



PEDREGUER PARTICIPATES IN THE EUROPEAN PROJECT *Kids Running Towards The Olympics*

In recent years, European and international organizations have made significant efforts to harness the power of sport as a tool for social change and development. Despite these efforts, there remains much room for improvement.



The "Kids Running Towards The Olympics" project aims to introduce the Olympics to children at risk of social exclusion. In collaboration with partners from seven countries (Turkey, Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Spain), the project seeks to integrate these children into social life and promote physical activity through athletics. The main goal is to highlight the importance of health-promoting physical activity, social inclusion, equal opportunity, and increased participation in sports.

Pedreguer, located in the Region of Valencia, southeastern Spain, is a municipality that champions equality, solidarity, humanity, universality, and education through sport. As part of the European Erasmus project "OlympicKids," Pedreguer has committed to sharing experiences and resources. The project team includes Mayor Sergi Ferrús Peris, Sports Councillor Jose Vicente Cabrera Puigcerver, sports technicians Miquel Àngel Noguera and Noel Miralles, and Rodrigo Cano, coach of the municipal athletics school.

Initial Steps of the Project:

The first working meeting took place on June 19-20, 2023, in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, to establish the project's foundations and facilitate introductions among partners. Representatives from Pedreguer presented their town and outlined the municipal sports programs, activities, schools, and notable events.



From October 9th to 12th, Mayor Sergi Ferrús Peris attended the European Week of Municipalities and Regions in Brussels. Here, he showcased various EU-funded projects involving Pedreguer, including "OlympicKids," emphasizing the project's role in promoting equality and solidarity through sports.

Training Sessions:

In early February 2024, training sessions for children aged 7 to 14 began at the Pedreguer athletics school. Fifty local children participated in sessions at the municipal sports center, where they learned athletics techniques, including various races, jumps, and throws. The sessions emphasized both the enjoyment and educational aspects of sports.



A visit to the adapted sports school of the Marina Alta region further reinforced Olympic values and aimed to engage children at risk of social exclusion, promoting sport as a lifestyle and embracing the Olympic Spirit.

Trip to Athens:

Following months of training, a selection of athletes traveled to Athens from April 9th to 11th. At the Ílion stadium, Pedreguer athletes participated in a speed race, long jump, and weight throw, fostering international camaraderie and embodying the Olympic values of sportsmanship over competition. The event was highly positive, leaving the young athletes with lasting memories.

Adult partners, including Rodrigo Cano, Mayor Sergi Ferrús Peris, and Sports Councillor Pepe Cabrera Puigcerver, used this opportunity to plan future project commitments, particularly the upcoming trip to Paris for the Olympic Games in August.

To enrich the experience and promote Olympic values, the children visited the Olympic Museum, the historic Panathenaic Stadium, the Acropolis, and participated in various leisure activities with other delegations.



Conclusion:

The "Kids Running Towards The Olympics" project exemplifies the power of sport in fostering social inclusion and promoting healthy lifestyles. Through international collaboration, Pedreguer and its partners have successfully created opportunities for children at risk of social exclusion to engage in physical activity and embrace the values of the Olympics. As the project continues, it holds the promise of furthering these goals and making a lasting impact on the lives of young athletes across Europe.

