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20TH MARCH 2019 - TOUR & TAXIS, BRUSSELS

SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH COMMUNITY SPORT: MYTH OR REALITY?

Marc Theeboom, Hebe Schaillée, Rudi Roose, Sara Willems, Lieve Bradt

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AGENTSCHAP INNOVEREN & ONDERNEMEN Vlaanderen is ondernemen

isb VLAAMS INSTITUUT VOOR SPORTBEHEER EN RECREATIEBELEID

COMMUNITY SPORT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Critical insights for your policy

1. Community sport in Flanders
2. CATCH
3. Key findings
4. Recommendation for policy-makers and practitioners

Your active involvement

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How are you involved in community sport?

1. Policy-maker
2. Coordinator
3. Coach/social worker
4. Administrative staff
5. Participant
6. Researcher interested in community sport
7. Other/not involved at all

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1. COMMUNITY SPORT IN FLANDERS

1. COMMUNITY SPORT IN FLANDERS

Looking for conceptual clarity

- International comparative perspective
- Alternative sport provisions in Flanders

1. COMMUNITY SPORT IN FLANDERS

Common characteristics

- Local focus
- Initiatives that are accessible and affordable for the target group
- Providing more than 'just' sport in the community
  - Community sport+
  - Often linked to 'social inclusion'

1. COMMUNITY SPORT IN FLANDERS

For who and why?

- Groups that are not included in, nor attracted by mainstream sport provisions

- Sport as an inclusive environment, in which people of all backgrounds and abilities can participate and access a range of benefits

1. COMMUNITY SPORT IN FLANDERS

The initial impetus for research

- Longstanding collaboration between 'Vrije Universiteit Brussel' (VUB) and 'Flemish Institute of Sport Management and Recreation Policy' (ISB)
- Apparent from various outputs, such as:
  - Publications: 'Playing sports around the corner' (2016)
  - Project-specific research reports: 'Street Action' (2012)

1. COMMUNITY SPORT IN FLANDERS

The initial impetus for research

- Benchmark Community Sport
  - Current situation of Community Sport in Flanders
  - Baseline measurement in 2014, in all 308 cities and municipalities
  - 67 cities and municipalities provide community sport

1. COMMUNITY SPORT IN FLANDERS

The initial impetus for research

N=55

Buurtsport Benchmark, 2014, ISB

- Providing more than 'just' sport in the community
  - Personal development - 81%
  - Health and healthy lifestyle - 80%
  - Social cohesion - 91%
- Perceptibility of reaching these goals without the ability to **explain how** they do it and **measuring the effect** of their interventions

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1. COMMUNITY SPORT IN FLANDERS

The initial impetus for research

- 213 cities and municipalities don't provide Community Sport
- Reasons
  - No priority - 48%
  - **Lack knowledge and expertise** in the sports service - 12%

1. COMMUNITY SPORT IN FLANDERS

The initial impetus for research

3 major issues of practitioners:

1. Lack of knowledge, expertise and experience in terms of setting up initiatives;
2. Difficulties in explaining how they reach their objectives;
3. Lack of knowledge and tools to evaluate the effectivity of their programmes

→ **CATCH**

To which extent do you know CATCH?

1. I have no idea what CATCH is about
2. I've heard of it and have some ideas about the content and purpose of CATCH
3. I have a great insight into the content and purpose of CATCH

CATCH

2. CATCH

2. CATCH

Community sport for **AT**-risk youth:
Innovative strategies for promoting personal development, health and social **C**o**H**esion

2. CATCH
Goals of this applied research project

- Advance scientific understanding of how community sport provision attempts to have a societal impact
- Produce insights that are beneficial for practitioners and key stakeholders
- Develop practical applications to establish and improve community sport practices

2. CATCH-TEAM

Scientific research process

Research team

- **Research Unit Sport & Society (VUB)**
  Marc Theeboom, Hebe Schaillée, Dorien Brosens, Pieter Debognies, Reinhard Haudenhuyse, Jikkemien Vertonghen, Helena Wittock

- **Department of Social Work and Social Pedagogy (UGhent)**
  Rudi Roose, Lieve Bradt, Shana Sabbe

- **Department of Family Medicine and Primary Health Care (UGhent)**
  Sara Willems, Emelien Lauwerier, Karen Van der Veken, Veerle Vyncke, Eva Steenberghs

Knowledge translation process

Boundary spanner

- **Flemish Institute of Sport Management and Recreation Policy' (ISB)**
  David Nassen, Piet Van Der Sypt

2. CATCH-TEAM

Scientific research process

Scientific steering committee

- **Fred Coalter** *(Leeds Beckett University – UK)*
- **Guy Kegels** *(Universiteit Antwerpen – B)*
- **Christian Kjeldsen** *(Aarhus University – DK)*
- **Ramon Spaaij** *(Victoria University – AUS)*

Knowledge translation process

Social users

- **22 Umbrella organizations**
- **18 community sport practices**

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voor participatie
& democratie

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VLAANDEREN

VDAB

VZW
JONG

STADSLABO
JES

B
Koning
Boudewijnstichting
Samen werken aan een betere samenleving

Vlaamse
overheid

VSF
Vlaamse Sportfederatie

CATCH

SPORTING
A

BUURTSPORT

Buurtsport
Brussel

ros beiaardstad
DENDERMONDE

Boom
Stroomopwaarts

LEUVEN
EEUWENOUD
SPRINGLEVEND

IEDEREEN
GENKT
Stad
GENK

Stad
KORTRIJK

Ninove
stad op mensenmaat

stad
TURNHOUT

MECHELEN

Stad Aalst

Dilbeek

H.
HASSELT HEEFT HET.

stad Lier

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gent:

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2. CATCH
Central research question

What are the mechanisms and facilitating conditions in community sport initiatives that contribute to social inclusion, in terms of personal development, health and social cohesion?

2. CATCH

Effect versus what and how it works

Phase 1

Programme theory development

Phase 2

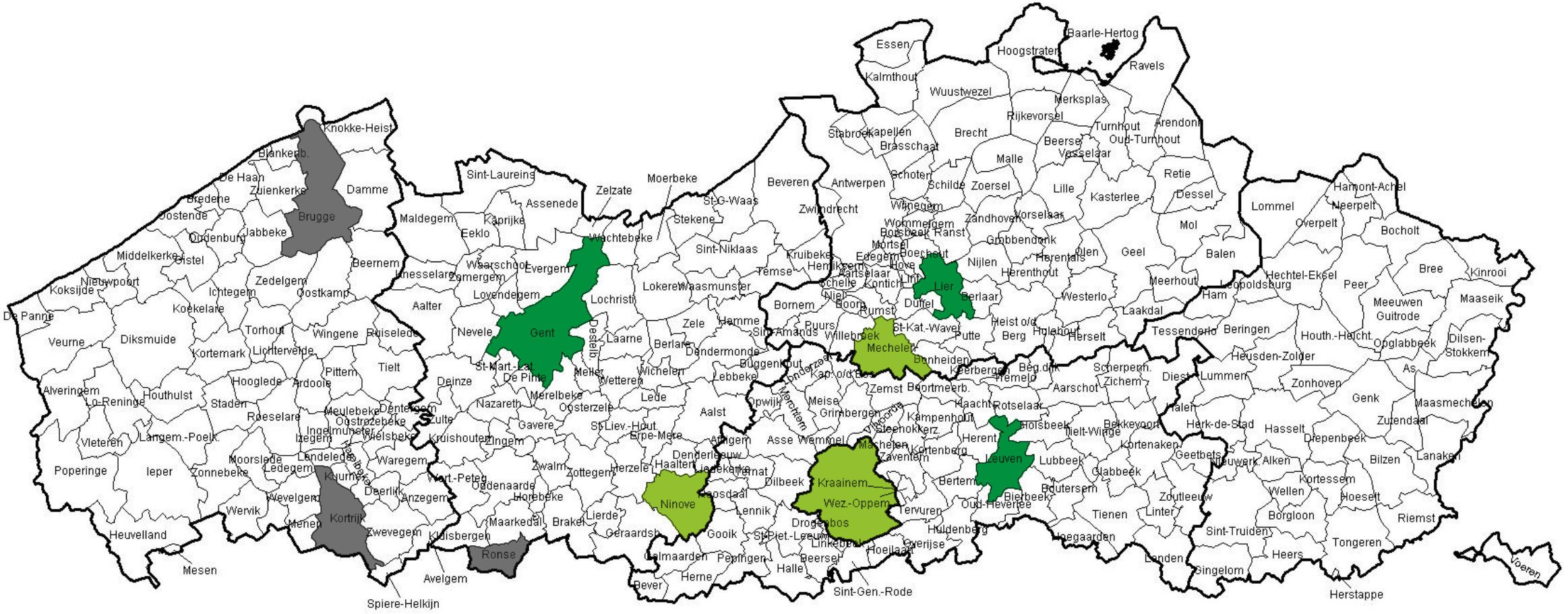
Intervention

Knowledge translation

CATCH

2. CATCH

Research phase 1: Programme theory development



Personal development

Health

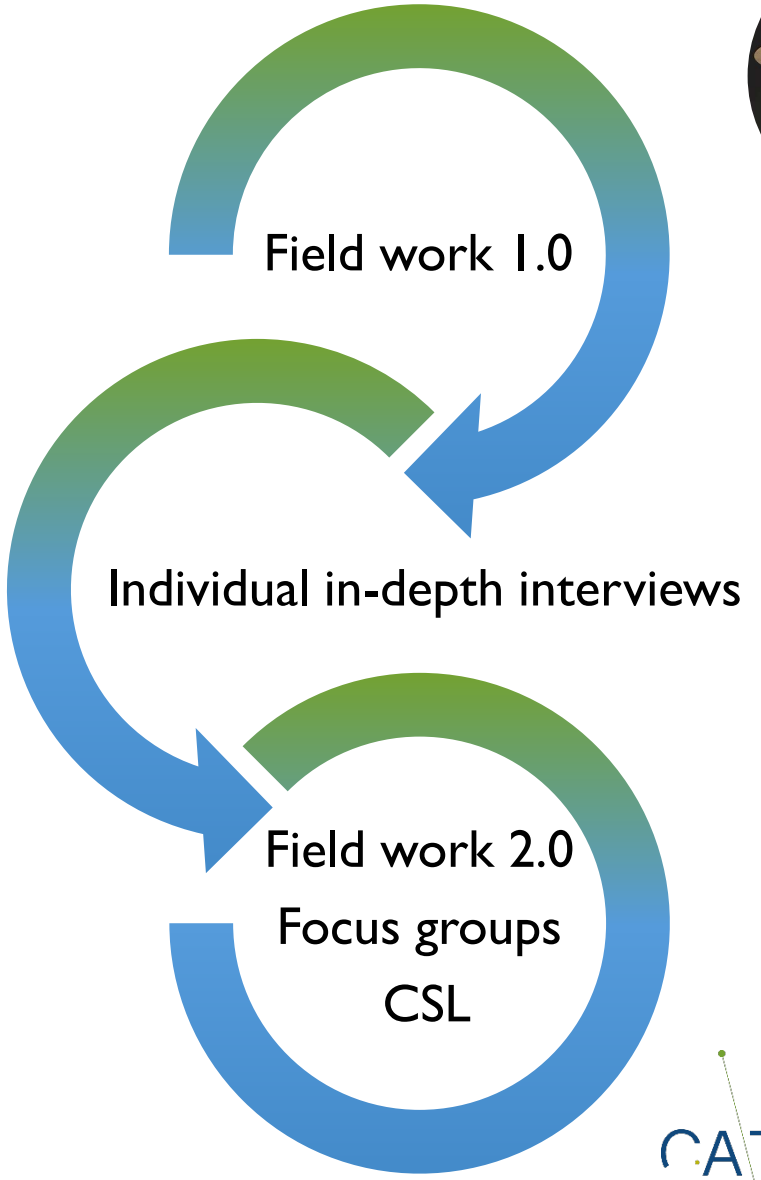
Social cohesion

2. CATCH
Research design phase I

PHASE I	REALIST EVALUATION
• Programme theory development	• Mechanisms • Facilitating conditions

2. CATCH
Research design phase 1

- Three research cycles
- Mixed methods
  - 319 participatory observation hours
  - 59 individuals in-depth interviews
  - 9 focus groups
  - 1 Community sport lab (CSL)
- Content analysis



Schaillée, Vyncke, Debognies, Sabbe, and Steenberghs (2017)

Phase 1

Programme theory development

Phase 2

Intervention

Knowledge translation

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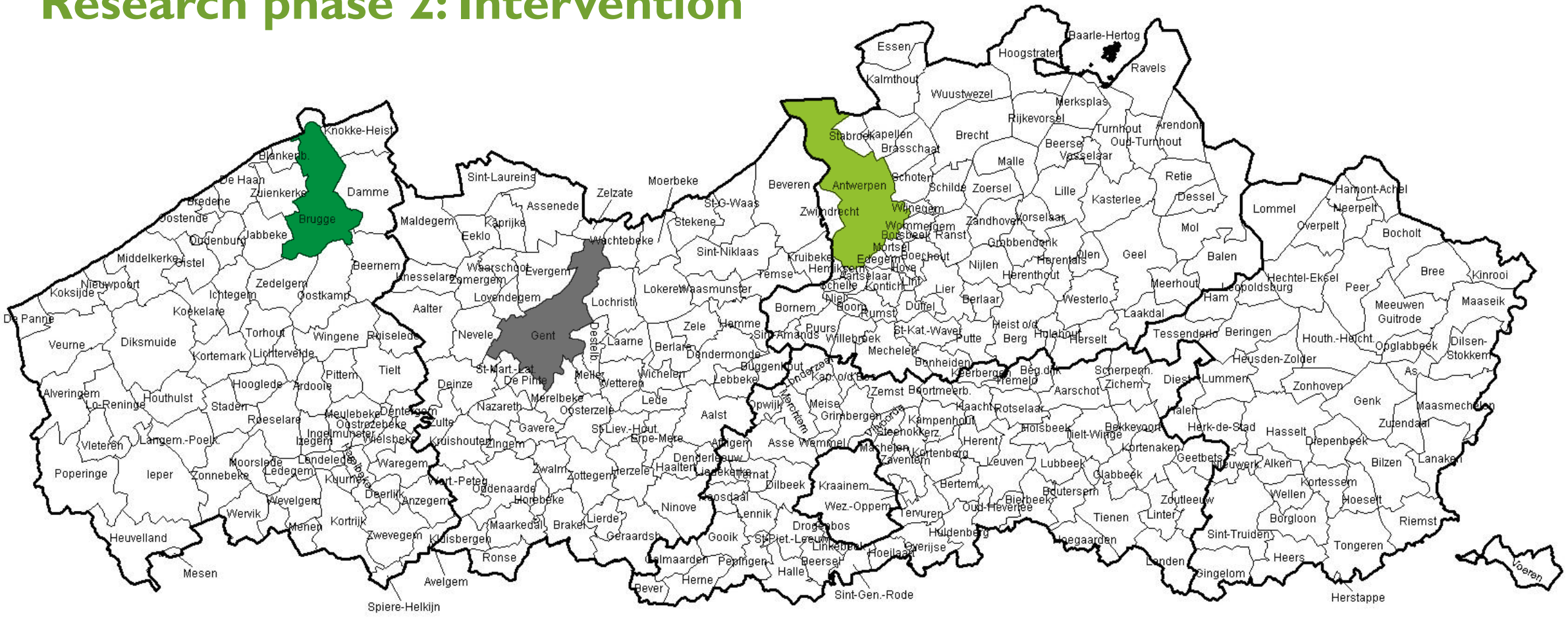
2. CATCH

Research phase 2: Intervention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Oudenburg
Nieuwpoort
Koksijde
Zedelgem
Oostkamp
Ichtegem
De Panne
Koekelare
Veurne
Diksmuide
Torhout
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Ardooie
Staden
Roeselare
Meulebeke
Oostrozebeke
Ingelmunster
Izegem
Wielsbeke
Vleteren
Langem.-Poelk.
Poperinge
Ieper
Moorslede
Ledegem
Zonnebeke
Lendelede
Waregem
Wevelgem
Wervik
Menen
Kortrijk
Heuvelland
Mesen
Zwevegem
Spiere-Helkijn
Avelgem
Ronse
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Maarkedal
Brakel
Horebeke
Oudenaarde
Kruisem
Deerlijk
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Wort.-Peteg
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Zottegem
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Sint-Laureins
Assenede
Maldegem
Eeklo
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2. CATCH
Research design phase 2

PHASE 2	ACTION RESEARCH
• Action research	• Demand-driven intervention • Co-created intervention: goals and process are determined in collaboration with practitioners

Phase 1

Programme theory development

Phase 2

Intervention

Knowledge translation

2. CATCH
Knowledge translation

LEVEL 1: SPREADING KNOWLEDGE

Community sport knowledge platform

LEVEL 2: BROADEN KNOWLEDGE

Quickscan

LEVEL 3: DEEPEN KNOWLEDGE

Practical applications: Training module and reflection tool for community sport coaches

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3. KEY FINDINGS OF CATCH

Are you able to clearly define what personal development, health and social cohesion mean?

1. Yes, for all concepts
2. Yes, for some concepts
3. No, for none

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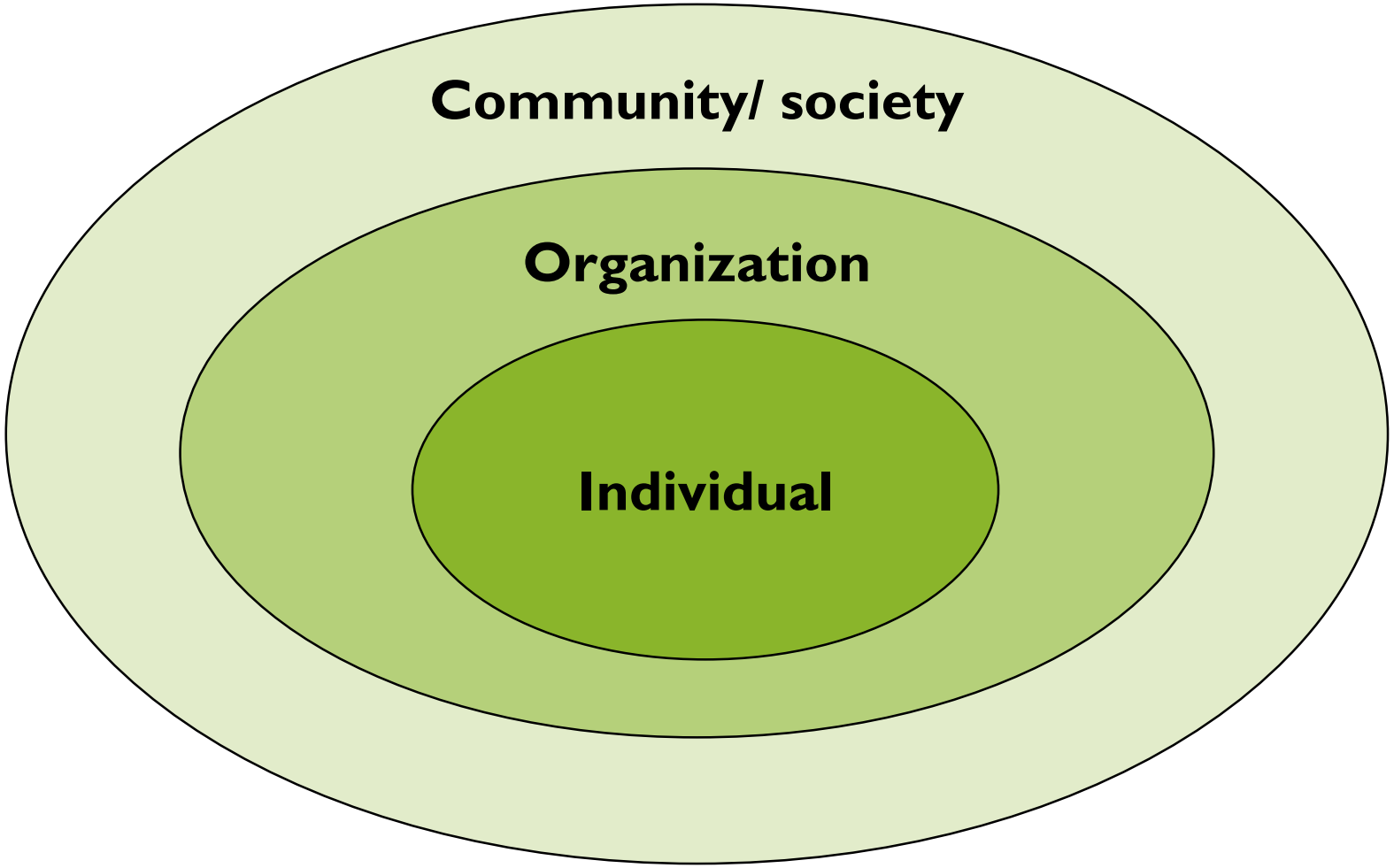
3. KEY FINDINGS

Personal development, health and social cohesion

- Notable diversity in conceptualisations
- Providing a clear definition is challenging
  - Goal oriented approach versus open-ended approach
- Explain how these goals are achieved even more difficult

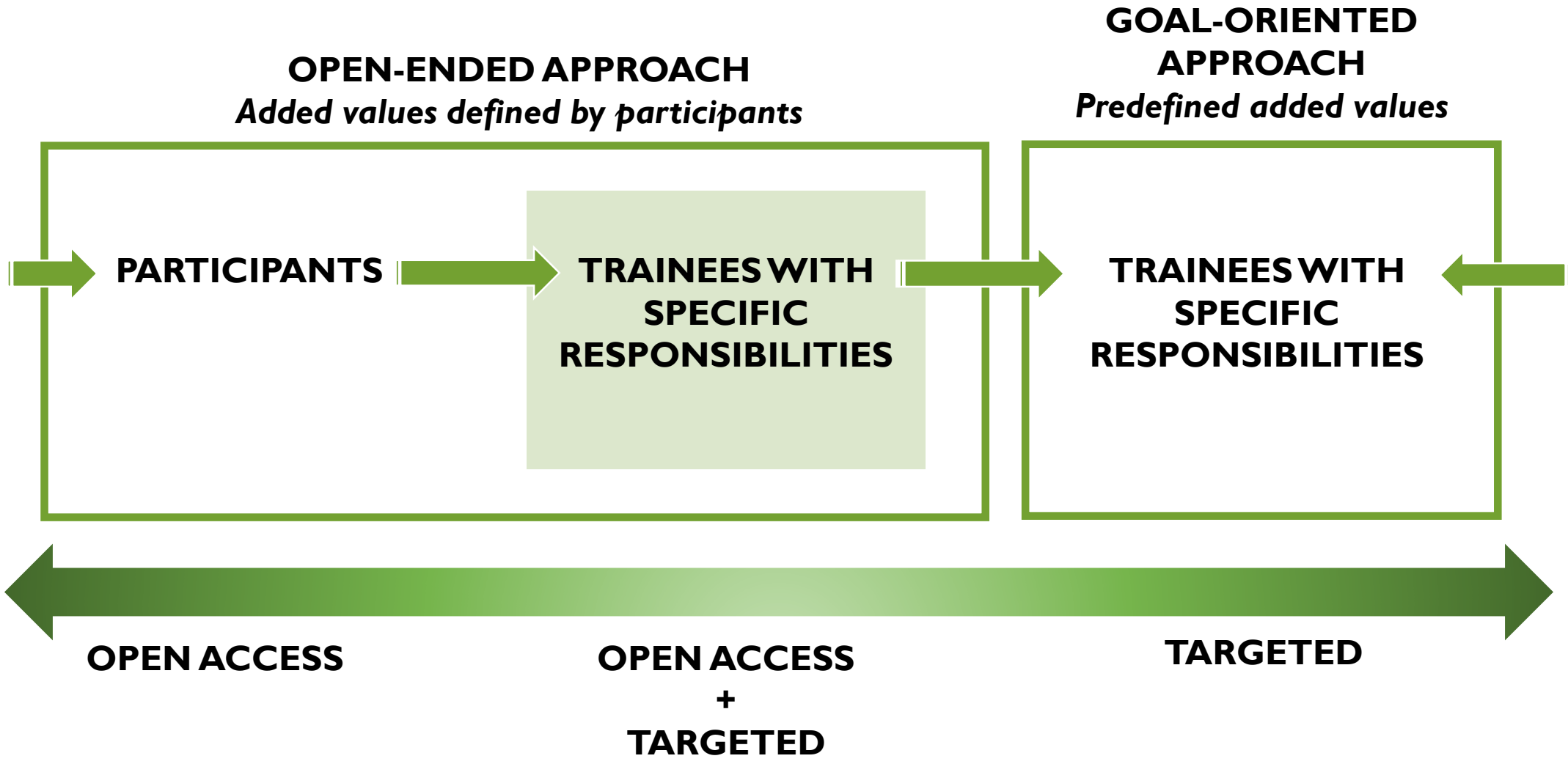
3. KEY FINDINGS

Added value of community sport at different levels



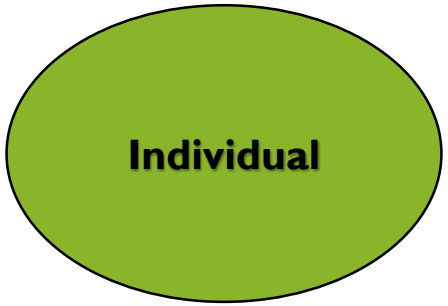
3. KEY FINDINGS

Individual level: diversity of individuals



3. KEY FINDINGS

Added value at individual level



- Safe environment
- Meaningful relationships (coaches/peers)
  - Trust
  - Valued within community sport and their own community
  - Support
- Having fun
- Access to sport

- Opportunities for successful experiences
- Increased resilience (perceived)
- More social skills (perceived)
- Active involvement and opportunities for specific responsibilities within the organisation
- Higher level of employability (perceived)

3. KEY FINDINGS

Added value on organizational level – Through:

- a focus on accessible sport in the community they reach the target group
- the use of sports' potential they create an experiential learning environment
- a focus on more than 'just sport' they have a broader legitimation base
- setting up developmental trajectories they can increase the number of volunteers
- the combination of professionals and experts-by-experience they can improve the quality of provision/guidance for participants
- collaboration with other actors they can better recruit the target group

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3. KEY FINDINGS

Added value for the community/society - Through:

- the general appeal of (community) sport for specific target group(s), external organisations have increased opportunities to reach out and work with youth in/for their community
- the collaboration with other actors, participants have opportunities to be more actively involved within their own community
- a wider use of sport, societal challenges (social inclusion) can be addressed

3 key strategies to contribute to the added values

KEY STRATEGY 1

To develop meaningful relationships with participants and trainees

1. Professionals (sport coach, youth worker …)
2. Experts by experience (trainees with specific responsibilities, talented/elite athletes …)

Key strategy 1: To develop meaningful relationships with participants and trainees

1. Professionals (sport coach, youth worker …)

Facilitating factors

- Mutual respect, trust and reciprocity
- Specific expertise (e.g., sport technical, socio-pedagogical)
- Knowledge of broader context (i.e., social, institutional)

Constraining factors

- Gap with socio-economic and cultural background of participants
- Diverse perceptions about their function

Key strategy 1: To develop meaningful relationships with participants and trainees

2. Experts by experience (trainees with specific responsibilities, talented/elite athletes …)

Facilitating factors

- Mutual respect, trust and reciprocity
- Similarity in background and experiences of participants
- Possibility to be considered as a role model

Constraining factors

- Limited specific expertise (e.g., sport technical skills and socio-pedagogical skills)
- Limited social distance
- Temporary involvement
- Gap with profile of elite athlete (sport technical level, socio-economic status, cultural background)

Key strategy 1: To develop meaningful relationships with participants and trainees

1. Professionals (sport coach, youth worker …)

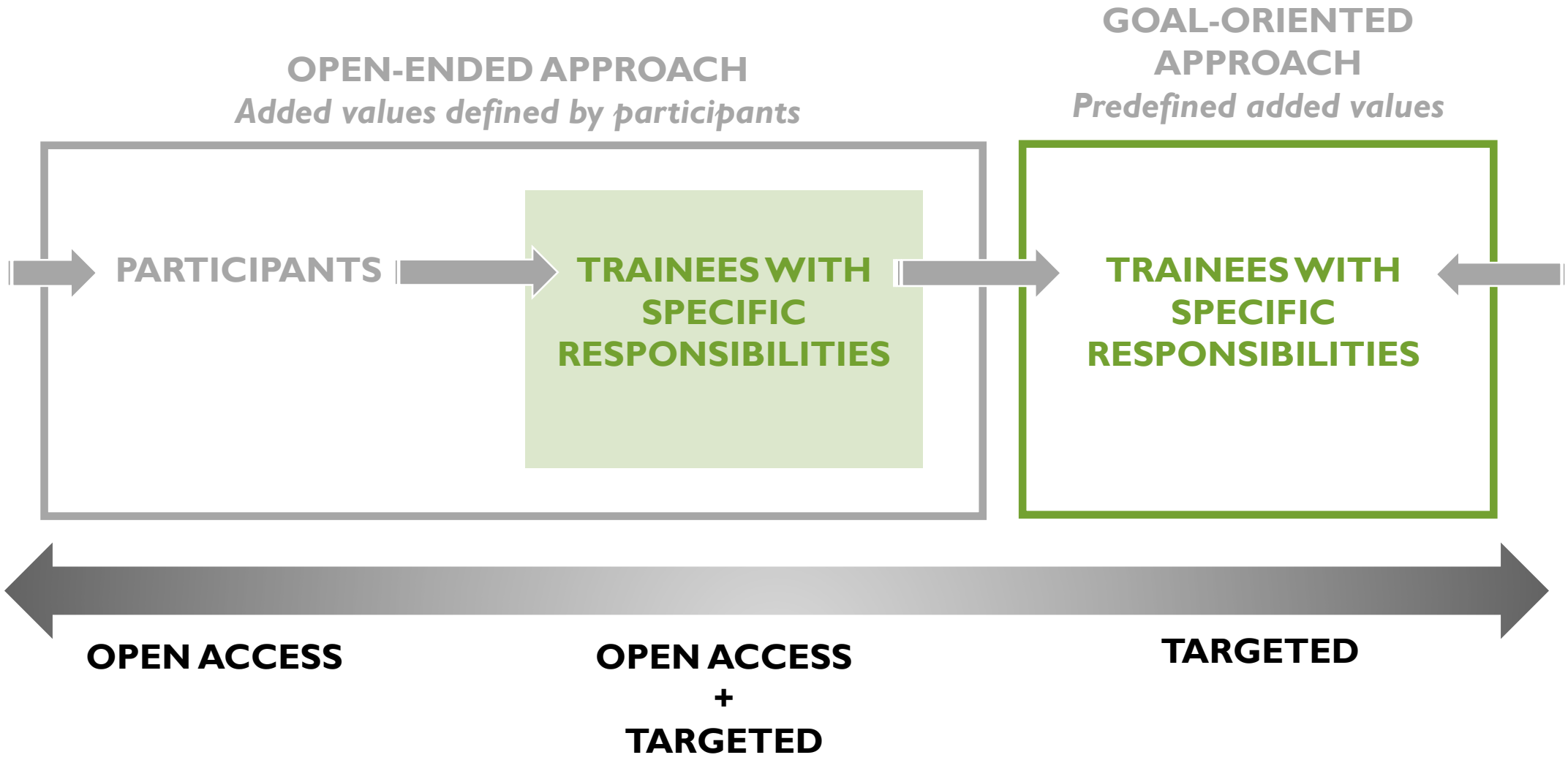
"*Quote*" (respondent)

2. Experts by experience

"*Quote*" (respondent)

KEY STRATEGY 2

To facilitate the developmental process of trainees in a systematic way



Key strategy 2: To facilitate the developmental process of trainees in a systematic way

Developmental process

Facilitating factors

- Direction setting
- Developmental opportunities (e.g., volunteering, increased responsibilities)
- Opportunities for critical (self-) reflection

Constraining factors

- Time constraints (with emphasis on outcome orientation)
- Limited socio-pedagogical expertise
- Lack of expertise of reflective approaches

Key strategy 2: To facilitate the developmental process of trainees in a systematic way

Developmental process

"*Quote*" (respondent)

KEY STRATEGY 3

To develop and use effective communication and meaningful relationships with external key stakeholders (community, policy-makers, organisations in different sectors)

1. Recognition
2. 'Signalisation'

Key strategy 3: To develop and use effective communication and meaningful relationships with external key stakeholders

1. Recognition

Facilitating factors

- Specific expertise in knowledge acquisition and knowledge transfer
- Organisational credibility
- Focus on positive branding within the community and society

Constraining factors

- Negative preconceptions (e.g., questioning the added value of community sport and stigmatisation of specific target groups)

Key strategy 3: To develop and use effective communication and meaningful relationships with external key stakeholders

2. 'Signalisation'

Facilitating factors

- Effective external communication
- Availability of relevant networks
- Collaboration between experts by experience and professionals

Constraining factors

- Insensitivity among external actors (top down)

Key strategy 3: To develop and use effective communication and meaningful relationships with external key stakeholders

1. Recognition

"*People see everything. Moreover, they see that we are doing a great job. It makes them realize that these youngsters can be trusted*" (Practitioner)

2. 'Signalisation'

"*Quote*" (respondent)

3. KEY FINDINGS

What if these 3 strategies have been implemented ...
… will this lead to community sports' expected added values?

1. Yes
2. No

elationships with
external stakholders

Community sport practice A

Community sport practice B

Fatinha Ramos, Global illustration award, 2018

3. KEY FINDINGS

Three challenging issues that hinder community sports' added value

EXPECTATIONS OF SUBSIDIZING AUTHORITIES

APPROPRIATENESS OF EVALUATION INDICATORS

AVAILIBILITY AND USE OF RESOURCES

CHALLENGE 1

Expectations of subsidizing authorities

- Managing expectations of subsidizing authorities with regard to the ‘real(istic)’ added value of community sport practice

CHALLENGE 2

Appropriateness of evaluation indicators

- Select and use relevant evaluation indicators (i.e., outcome based versus process based) for community sport

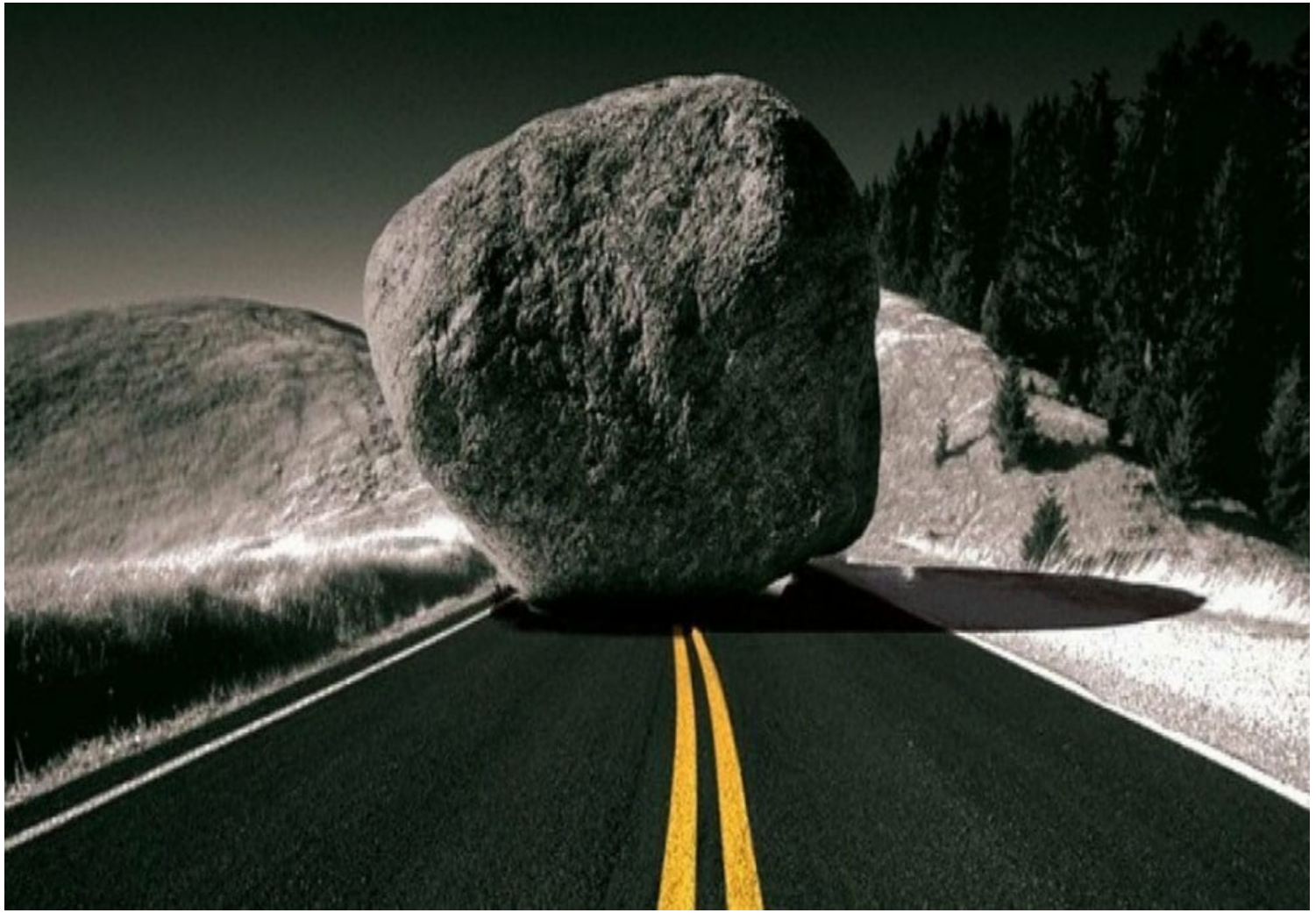
CHALLENGE 3

Availability and use of resources

- Availability and use of resources to improve the effectivity of community sport practices:
  - Availability and use of human capital
  - Knowledge and use of sport as an experiential learning environment
  - Knowledge and use of monitoring tools

3. KEY FINDINGS

The road to success for practitioners is full of obstacles



4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY-MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS

3. CATCH
Policy recommendations

1. Recognise and support community sport as a context to work with youth in socially vulnerable conditions
2. Support existing community sport initiatives that reach the target group and work towards doing more than 'just' play sports
3. Provide support from different policy domains

SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH COMMUNITY SPORT: MYTH OR REALITY?

Thank you on behalf of the CATCH consortium

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