

Polska

Analytical description of the cases

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Verantwortliche:

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Analytical description of the Polish cases

1. Neighbourhood Coach (Trener Osiedlowy – Głogów)

1. Broad notion of sport

The Neighbourhood Coach project represents a rather broad notion of sport, viewing physical activity primarily as a tool for community building, education, and social inclusion rather than competitive performance.

Although coordinated by a professional football club (Chrobry Głogów S.A.), the programme's objectives focus on encouraging everyday participation and providing safe after-school environments for children not involved in organized sport structures.

However, this notion of sport is narrowing as the focus is currently on football classes and league has been introduced as a way to keep children motivated in participation.

2. Socio-spatial orientation

The project has a distinct socio-spatial orientation rooted in the local neighbourhoods of Głogów. Sessions are held on school playgrounds and municipal sports fields close to participants' homes. Local schools, municipal departments, and community institutions are directly involved. No formal neighbourhood manager exists, yet the coordinating role of the municipality and the presence of local coaches substitute this function effectively.

3. Cross-sectorality / intra-sectorality

The initiative forms a cross-sectoral partnership combining the public sector (City of Głogów, local schools), the sports sector (Chrobry Głogów S.A.), and elements of civil society (local NGO "Szansa", which introduced trainers to safeguarding). During the development phase of the project, the municipality developed the idea and the club fit in; during implementation, the project partners expanded to schools, NGOs, and to a limited degree, to national football structures.

4. Change of role (referring to the sport club)

Chrobry Głogów transformed from a professional football enterprise into a social actor and community facilitator. Through the project, it assumes educational and social responsibilities, emphasizing civic engagement and inclusive access to sport. While the club has not undertaken any other 'social projects' like this before it is important to note, that it had already extensive experience in training children (with about 300 children and youth in their football academy).

5. Professionalisation

Elements of professionalisation include trained and formally employed coaches and administrative coordination within the club's structure. However, systematic evaluation is limited, indicating partial professionalisation.

6. Role of engaged individuals

The programme development depended significantly on motivated individuals such as Vice-Mayor Bożena Kowalczykowska. Its implementation on the other hand depended on club coordinators, such as Alicja Męczyńska. The project relies on individual leadership although it benefits from institutional continuity. This individual leadership primarily refers to reinventing the programme to endure it is still attractive to participants.

7. Path dependency and change

The project emerged from incremental processes rather than a single event. Local observations and social needs created the context. A focusing event occurred in 2016 when the municipality launched a call for proposals for free neighbourhood sport classes, opening a window of opportunity. Later improvements, such as the “Neighbourhood League” (2022), show adaptive evolution.

8. Representation and co-ownership

Representation was indirect via schools and officials; co-ownership emerged through coaches and schools' involvement in logistics. Participants remain beneficiaries rather than co-managers.

9. Funding

Funded entirely by the municipal budget (~PLN 110,000 annually). Schools provide in-kind contributions. Importantly the club also belongs to the city. The initiative is a social-policy investment rather than a market-driven project.

2. Ekstra FAN – Gdańsk

1. Broad notion of sport

The Ekstra FAN programme embodies a broad and preventive notion of sport, in which physical activity functions as an instrument of public health, education, and social activation.

While initiated by a professional football environment (Lechia Gdańsk and Stadion Energa Gdańsk), its conceptual focus extends far beyond competitive or performance-oriented sport.

The programme integrates **exercise, health education, and behavioural change**, using sport as a tool to promote *well-being, self-efficacy, and sustainable lifestyle choices*.

Participants were middle-aged adults with overweight or obesity (BMI ≥ 28), typically outside organised sport structures (sport spectators)

This shift from *sport for performance* to *sport for health and social inclusion* represents an exemplary implementation of the “sport-for-all” paradigm within professional sport infrastructures.

2. Socio-spatial orientation

The project was clearly **anchored in the local urban ecosystem** of Gdańsk, leveraging the city’s high-quality sport and health infrastructure.

Sessions took place **within the Stadion Energa complex** and other municipal facilities, creating emotional identification through place-based symbolism - the stadium as both a physical and emotional space of belonging.

The socio-spatial strategy relied on **linking fans, health professionals, and public institutions** within the same urban environment, making participation logistically accessible.

Although no formal “neighbourhood manager” was appointed, the coordination between the Gdańsk Health Promotion Centre (GOPZ) and stadium management fulfilled that function by actively connecting health and sport sectors.

Hence, *Ekstra FAN* demonstrates a *city-level socio-spatial orientation* rather than a neighbourhood-based one, rooted in the health governance of Gdańsk.

3. Cross-sectorality / intra-sectorality

The project was strongly cross-sectoral from its inception.

Three main sectors co-created and delivered the programme:

- Sports/business sector – Arena Gdańsk Operator (stadium operator) and professional clubs such as Lechia Gdańsk, Trefl Sopot, Wybrzeże Gdańsk;
- Public health sector – Gdańsk Health Promotion Centre (GOPZ) and later Polish Society for Health Programmes (PTPZ) providing scientific and medical expertise;
- Public administration – *City of Gdańsk*, Department of Social Affairs, ensuring strategic and financial support (a more indirect partner)

During the development phase, the key link connected the stadium operator and the GOPZ; in the implementation phase, the network expanded to multiple sport clubs, Staff associated with GOPZ and additional entities supporting the programme.

Intra-sectorally, the project also connected various municipal departments (sport, health, social welfare), reinforcing the integrative approach of local policy.

4. Change of role (referring to the sport club(s))

Ekstra FAN illustrates a clear transformation of the sport sector's role.

The stadium operator and, to some degree the Lechia Gdansk professional football club, reframed their identities from entertainment providers to agents of public health and community well-being.

By hosting training sessions for overweight adults, the stadium became a site of prevention *and* education rather than elite sport only. This transformation corresponds to a change of role towards a social actor.

The project also repositioned the stadium's brand as a civic institution, demonstrating how commercial sport infrastructure can be used for socially responsible purposes.

5. Professionalisation

The project exhibited a high level of professionalisation across several dimensions:

- Programme design: Developed in cooperation with the *Polish Society for Health Programmes (PTPZ)*, which ensured scientific validity and monitoring protocols. The PTPZ is an expert organisation consisting researchers and public health professionals.
- Staff training: Coaches, dietitians, and psychologists were professionally engaged and compensated (most of them were the employees of GOPZ).
- Monitoring and evaluation: Participants underwent standardised medical and psychological assessments (baseline, mid-term, post-programme, and follow-up).
- Coordination: The stadium operator created a dedicated CSR function for managing the project, under the leadership of *Wojciech Dąbrowski*.

Professionalisation thus occurred both in content (health methodology) and structure (full-time coordination and evaluation systems), establishing Ekstra FAN as one of the first scientifically validated health-sport programmes in Poland.

6. Role of engaged individual(s) – “people on fire” / *Ildsjet*

The project's genesis and continuity were highly dependent on one key initiator, Wojciech Dąbrowski – CSR and communication director of Stadion Energa Gdańsk. His policy entrepreneurship and networking capacity connected otherwise separate sectors (sport, public health, municipal administration).

Although institutional partnerships later developed, the initial design and scaling relied heavily on his personal initiative, enthusiasm, and legitimacy in both sport and public sectors.

The project's sustainability decreased after his departure and organisational restructuring

of GOPZ, showing high individual dependency and limited institutionalisation of knowledge transfer mechanisms.

7. Path dependency and change

Ekstra FAN evolved within a **favourable policy environment** shaped by Gdańsk's long-standing local health programmes (and GOPZ broad approach to health promotion through sport)

The problem stream included growing rates of obesity and sedentary lifestyles among adults; the policy stream featured the existence of a municipal health promotion infrastructure; and the political stream was characterised by proactive city leadership supporting social innovation.

The focusing event was the exposure of the British Football Fans in Training (FFIT) model during a European Healthy Stadia network meeting in London, which inspired local adaptation.

The window of opportunity opened around 2015–2016, when the city (or GOPZ) sought innovative preventive programmes and the stadium operator had underused resources. Subsequent expansions to female participants (Ekstra FAN Ladies, 2019) and cooperation with other clubs illustrate incremental institutional learning rather than radical reform.

Summary of the timeline:

2014 – Participation in Healthy Stadia network →

2015 – Project concept created by Stadion Energa Gdańsk & GOPZ →

2016 – First edition for male fans →

2018 – Involvement of multiple clubs and PTPZ →

2019 – Launch of *Ekstra FAN Ladies* →

2020–21 – Suspension due to pandemic →

2022 – Termination following GOPZ reorganisation.

8. Representation and co-ownership

Representation of target groups (overweight adults) was indirect, based on epidemiological data and the professional experience of health practitioners rather than on participant self-advocacy.

However, through feedback sessions and repeated recruitment cycles, participants' perspectives influenced programme adjustments (e.g. scheduling, session types).

Co-ownership emerged during implementation in the form of peer support networks and participant groups that remained active after the official programme ended.

Nevertheless, strategic decision-making stayed within the institutional actors (stadium operator, GOPZ), indicating moderate representation and partial co-ownership.

9. Funding

Funding derived from municipal health budgets (City of Gdańsk), complemented by in-kind contributions from the stadium operator (facilities, logistics, PR) and support from PTPZ in evaluation.

No traditional sport-sector funds were used. Yet, it might very well what led to abandoning of the program, as the new board of Stadion Energa considered it to be a

cost, rather than investment.

Additional visibility and symbolic value were provided by professional clubs contributing media and ambassadorial support rather than direct funding. Yet, the project never received meaningful external funding.

3. Radomiak Futbol Plus – Radom

1. Broad notion of sport

The *Radomiak Futbol Plus* initiative represents a **highly inclusive and human-centred notion of sport**, rooted in the belief that *football can serve as a therapeutic, educational, and integrative tool* rather than merely a competitive activity.

By adapting training to the **functional abilities rather than medical diagnoses** of children with diverse disabilities, the programme redefines sport as a form of **social participation, emotional development, and self-expression**.

Its design rejects standard performance metrics and focuses instead on building self-confidence, joy, and inclusion.

2. Socio-spatial orientation

The project is **locally embedded in Radom**, but its influence extends regionally through the PZU Futbol Plus national network.

Training sessions are held in accessible, adapted facilities managed by the *Radomiak Foundation*, closely linked to the professional football club.

The spatial orientation reflects inclusive accessibility: participants come from the city of Radom and surrounding gminas, with parents actively participating as assistants and supporters.

While there is no official “neighbourhood manager,” the programme relies on **community proximity and parental engagement** as substitutes for structured territorial coordination.

In this sense, Radomiak Futbol Plus exemplifies a community-centred rather than geographically bounded socio-spatial model - built around relationships of trust, inclusion, and shared purpose

3. Cross-sectorality / intra-sectorality

From its origin, the initiative has been characterised by cross-sectoral cooperation, connecting actors from:

- the sports sector (Radomiak Radom S.A., Radomiak Foundation, PZU Futbol Plus network),
- the public sector (City of Radom, Ministry of Sport and Tourism),
- and the private/corporate sector (PZU, Orlen, Decathlon).

Additionally, partnerships with education and rehabilitation institutions (schools, physiotherapy centres) and civil-society actors (volunteers, families) strengthen its multi-layered structure.

During the development phase, the network was informal, centred on the founder and a few volunteers. In the implementation phase, it evolved into a semi-formal ecosystem supported by sponsors, public grants, and the club’s infrastructure.

This trajectory illustrates the project's maturation from a grassroots initiative into a multi-sectoral social innovation embedded within the professional football environment.

4. Change of role (referring to the sport club(s))

The project triggered some transformation of Radomiak Radom's social identity. While the professional club historically focused on elite football, the *Futbol Plus* initiative encouraged it to present itself as a community-oriented social actor, highlighting inclusion and civic responsibility. The club's foundation became the operational platform for these activities, symbolically bridging professional sport and social mission.

This transformation clearly corresponds to scenario (a) from the typology - *a change of role towards a social actor*. Through the visibility of the *Futbol Plus* brand, the club enhanced its social legitimacy and aligned with the expectations of its public funders (municipality, corporate sponsors) to demonstrate tangible social value

5. Professionalisation

Over time, Futbol Plus underwent significant professionalisation in three main areas:

- Programme structure: Training sessions are designed using professional football methodology adapted to special needs contexts; groups are divided by functional ability.
- Staff development: Coaches and physiotherapists receive specialised training in adaptive sport and disability inclusion.
- Organisational capacity: The Radomiak Foundation manages finances, communication, and logistics at a professional level, including participation in national tournaments and media relations (as they also run the club's academy)

Despite its continued reliance on volunteerism, the programme demonstrates a hybrid professional model - combining social dedication with institutional rigour.

6. Role of engaged individual(s) – “people on fire” / *Ildsjel*

The programme's existence and success are inseparable from the vision and personal engagement of Paweł Pietrzyk, a physiotherapist and community leader. He developed the idea and started the initiative with the Radomiak foundation and now is responsible for strategic decisions, partnerships and fundraising.

This heavy personal dependency constitutes both a strength (leadership, authenticity) and a risk (succession gap).

Although the Radomiak Foundation provides partial institutionalisation, the project's creative energy and continuity remain closely tied to Pietrzyk's involvement, marking it as a high-Ildsjel-dependency case.

7. Path dependency and change

The initiative is rooted in path-dependent processes within Polish sport and disability policy.

Before 2021, Radom lacked structured sport opportunities for children with disabilities, despite available infrastructure.

The problem stream was long-standing: social isolation of children with disabilities and the absence of accessible local programmes.

The policy stream was activated by the creation of the PZU Futbol Plus national framework, offering funding for football sections for children with disabilities.

The political stream was shaped by the city's support for the professional club and its foundation.

The focusing event was the informal success of a pilot group organised by Pietrzyk, which demonstrated high demand and parental enthusiasm - convincing the club and city to formalise cooperation.

(Timeline summary)

2019–2020 – Informal sessions by Pietrzyk →

2021 – Launch under *Radomiak Foundation* →

2022 – Integration into *PZU Futbol Plus* network →

2023 – Ten training groups, national visibility →

2024–2025 – Institutional consolidation and municipal support.

8. Representation and co-ownership

Representation of the target group (children with disabilities and their families) is direct and continuous.

Parents participate in the programme's design, logistics, and events; some serve as volunteers or assistant coaches.

This participatory model creates strong co-ownership, where beneficiaries are not passive recipients but co-creators of the community.

9. Funding

The funding model is diverse and multi-source, combining:

- public funding: Ministry of Sport and Tourism grants, local government subsidies;
- corporate sponsorship: PZU Group, Orlen, Decathlon;
- private donations and crowdfunding;
- in-kind support: facilities and infrastructure from Radomiak Radom S.A.

However, the programme lacks multi-year guarantees and depends on annual grant cycles and individual fundraising efforts, exposing it to volatility. Financial sustainability thus

remains a strategic challenge despite strong brand recognition (leading for example to additional resources targeted for sport with disabilities by the municipality)

4. Etnoliga – Warsaw

1. Broad notion of sport

Etnoliga represents a broad conceptualisation of sport. It defines football not merely as a physical or competitive activity but as a medium of intercultural dialogue, community-building, gender equality, and civic education.

The league's format - with mandatory mixed-gender and multinational teams - demonstrates an explicit rejection of exclusionary logics of mainstream sport. Fair play points, voluntary participation, and social contribution weigh as much as match results, which shifts the programme's logic from competition *to* cooperation. In this model, sport functions as a social pedagogy and platform for equal participation, aligning closely with the ideals of sport for peace and development promoted by the UN and UEFA. However, it is still important to note that participants are definitely paying attention to competition between the teams.

2. Socio-spatial orientation

The project is strongly socio-spatially embedded in Warsaw's urban and social fabric. By using publicly accessible sports infrastructure (municipal fields, OSiR facilities) and maintaining no-fee participation, Etnoliga eliminates spatial and economic barriers to inclusion. Yet, the program is highly dependent on available infrastructure, so it is willing to move if opportunity presents itself in a different location. Although no official "neighbourhood manager" role exists, the Foundation for Freedom effectively assumes that function through long-term community mediation and trust-building.

3. Cross-sectorality / intra-sectorality

Etnoliga would like to be and from time to time is a case of cross-sectoral cooperation involving:

- Civil society: Foundation for Freedom (main operator), migrant associations, international funders, volunteers;
- Public sector: City of Warsaw, Office for Foreigners, municipal sports facilities;
- Sports sector: Polish Football Association (PZPN) and UEFA through their grassroots and inclusion frameworks;

Over time, the project evolved from a small NGO-led activity into a multi-level network connecting local, national, and European actors.

Intra-sectorally, it established links among migrant organisations, integrating them into

broader Warsaw civic networks.

During the development phase (2005–2010), cooperation was mostly civil-society based; in the implementation phase, it expanded to include formal partnerships with the city, PZPN, and UEFA.

This gradual institutionalisation demonstrates the resilience and adaptive capacity of grassroots networks in a complex urban policy ecosystem.

On the other hand, the number of partnerships and organisations in the network change dynamically over time. While there were more organisations cooperating right after the Russian attack on Ukraine, now it is much harder to ensure similar interest stemming from the partners.

4. Change of role (referring to the sport club(s))

Etnoliga does not involve a single professional club but rather a network of community-based teams coordinated by an NGO.

The “club role” is distributed across many small informal collectives - migrant associations, local groups, student teams - each functioning as a micro-community. In this context, the change of role applies to the Foundation for Freedom, which evolved from a human-rights advocacy organisation into a sport-based social integrator.

This can be seen as an *extension of mission* (from legal aid and inclusion to sport-for-integration) rather than a transformation of a traditional sport entity.

The Etnoliga case introduces a different scenario: an NGO becoming a de facto sport organisation to achieve social objectives.

5. Professionalisation

Over nearly two decades, Etnoliga has achieved a high level of professionalisation while retaining its civic character.

Professionalisation occurred in the following areas:

- Project management: The Foundation operates with stable governance structures, employs coordinators, and manages multi-source budgets.
- Communication and outreach: Professional social media, multilingual content, and regular public reporting.
- Event organisation: Logistically complex league operations (multiple divisions, tournaments, academy for children).
- Partnership management: Long-term collaboration with organisations such as FARE network,

Nevertheless, the league preserves elements of *volunteer-driven authenticity*, with many referees, coordinators, and players contributing unpaid time.

This duality - professional in structure, grassroots in spirit - constitutes one of its strongest features.

6. Role of engaged individual(s) – “people on fire” / *Ildsjel*

The project’s trajectory is inseparable from the leadership of Krzysztof Jarymowicz, founder and long-time coordinator of Etnoliga.

His long-standing commitment, intercultural competence, and ability to navigate between institutional frameworks (municipality, NGOs, sponsors) have sustained the initiative through economic and political fluctuations.

While the organisation now includes a small professional staff and trained volunteers, its continuity still depends heavily on his vision and network capital.

This high dependence on a charismatic leader presents both stability through leadership and vulnerability through concentration of responsibility, although gradual delegation of roles (e.g. youth academy coordinators) indicates partial mitigation.

7. Path dependency and change

The development of Etnoliga can be interpreted through the Multiple Streams Framework as a convergence of social, political, and cultural processes:

- **Problem stream:** Lack of spaces for intercultural interaction in post-2004 Poland; marginalisation of refugees and migrants; gender inequalities in football.
- **Policy stream:** Growing recognition of inclusion and diversity as urban policy priorities (Warsaw’s “City for All” strategy).
- **Political stream:** EU accession (2004), increased migration, and the rise of local integration initiatives.

While there isn’t clear cut focusing event leading to the implementation there were several events leading to increased interest in Etnoliga. Some of these events were: 2015 migration crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the 2022 Ukrainian refugee influx - continuously redefined the project’s relevance and scope.

(Timeline summary)

2005 – First integration match (origin) →
2010 – Institutionalisation as a regular league →
2012 – Launch of Junior Academy →
2020 – UEFA Grassroots Award →
2022 – Inclusion of Ukrainian refugees →
2025 – 30th season

8. Representation and co-ownership

Representation and co-ownership are core design principles of Etnoliga.

From the earliest phases, migrants, refugees, and minority participants were directly involved in co-creating rules, governance, and events.

The league's "parliament" structure and consultative meetings ensure that voices from diverse communities influence decisions about regulations, scheduling, and priorities. Team captains and community leaders often act as cultural mediators, fostering bottom-up governance.

In the implementation phase, participants not only play but also organise matches, volunteer, and mentor new teams, achieving a high level of co-ownership.

9. Funding

Funding is plural and flexible, reflecting the NGO's adaptability (and the current opportunities):

- Public funding: Grants from the City of Warsaw, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, and EU programmes (Erasmus+).
- International sport funding: Support from FARE network for inclusion and grassroots initiatives.
- Private support: Occasional CSR partnerships and small-scale donations.
- In-kind contributions: Free access to municipal pitches and volunteer labour.

This hybrid model reduces dependency on any single source but requires constant resource mobilisation.

The main financial challenge remains project-based funding cycles, limiting long-term stability despite broad institutional recognition.

5. Let's Play Together – Wrocław (V4Sport Foundation)

1. Broad notion of sport

The Let's Play Together initiative embodies a broad understanding of sport and physical activity, centred on play (fun, connection, and movement) rather than competition or performance.

Developed by the V4Sport Foundation, the project uses football and play-based activities to foster social inclusion, intergenerational integration, and empathy.

Its conceptual foundation lies in sport for development and education through sport principles: sport is seen as a medium for learning, cooperation, and civic values rather than an end in itself.

2. Socio-spatial orientation

The project has a distinct local anchoring in Wrocław and Lower Silesia.

Activities are implemented in schools and local sports venues, enabling direct neighbourhood participation of children and families.

The initiative is socially and spatially inclusive, engaging both urban and rural communities.

It operates primarily through partnerships with local schools, teachers, and municipal local departments.

Thus, Let's Play Together represents a distributed socio-spatial model, where inclusion occurs through multiple micro-locations embedded in local educational ecosystems.

3. Cross-sectorality / intra-sectorality

The Let's Play Together project exemplifies a cross-sectoral collaboration among the following domains:

- Civil society sector: V4Sport Foundation as lead organiser and methodological innovator.
- Public sector: City of Wrocław (WCRS),
- Educational sector: schools and local institutions providing space and staff.

During the development phase, cooperation focused on NGOs and international sport-for-development organisations as well as local sport organisation (SZS Lower Silesia) and local authorities (WCRS).

This broad partnership landscape allowed V4Sport to act as a social broker, translating between educational, municipal, and sport sectors - a hallmark of cross-sectoral governance.

4. Change of role (referring to the sport club(s))

Let's Play Together does not revolve around a professional club but around a specialised social-sport NGO (V4Sport Foundation).

The foundation has adopted responsibilities similar to those of a public-policy intermediary, linking grassroots actors, schools, and policymakers.

This marks a systemic shift from project-based activism to structured, institutional social innovation - expanding the notion of what a "sport organisation" can be in public policy.

5. Professionalisation

Let's Play Together demonstrates advanced professionalisation both organisationally and methodologically:

- Programme design: Activities are based on pedagogical frameworks emphasising empathy, teamwork, and inclusive play.
- Facilitator training: Teachers and educators receive training based on the experience of international sport for development organisations to deliver inclusive sports sessions.
- Monitoring & evaluation: Impact assessments are integrated into the project, focusing on children's social and emotional competencies.
- Institutional management: V4Sport maintains professional staff, project offices, and international partnerships

These mechanisms elevate the initiative from a local social experiment to a replicable educational intervention.

6. Role of engaged individual(s) – “people on fire” / *Ildsjel*

As with other innovative projects, Let's Play Together was initiated and driven by highly motivated social entrepreneurs within V4Sport, notably its founder and long-term president Jakub Kalinowski.

Their long-standing involvement in international sport-for-development networks (ISCA) provided credibility, partnerships, and funding access.

V4Sport has successfully built institutional capacity that transcends individual dependency, transferring know-how to trainers, educators, and local coordinators.

A transition from person-dependent leadership to distributed professional governance - a rare achievement among Polish NGOs in the sport field happened to some degree.

7. Path dependency and change

The project's origins and evolution reflect a combination of long-term path dependency and catalytic change events:

- Problem stream: Identified need for inclusive, play-based physical activity responding to children who are not in any educational systems.

- Policy stream: Alignment with local and national policies on inclusive education and physical activity promotion.
- Political stream: Support from the City of Wrocław and European programmes promoting grassroots sport innovation.

8. Representation and co-ownership

The tandem coaches act as co-implementers rather than passive recipients of training. It is up to them to develop activities on a local level, based on their observations, experience and training. Thus, the ‘content’ of the programme might differ between the localisations.

In comparison to the development stage of the programme which was top-down, the implementation is characterised by a co-ownership. The responsibility is expanded from V4Sport staff to local educators and municipal coordinators, forming a distributed governance model that ensures sustainability and replication.

This high degree of representation and shared responsibility makes Let’s Play Together a model of participatory, education-based sport programming.

9. Funding

Funding is diverse and multi-level, combining:

- EU and international funding: Erasmus+ Sport
- Public funding: municipal and regional support from the City of Wrocław and local educational authorities.
- Corporate/CSR funding: sponsorships and partnerships for events, materials, and outreach.
- In-kind contributions: volunteer educators, school facilities, and local infrastructure.

This diversified financial structure ensures relative stability and scalability, reducing dependency on any single donor.

Unlike many short-term Polish sport projects, *Let’s Play Together* demonstrates strategic financial management and multi-source sustainability. Despite the resignation of one of the donors (Associated with the United States of America) the project has not been abandoned.

6. Kavkaz club

1. Broad notion of sport

Klub Kavkaz embodies a broad notion of sport, merging competitive excellence, education, and social integration.

While it operates as a professional wrestling club, it simultaneously serves as a social-support structure for refugee and migrant youth.

The sport of wrestling, sambo, judo, and general physical conditioning are merged with educational and vocational support as a holistic vision - one where sport is a means of personal and social development, addressing gaps in both the formal sport system and the public integration framework.

The club thus bridges sport-for-performance and sport-for-inclusion, showing how competitive training can coexist with social impact.

2. Socio-spatial orientation

The project is firmly anchored in the urban context of Warsaw, but its activities reach diverse migrant and refugee communities across Poland.

Training sessions take place in local sports facilities, allowing participation from children and youth residing in refugee centres or peripheral neighbourhoods.

The club creates a safe space that transcends ethnic divisions - fostering mutual support and a shared sense of belonging rooted in sporting excellence.

3. Cross-sectorality / intra-sectorality

The Kavkaz initiative exemplifies cross-sectoral cooperation across five distinct domains:

- Sport sector: formal cooperation with the Polish Wrestling Federation enables participation in national championships and ensures technical legitimacy.
- Education sector: the club operates a home-schooling programme combining sport training with tutoring and vocational practice.
- Private sector: IVITER, a Warsaw-based technology firm, provides major financial and logistical support.
- Public sector: periodic local grants and access to public sports facilities.

During the development phase (2019–2021), the network was informal and relational, based on trust and shared community identity.

In the implementation phase (2021–2025), it evolved into a hybrid organisational ecosystem, balancing grassroots participation with external partnerships.

This organic and adaptive network structure allows flexibility but also underscores dependence on a limited number of private and personal connections.

4. Change of role (referring to the sport club(s))

Klub Kavkaz represents a new and unique model of a sport organisation in Poland, simultaneously a competitive club and a social mission platform.

While achieving high sporting results - national youth medals and international representation - it has redefined the meaning of a wrestling club in Poland.

Instead of focusing solely on elite development, it positions itself as a social actor providing education, welfare, and integration support.

This corresponds to scenario (a) in the analytical typology: a change of role towards a social actor.

By doing so, Kavkaz challenges the dominant performance-oriented logic of Polish sport institutions, demonstrating that competitive excellence and social inclusion can reinforce each other.

5. Professionalisation

Despite its grassroots origins, Klub Kavkaz has undergone a visible process of professionalisation:

- Organisational level: formal registration as Stowarzyszenie Kavkaz in 2021, adoption of governance procedures, and recognition by national sport bodies.
- Training standards: employment of qualified and licensed coaches, many of whom are former elite athletes from the Eastern Europe and Middle Asia countries
- Educational component: development of an alternative schooling model with structured curricula and vocational partnerships.
- Event management: hosting major competitions (e.g., U22 Polish Championships, Kavkaz Sambo Cup) demonstrates advanced logistical capacity.

Nonetheless, much of the administrative work relies on volunteer labour, and the continuity of professional standards depends heavily on leadership commitment. Hence, Kavkaz can be classified as a semi-professional hybrid - operating between formal sport structures and civic activism.

6. Role of engaged individual(s) – “people on fire” / *Ildsjel*

The existence and growth of Klub Kavkaz are inseparable from the vision and personal investment of Iwo Czerniawski, founder, president, and principal sponsor through his company IVITER.

Czerniawski acts as a policy entrepreneur and social innovator, bridging private-sector

resources, sport structures, and refugee communities.

His engagement has been both financial and organisational: financing operations, securing venues, and building partnerships with educational and sport institutions.

The club's leadership core also includes dedicated trainers and community members, but the organisation remains strongly personality-driven, reflecting the classic Ildsjel model of leadership.

While such leadership ensures agility and charisma, it raises long-term sustainability questions in case of leadership transition.

7. Path dependency and change

The development of Klub Kavkaz can be understood through the Multiple Streams Framework:

- Problem stream: exclusion of migrant youth (especially from Caucasus) from formal education and organised sport in Warsaw, exacerbated by linguistic, cultural, and bureaucratic barriers.
- Policy stream: absence of adequate institutional integration mechanisms at municipal and national levels.
- Political stream: increased migration to Poland in the last 10-years and, later, the Ukrainian war crisis highlighting systemic gaps.

The focusing event might be viewed from the perspective of the first successes of the club:

1. The sporting successes of Kavkaz athletes (national and international medals), which legitimised the club and drew media and institutional attention.

These factors collectively created the window of opportunity for formalisation (2021 registration) and partnership-building with private sponsors and sport federations.

(Timeline summary)

2019 – Informal training group of Chechen youth →

2021 – Registration of Stowarzyszenie Kavkaz →

2022 – Partnership with Polish Wrestling Federation →

2023 – Launch of home-schooling programme; hosting of national events →

2024–2025 – Consolidation of dual sport-social model and expansion of participant base.

8. Representation and co-ownership

Klub Kavkaz exhibits a top-down governance model.

The strong central leadership and sponsor dependency limit the degree of horizontal decision-making typical of more mature NGOs.

9. Funding

The club's financial structure is diverse but fragile, combining:

- Private sector funding: substantial, continuous support from IVITER (covering equipment, facilities, and coaching stipends) - a company owned by the founder of the NGO
- Public grants: small, short-term funds from local and national institutions.
- In-kind contributions: donated space, volunteer time, and family engagement.
- Competitive sport subsidies: partial reimbursement from the Polish Wrestling Federation for participation in tournaments.

While this multi-source model allows flexibility, it is heavily reliant on private sponsorship and unpaid work, making sustainability uncertain.

Long-term stability would require integrating the club into formal municipal or national funding schemes for social sport and education.