



SILAWAY

INFO GUIDE FOR SAILING CLUBS



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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Project Partners:



Sportski savez osoba s invaliditetom grada rijeke
rijeka sports association for persons with disabilities



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The background of the page is a vibrant blue gradient. At the top, there are two stylized white clouds. Below them, a white seagull is flying. The bottom of the page features a series of white, wavy lines representing ocean waves. The 'Table of contents' section is enclosed in a light blue rectangular box with rounded corners. The title 'Table of contents' is in a bold, dark blue font. The list items are numbered 1 through 9, with each item followed by a dotted line and a page number. The text is left-aligned within the box.

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1. What is SailAway?



This is an Erasmus program, resulting from the partnership of 6 European organizations: KMOP (Greece); Rijeka Sports Association for persons with disabilities (Croatia); Aproximar (Portugal); Fundació Mira'm (Spain); Montetauro Social Cooperative (Italy); Institute of Development Ltd (Cyprus); Nautical Club of Paleon Faliron (Greece). It arises from the need to support inclusion and the development of physical and emotional skills in children and young people with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), encouraging their participation in team sports activities such as sailing.

2. What is our aim?



SailAway intends to promote and facilitate the practice of sailing by child and young people with ASD. This initiative also focuses on improving the skills of coaches and sailing clubs to effectively involve children and young people with ASD in their activities and programs, as well as raise awareness in parents/educators of these children about its benefits and access to these opportunities. Participating in this sport is positive not only for their physical well-being and personal or emotional development, but also for their social inclusion and participation in the community. Some of the evidenced benefits include a decrease in repetitive behaviours.

3. But, what is ASD?



Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopment disorder that appears in the first years of life and is present during the affected person's life. However, depending on the support that person receives, the quality of life can be improved. The greatest difficulties are the social-communicative, as these people present interests and activities which are restricted and repetitive. People with ASD need support that must be adapted to their specific characteristics and needs according to its stage of development.

4. What is quality of life?



Quality of life (QoL) means attaining those things that every person desires for his or her life in order to have a fulfilling life. Quality of life is normally structured in eight interconnected dimensions: "emotional well-being, interpersonal relationships, material well-being, personal development, physical well-being, self-determination, social inclusion and rights". Also, that of people with ASD if we give them the chance and necessary support.

Each dimension is translated into different indicators. Physical well-being takes into account issues related to health or leisure; social inclusion deals with participation and integration in community or social support; personal development relates to education or performance; material well-being has to do with employment and housing; interpersonal relationships deals with relationships; self-determination has to do with goals and values or choices; and emotional well-being is related to self-consciousness or emotions.

5. What are the main benefits for child and young with ASD?



Sailing has benefits in areas such as executive functions to improve flexibility, waiting times, impulsivity and attention. In addition, Sailing is not just another sport: it is a sport that gives them the opportunity to participate in a team with shared challenges in an inclusive and active way. A team with both people with ASD and with neurotypical development. All this in an exclusive and natural environment. Any better offer?

Therefore, SailAway will boost the participation of children and youth with ASD in sailing. We believe that sailing, as a sport, can improve the quality of life of the people who practice it. Also, that of people with ASD if we give them the chance and necessary support.

6. What do other clubs think?



Now that we know what is quality of life and what it is made of, we can see how sailing can improve their quality of life through its possible effect on many of those dimensions. For this, we rely both on our own experience and on the background information received from sailing clubs of different European countries.

Now we will show you a summary of the opinions gathered:

DIMENSION	RELEVANT ASPECTS FOR CLUBS
Physical well-being	- Enjoying a healthier lifestyle (exercise, rest, good diet) and a better shape (balance, postural control).
Emotional well-being	- Reducing stress by learning and completing new tasks. - Increasing the release of positive hormones (dopamine, serotonin, endorphins) for the state of mind.
Material well-being	- Learning the respect for materials and sharing it with other people, being able to translate it to other contexts of their daily life (school, family, leisure time).
Personal development	- Learning new sailing skills, attaining objectives and cooperating aboard.
Interpersonal relationships	- Developing new relationships from the cooperative work necessary to crew a boat.
Social inclusion	- Performing to different tasks and roles by participating in an inclusive, collaborative group activity.
Self-determination	- Increasing the ability to make decisions and solve problems in a more flexible and efficient way. - Increasing leisure options and motivation.
Rights	- Overcoming barriers and fighting against prejudices by means of sports.

According to the clubs, sailing can improve the quality of life of the participants by positively affecting aspects such as: postural control and balance (physical well-being); the feeling of well-being, happiness and calmness (emotional well-being); the ability to solve new challenges and set new goals (personal development); the possibility of having new social experiences and friends (interpersonal relationships); offering leisure activities and options (self-determination) just like any other citizen (rights); and participating in the community and adapted activities to avoid sedentary lifestyles (social inclusion).

7. What do you think?

We would like to thank for your time so far. If after reading the above you think your club should add this inclusive sailing activity to its portfolio, please contact the closest entities that have collaborated in the SailAway project so they can guide you in this exciting journey.

8. Do not forget...

Sailing is not a very common sport, and therefore at first we will not know if practising the sport will be pleasant for participants. However, this does not mean we should not give those people the opportunity to try it and make the decision later. Through language, other means of communication, behaviours and expressions, you will be able to know if the activity is being pleasurable or not for participants. You should also keep in mind that it is very likely that the person with ASD requires a period for adaptation. For this reason, we will try to make the environment and the activity as friendly and respectful as possible. Here you will find some recommendations:

- Hold as previous meetings as you need with the person with ASD, their relatives and family members and other support people. The person with ASD should be the focus and any support must be developed around him/her. These supports can be adapted throughout the sessions, taking into account the goals you all set.

In these meetings is quite important that you discuss:

- The person with ASD likes, interests, motivations and fears.
- Potential signs of anxiety and frustration in the person with ASD and any strategies to addressing and reducing them.
- The communicative modality or modalities the person with ASD uses (oral, written, gestural, AACs...).
- Sensory aspects to be taken into account (both for their own interest and in case they have excessive sensitivity).
- How to present him/her the activity taking into account the different routines, and so he/she is able to understand what will be expected of him/her and what will happen sequentially.
- How to use different aids, visual or otherwise, within the boat and how the crew will use them.

- You should adapt and customise the activity according to the age and physical ability of the person with ASD so the experience is indeed rewarding.
- You should facilitate a positive bond between the coach, other participants in the activity and the person with ASD.
- You should guarantee the cognitive and physical access of participants providing all necessary supports.
- You should guarantee the personal and direct support that some people with ASD may need by promoting the greatest possible autonomy for him/her.
- You should organise and foresee previous activities to reduce any doubt, as well as any sequence that may be happening in the vessel if necessary.
- Please provide feedback during the activity, but avoid over-stimulating.
- You should plan the breaks in the sailing routines to avoid fatigue, and please pay attention to any physical need: thirst, heat, cold, fatigue, etc...

Finally, you must bear in mind that the journey may not be easy at first. But we recommend you not to give up trying: the pleasure you will experience once you are used to sailing practice will bring you a handful of sensations hard to find in other sports. However, participants must have the final say.

9. Where can I find more info?



SailAway has its own [website](#). You can find more information about this theme.

Also, we have created an specialized Guide on how to include youth and children with ASD in your activities. Find out more here: <https://www.sailawayproject.eu/library/>



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