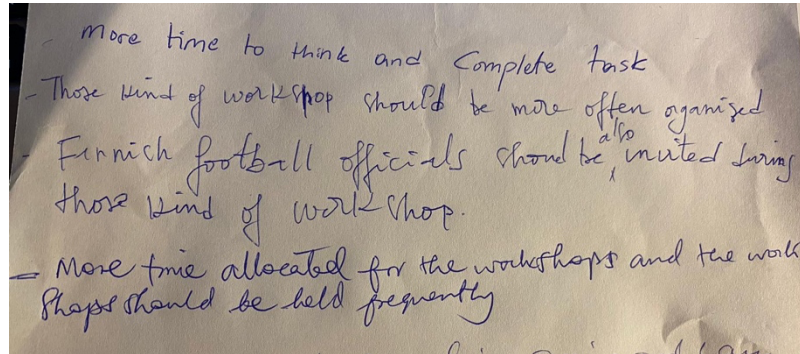
*Feedback by participants*

### E. What did you miss?

#### Results:

- **Time:** Time was a constraint. That is why some participants would have wanted to have a deeper dive into specific topics, such as legal aspects of combating discrimination in sports, and specific strategies for dealing with incidents of racism.
- **Interactive and practical sessions:** Some participants missed more interactive or hands-on sessions where they could practice the actual skills discussed, such as role-playing exercises or workshops on policy drafting.

- **Follow-up resources and support:** There was feedback indicating a need for more follow-up resources or ongoing support, such as a toolkit for implementing strategies in their own organisations, or a platform for continued learning and discussion.



*Feedback by the participants*

### More feedback questions:

- How satisfied are you with this seminar? (1-5) **Result:** 5
- What was the most useful content? **Answers:** The videos, the expert presentations
- What part was so valuable you will use every day? **Answer:** The encouragement to be brave through the case-study video.
- What are the learnings you will use every now and then? **Answer(s):** The deeper understanding of the different aspects of racism.
- Which content shall go to the garbage can, what is the material you will never use again? **Answer:** It was all valuable for different situations.

### To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements? (y/n)

- The language was easy to understand: 23 y / 5 n
- I'm likely to participate again in the future: 28 y
- The instructional materials complemented each other: 28 y
- The workshop was organised in a manner that helped me understand the underlying concepts: 26 y / 2 n
- The material was easy to understand: 22 y / 6 n
- The flow was well organised (felt like natural learning path): 28 y
- How likely is it that you would recommend this to a friend or colleague (1, not -10 very likely)? Average answer: 8,9

### Conclusion:

This pilot workshop indicated that the concept is inspiring, engaging and encouraging. Moreover it is very educational. Even though many of the participants were experts in some parts of the field, in sports, anti racism and education as well as in social work, still everyone had learned something new and felt empowered to participate in the work against discrimination. The need for effective monitoring and actions was emphasised by all.



*Project coordinator Jean Marc Alingue presenting the Monitora Project*

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