

PREVENTION

If the term radicalisation is clear, one can move to a second phase, the *Prevention phase*, strictly related to the question regarding the perception of radicalisation within one's country (see Flowchart). Not all countries suffer from radicalisation in the same way. Indeed, some have had several episodes linked to radicalisation (e.g., Northern Ireland) while others may have not witnessed such violent episodes (e.g., Malta). Of course, actions which should be taken in response to these two situations need to be different since, in one case, there is a need to fight an existing situation while in the other case prevention of potential future radicalisation-related issues should be the aim. Nevertheless, we believe that fighting radicalisation should go hand in hand with prevention. Fighting radicalisation does not mean that prevention should not be aimed for. Thus, as displayed in the Flowchart, in the case of lack or presence of radicalisation phenomena in the country, the use of the *prevention strategy* is always advised.

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3.2.1 The prevention strategy and its zones of action

The preliminary activities presented in these guidelines mainly target youth and adolescents. The prevention strategy aims at working on specific areas which are believed to empower youth on different aspects. We believe that using a holistic approach in this phase should be of primary interest. Indeed, this is in line with the United Nation's approach which considers five different "zones" for the prevention of violent extremism through sport (UNODC, 2021). These zones all consider tackling radicalisation through different, although complementary, roots. FAIRER highly supports this approach and aims at working on different areas which revolve around 1) self-empowerment; 2) civic consciousness; 3) social



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responsibility; 4) sport cohesion; 5) planning the future. These areas are believed to be important sources of well-being and to include important aspects in the fight against radicalisation.

The above mentioned areas derive from the project “Football For A Better Chance 2.0” (i.e., FFBC 2.0), an extension of the original project “Football for A Better Chance” financed by the European Commission and led by the Federația Română de Fotbal (the National Football Association of Romania) and involving the UEFA National Associations from Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, and Portugal, as well as the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Italy) as an academic partner. Football For A Better Chance 2.0 was financed by the European Commission and led by FIGC (Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio) and involved the Football Association of Ireland, Malta Football Association, the Football Association of Slovenia, the Royal Spanish Football Federation, as well as the University of Reggio Emilia as an academic partner.

The project aims at promoting social inclusion and fighting radicalisation of young people aged 14 to 18 through football and more precisely through the development of training programmes for young athletes. Throughout the project coaches specifically deal with youngsters at risk of marginalization to manage conflict and create a cohesive environment for social inclusion. As mentioned earlier, five main areas are targeted (see also Figure 2) some of which will be briefly discussed:

- 1. Sport cohesion**
- 2. Self-empowerment**
- 3. Social responsibility**
- 4. Civic consciousness**



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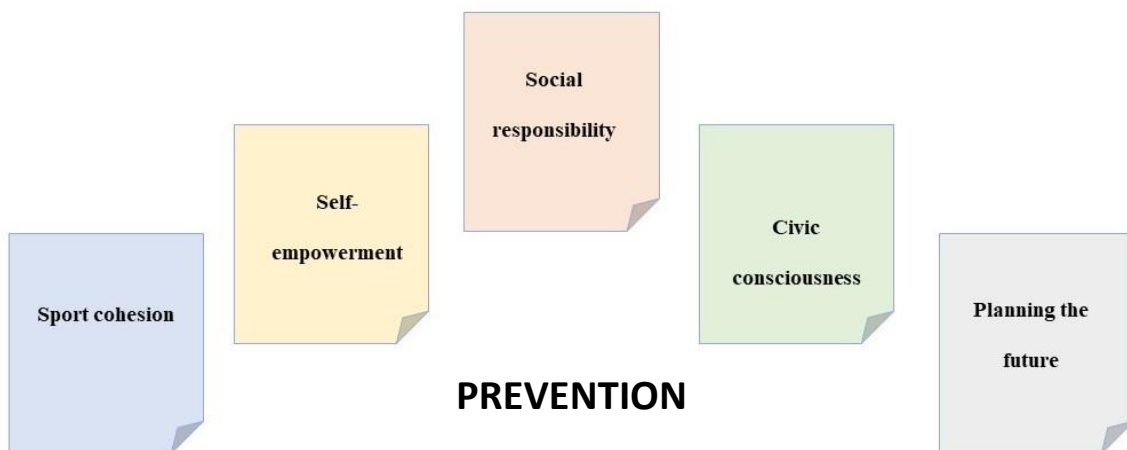


5. Planning the future

The five areas are considered of extreme importance from a preventive point of view. For example, through working on activities concerning *Sport Cohesion* it is possible to make a team feel more united so that athletes will spend time in teams instead of engaging in illegal behaviour. In addition, making youngsters believe in themselves through *Self-Empowerment*, make them find their talent, and organise their future is another core aspect believed to be fundamental to keep youngsters away from risks of radicalisation. Finally, by developing a sense of community and rules within and outside the team helps building higher levels of *Social Responsibility*, another aspect which is believed to contribute to preventing youngsters from turning to radicalised forces.

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Figure 2. The 5 areas from Football For a Better Chance 2.0 included in the prevention phase



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All areas have been organised in activities and guidelines in order to be easily used by coaches. Based on the context and main perceived needs, coaches and educators may choose to focus on specific modules and related activities included in the five macro areas.

For full information regarding the activities and trainings included in Football for a Better Chance please check the website at: <https://www.footballchance.eu/>

Based on the activities of FFBC 2.0, the FAIRER prevention strategy entails three different steps which should be implemented to reach its full potential (see Figure 3).

- The *first step* includes the use of the modules *within the football environment* where the activities are carried out by coaches.
- The *second step* brings its activities *outside the football environment* by specifically individuating *schools* interested in empowering students through the different modules. Most at risk schools, or even youth clubs, within the most problematic areas should be prioritised. Reaching these environments is believed to be an important step in this phase since it allows engaging a wide audience of young individuals which are not necessarily involved in football associations in their daily routine.

Participation of football fans in this phase is considered an additional value since they represent an important entity with whom youngsters may share a social identity as football fans, thus providing potential positive group norms to be followed. In order to increase participation of football fans in these activities, stakeholders who participated in the Living Labs (LL) believe that incentives and rewards of different kinds should be considered. These may also indirectly include enhancing commitment



to their club through enhancement of pride of doing something for their club and community as well as being a focal point for their group.

- The *third step* brings the activities in *public spaces* where different institutions such as police forces but also football fans and football associations should be present. The third phase is aimed at involving the community to convey a clear message that the city cares about youth's well-being in general. To recruit football fans, effort should be made by football clubs to engage their supporters mainly through social media and through attractive campaigns possibly held by known football players. Incentives should be considered also in this step.

Within the prevention strategy, stakeholders acknowledge the importance of collaboration between football clubs, state institutions, and relevant organisations. By working together, these stakeholders can pool resources, knowledge, and expertise to develop effective prevention strategies.

Figure 3. Steps in the prevention strategy



Notwithstanding the importance of the above mentioned activities regarding FFBC 2.0, several other programmes may be implemented and used when talking about prevention. Indeed, in addition to full radicalisation prevention programmes as FFBC 2.0, there are other



activities and actions which have emerged during the LL and that may be implemented to prevent radicalisation within the football environment specifically, such as:

- Involving children and young individuals in thematic days in which they could experiment what it means to be a *football fan* and learn the crucial positive values of this role. “Living as a fan” for a day would mean learn what a fan should or should not do at the stadium and learn to make the best out of the football fan experience by learning how to positively and constructively socialise in the context.
- Creating opportunities for discussion with young adults (workshops and trainings by educators and coaches) about the risks of several behaviours which arise within the stadium and outside, especially in the most at risk contexts and areas. Authorities may also be involved to give a clear message which includes that certain behaviours are not tolerated and some possibly prosecuted by law.
- Include conversations about tolerance in parent meetings to promote awareness and understanding of the risks of radicalisation.
- Organize role-play activities addressing issues of tolerance and inclusivity, aimed at educating children and promoting positive behaviours.
- Promote values of respect, diversity, and inclusivity during training sessions and matches.
- Help young women and girls to get more engaged which could ultimately bring about a different atmosphere based on the difference seen at some games with men’s and women’s football.



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- Focusing on finding future potential leaders who can bring a positive voice into ultra groups.
- Share positive examples of how radicalisation among young people has been prevented, emphasizing success stories and lessons learned.

In sum, the prevention strategy is meant to be a starting point for football clubs, federations and institutions interested in working in radicalisation prevention. One of the aims of the present guidelines will be that of including information also on additional prevention programmes which other stakeholders may have used/may use in the future in this respect, thus contributing to the creation of a list of activities and good practices which may be used in this respect (but see FAIRER's report at www.projectfairer.com for a partial list of some good practices which have been used to prevent/fight radicalisation).



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