NEWSLETTER

N. 3 - October 2026

"Mentor on The Move: Sports-Based Mentoring Across Borders" Project

Welcome to our 3rd Newsletter!

We are thrilled to continue this communication space to keep you updated on the progress of the **European Project Mentor on the Move (MOTM),** its latest news and valuable resources it offers. We hope you find this newsletter helpful and that it serves as a source of information and inspiration for promoting social inclusion.

Thank you for being part of the MOTM community!

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1. WHAT'S NEW IN MOTM?

A lot has happened since our last newsletter in June, so here is a quick recap of the journey so far. Between January and April, partners held **Local Training Workshops** across all partner countries, introducing the MOTM project and its **Online Training Course** to local professionals and future mentors and building interest and engagement around the project. Building on those results, **partners then met in Madrid** in April to review how the workshops had gone and start organising the mentorships, agreeing the project was ready to move from training into its pilot phase, with local pilots expected to launch around September or October 2026.

Over the summer, each partner focused on **recruiting mentors and mentees** for their **local pilot** and matching them into pairs based on shared interests and needs. That work is now complete, and in September and October, most countries held its official kick-off event – bringing mentors and mentees together for the first time and officially **launching the pilots** on the ground.

2. THE ADVENTURE BEGINS: LOCAL KICK-OFF EVENTS

Across the consortium, **kick-off events brought mentors and mentees together for the very first time** — the moment when MOTM stopped being a project on paper and became something real. Here is a closer look at how each one unfolded.

Romania - Suceava & Putna (AJSPT Suceava)

30th Aug & 25th Sept 2026 | 34 women: 17 Romanian mentors, 17 Ukrainian refugee mentees

In Romania, the journey began long before the Suceava session grabbed everyone's trainers. On 30th August, Romanian and Ukrainian women first came together in Putna over something simple: food. Cooking traditional food side by side gave space for stories, memories and quiet connection to emerge - no mentor-mentee pairs assigned yet, just women getting to know each other.



Three weeks later, on 25th September, the group reunited in Suceava for "Sport as a common language": a capoeira session that turned movement and rhythm into a shared language everyone could speak, no matter their mother tongue.

By the end of the afternoon, the 17 pairs had quite literally found each other, drawn together by the connections that had been building since that first meal in Putna. The event was held under the EU's #BeActive European Week of Sport.

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Finland - Helsinki (Monaliiku)

6th October 2026| 20 mentors and mentees



In Helsinki, Monaliiku opened its doors to 20 mentors and mentees - plus 8 children who came along for the ride - for an evening built on conversation rather than structure. Over icebreakers and open discussion, pairs were introduced to "Our Path", the tool that will guide their journey together: instead of following a fixed programme, each pair decides for themselves what success looks like and which sports they'd like to explore. Welcoming children into the room wasn't an afterthought - it reflects Monaliiku's understanding that for many participants, finding time to take part means finding ways to include their families too. From here, Monaliiku will stay close to each pair, checking in regularly as the journey gets underway.



Belgium - Brussels, Kortrijk & Leuven (Minor Ndako)

Minor Ndako brought MOTM to three Belgian cities this autumn, each with its own flavour. Brussels kicked things off on 6th October with 14 participants breaking the ice through games before settling in to build their "Our Path" together. In Kortrijk, a smaller group of 6 gathered over tea on 7th October, warming up with a dilemma game before meeting their match. And in Leuven, on 5th October, pairs went straight for competition with a game of KUBB, before swapping phone numbers and locking in their first sports session on the spot.

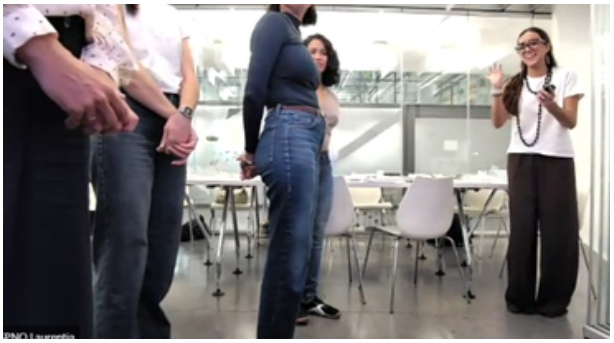
Spain - Madrid (Plan International España)

5th October 2026 |Hybrid format

In Madrid, Plan International España welcomed participants for a hybrid kick-off built around connection. The "Common Steps Map" activity invited mentors and mentees to find what they already had in common and start shaping, together, what MOTM means to them — while the practical side of the programme (roles, confidentiality, consent) was also covered, so that everyone started on the same page. The session closed with an introduction to the "Our MOTM Path" tool and the first contact between each pair, ready to arrange their own first meeting. Asked what united them, participants didn't hold back:

"Energy. Sport keeps us moving forward – doing it with women who love the same thing doubles it."
On expectations:

"For me this is something completely new – a beautiful activity that can bring great results. We are pilots, and it's important to see how it works."



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Across the consortium, **these kick-offs marked the first step of a six-month journey to build inclusion**, well-being and connection through sport and mentoring — with Greece's own kick-off still to come.

3. FIRST STEPS TOGETHER: MENTORS AND MENTEES IN ACTION

Pairs across the consortium are already putting their mentoring journey into motion. In Belgium, Leuven's pairs have locked in their first sports session, Brussels' pairs are mapping out their personal "Our Path", and in Kortrijk pairs have just started building theirs too. In Spain, mentors and mentees have been put in touch to arrange their own first meeting, while in Finland, pairs are getting started with "Our Path" ahead of their first sessions together. And in Romania, mentors and mentees have already had their first sports sessions together – and the feedback says it all:

"It was cool! It was a wonderful opportunity to be physically active, have fun, and rediscover the joy of playing. Sometimes, all we need is a little sport to recharge our batteries and feel better. Thank you to our mentors for this experience! I'm already looking forward to our next meeting!" – O.Z., Ukraine

"I really enjoyed playing padel! I realised how much I missed doing sports, playing, and enjoying movement together with others. Besides being good for our health, sport helps us relax, smile, and build closer connections with one another. Thank you for this wonderful experience! See you at the next game!" – K.M., Ukraine

More stories like these will follow as pairs across all countries begin their first joint sports sessions in the coming weeks.



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