

# WELCOME TO HALT4KIDS

HALT4Kids is a EU funded project (2023-25), focused on developing awareness about harassment and abuse in sports among child athletes (specifically of ages 5-12 years). The project also aims to educate the coaches, athletes/former athletes, physical education students, physical education teachers and other stakeholders of sports who work with young athletes and to support them to recognize and avoid harassment and abuse among child athletes.

In this edition of the Newsletter (December 2024), you can learn about the various events and developments from the partner organizations and around the world in the field of promotion of safe sports, especially for children and young adults.

Particularly you can find more information about the launch of the Digital Story Board and Online Game exclusively designed, developed and launched by the Halt4Kids project consortium.

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## KEY PROJECT UPDATES

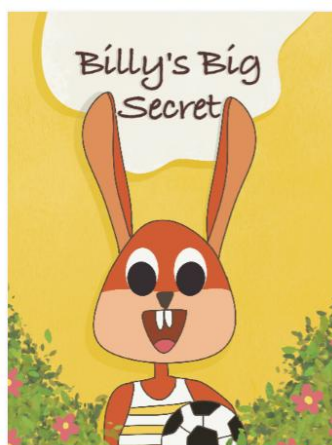
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### **Digital Story Board (Billy's Big Secret) & Mobile/Online Game (Peaceful Pines)**

We are excited to announce the launch of Peaceful Pines, an interactive serious game developed under the H4K Project. This innovative tool is designed to educate and empower child athletes aged 9-12, promoting safer sports environments through awareness and informed decision-making.

#### About Digital Story Board - Billy's Big Secret

The digital story board focuses on increasing the knowledge of child athletes for harassment and abuse in sport, by creating scenarios for child athletes aged 5 to 8, along with short readable and audible text.



In his office, the coach makes a strange request. He asks Billy to take off his shirt. To see how strong, he has become after so much practice and hard work. But Billy feels very strange about such a request.

[Read Text](#)



Screams NOOOOOOOO..... and runs fast outside feeling confused and upset.

[Read Text](#)

The characters in the digital story are presented as animals and the title is “Billy's Big Secret”. It presents cases of harassment and abuse in sports in child athletes to promote awareness in athletes and also mobilize and sensitize the public about this, as well as to support the whistleblowing of harassment and abuse in sports in these ages.

You can access the digital story book on the Halt4Kids website here: <https://halt4kids.phed.auth.gr/digital-story/> or by scanning the QR code below:



#### About Mobile/Online Game (Peaceful Pines)

The game aligns with the H4K Project’s mission to enable knowledge sharing and develop best practices in child athlete safeguarding. By fostering awareness and practical skills, the game, titled as ‘Peaceful Pines’, equips young athletes (of ages 9-12) to build confidence and resilience while encouraging sports stakeholders to create safe, inclusive spaces.



The game takes young players on a journey where they learn to:

- Identify Trusted Adults: Recognize who they can turn to for support.
- Recognize Safe and Unsafe Situations: Understand how to assess their surroundings.
- Learn Boundaries and Consent: Build confidence in setting personal limits.
- Report Inappropriate Behavior: Take actionable steps when encountering unsafe situations.

Through these missions, players navigate real-life scenarios, making decisions that help them understand harassment, abuse, and how to protect themselves in a supportive and engaging way.

You can start exploring the game **Peaceful Pines** now and join us in making sports safer for everyone. Together, we can empower the next generation of athletes with the tools they need to thrive.

You can access the online game from our website: [https://halt4kids.phed.auth.gr/peaceful\\_pines/](https://halt4kids.phed.auth.gr/peaceful_pines/), or download the app on [Android here](#), [iOS here](#) or by scanning the QR codes below:



**App Store**

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**Play Store**

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**HALT4KIDS project coordinator AUTH organized seminar in Athens titled “Halting Harassment and Abuse in Sport for kids using Learning Technologies”**

AUTH University, on 18th of November 2024, organized a seminar titled: “Halting Harassment and Abuse in Sport for kids using Learning Technologies (HALT4kids)”. The HALT4kids project aims to support/mobilise child athletes to (a) recognize and (b) avoid harassment and abuse in sport. Also, it focuses on enabling knowledge sharing and the emergence of best practices on child athlete safeguarding by developing e-learning material for sport stakeholders.

The seminar was addressed by distinguished scientists of the sports science area, on the subject of harassment, to raise awareness of the audience attending the event, both offline and online. Over 90 people participated, including parents, coaches, athletes, scientists of the sports world and physical education teachers.

The event presented the objective of the HALT4kids project, that is to raise awareness about best practices for preventing harassment and abuse in sports for kids and especially effective practices for the focus groups of HALT4kids project in Greece.



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### **Team #HALT4Kids becomes “The Voice of Breaking the Silence”**

HALT4Kids partner APS ASD Margherita Sport e Vita was represented by Spartaco Grieco, CEO and Project Manager, shared his valuable experience in promoting skills through innovative learning methods. During his presentation, he illustrated the HALT4kids project, which aims to create digital tools to raise awareness and inform about harassment and abuse in sport. This project aims to recognise and prevent such phenomena by valuing the importance of online communities.

“Breaking the Silence” is an initiative that deals with the prevention of interpersonal violence in sports, aimed at both minors and adults and is a project that marks a historic step in the fight against violence in sports. The collaboration with the Carabinieri is in fact the first of its kind in Italy and aims to create a significant impact at a national level with the objective of making sports a safer, more ethical and respectful environment through research, dissemination, training and psychological support. It is the first observatory, led by a sports club, focused on the study of the perception and understanding of violence in sports and has the objective of building a safer and more respectful environment, promoting awareness and education.

We thank Spartaco for his contribution and for being one of the voices of Breaking the Silence and for spreading the knowledge of the digital tools being developed under the #HALT4Kids project to help kids and adolescents understand the concepts of safeguarding in an easy and friendly manner.



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### **HALT4Kids presented in Salzburg, Austria: Empowering Coaches for Child Protection in Sports**

On November 9, 2024, HALT4Kids project and the tools therein were introduced to the movement coaches of ASVÖ Salzburg in a dedicated workshop. The aim of the session was to raise awareness among the coaches about child protection in sports and equip them with practical tools and knowledge to handle sensitive situations.

The workshop, which lasted 1.5 hours, brought together around 20 movement coaches and showcased the tools developed within the framework of the HALT4Kids project. Highlights included the Digital Story and the serious game Peaceful Pines, both designed to educate children aged 5–12 about harassment and abuse in sports.

In addition to presenting these innovative tools, the session included a hands-on exercise where coaches reflected on their confidence in providing physical assistance to children and discussed appropriate actions to take if they encounter or learn of any misconduct. The coaches were also encouraged to ask questions, fostering an open dialogue about this critical topic.

The HALT4Kids project focuses on raising awareness among children and adults about harassment and abuse in sports. It empowers children aged 5–12 to recognize harmful behaviors and supports coaches in understanding their role in addressing such issues responsibly.

Through workshops like these, we are taking significant steps to ensure that child protection remains at the heart of all movement programs.




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**HALT4Kids partner APS ASD Margherita Sport e Vita participates in  
Accanto a minori e famiglie, Italy**

The conference “Accanto a minori e famiglie” was dedicated to some aspects of strong impact and innovation for Welfare, not only regional, and various themes were analyzed including that of building the well-being of children and adolescents. The tools available or under construction to monitor and evaluate the policies implemented were presented and some positive testimonies were heard in terms of adolescent empowerment. The aim was to address the well-being of adolescents and the importance of safeguarding and protecting their rights in all aspects of their lives, including sports.

The meeting was attended by welfare managers of the Puglia region, the Regional Guarantor for minors and people with disabilities, representatives of school institutions, the presidents of the orders of social workers and psychologists, testimonials of life stories. Over 300 people participated, including social workers, pedagogists, educators, psychologists, teachers, trainers, representatives of civil society and the sports world.

The event proved a strong platform for dissemination of the project deliverables and helped to trigger discussions among the participants about the importance of adapting safeguarding education for young kids in an easy manner.



**Halt4KIDS presented to attendees of the conference in Cyprus titled “Innovations in Physical Education, Sports, and Exercise Science”**

On November 2nd, 2024, Dr. Andreas Avgerinos, a member of the Cyprus HALT4Kids team, participated in the conference titled “Innovations in Physical Education, Sports, and Exercise Science.” The event was co-organized by the Cyprus Association of Graduates in Physical Education and Sports Science (PASYPEFA), in collaboration with the "European University Cyprus," "University of Nicosia," "Frederick University," and "UCLAN Cyprus."

This conference marked the 2nd Scientific Conference of the Association, involving all Cypriot universities offering programs in Sports Science. The event aimed to update professionals and students in Cyprus on the latest scientific developments in the field, while also emphasizing the critical role of physical education professionals in promoting public health.

During the conference, Dr. Avgerinos presented the objectives and scope of the HALT4Kids project, as well as the digital tools developed, to over 180 physical education instructors.

The conference, held on Saturday, November 2nd, at the Shakoleio Educational Center of the Clinical Medicine Department in Nicosia (09:00 - 18:00), included a Round Table Discussion, Oral and Poster Presentations, and a Keynote Speech by an internationally renowned scientist.



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**Halt4KIDS presented to attendees of the conference in Cyprus  
"Start to Talk Cyprus-For better protection of Children in Sport"  
organized by the Cyprus Sports Organization**

On September 18th, Dr. Antonis Alexopoulos, member of the Cyprus HALT4Kids team, participated in the Conference "Start to Talk Cyprus-For better protection of Children in Sport," organized by the Cyprus Sports Organization, as part of its cooperation with the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport of the Council of Europe (EPAS).

Attendance at the Conference was crucial for all those who worked with children in sports. The Conference offered a unique opportunity to learn about best practices related to protecting young athletes, in collaboration with experts dedicated to strengthening child protection. With their participation, they gained valuable knowledge and tools for creating safer environments, and ensuring the well-being of every child in sports as the highest priority.

The opening of the Conference was declared by the Honorable President of the House of Representatives, Mrs. Annita Demetriou, while among the keynote speakers was the Paralympian Karolina Pelendritou.



**CYPRUS SPORT  
ORGANISATION**  
The Highest Sport Authority in Cyprus



**start to talk**

Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport  
**epas**  
Accord partiel élargi sur le sport



Strasbourg, September 2024

EPAS(2024)48

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**LAUNCH OF "START TO TALK"  
NATIONAL CAMPAIGN IN CYPRUS**

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**FOR BETTER PROTECTION OF CHILDREN  
IN SPORT**

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## **NEWS FROM PARTNER COUNTRIES**

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### **Initiatives from Catalan Sports Council to strengthen Safeguarding investigation**

The Catalan Sports Council with the Vicki Bernadet Foundation have created "Framework Protocol for the protection of children and adolescents against violence in sports" and the short guide "Safe sport. (Re) knowing, speaking and acting". Launched yesterday by the Catalan Minister of Sports, Berni Álvarez at Centre d'Alt Rendiment (C.A.R.), the high performance sports center of Sant Cugat, these two key initiatives are aimed at creating safer environments in sports and are designed to prevent violence and ensure the protection of both children and adults in sports settings.

With over 150 attendees from the Catalan sports sector, the panelists emphasized the responsibility of sports organizations to adopt and implement these guidelines. The framework protocol provides mechanisms to protect young athletes from various forms of violence, including bullying, cyberbullying, and harassment, while the "Safe Sport" guide offers practical steps for sports entities to raise awareness, detect, and address sexual violence. These efforts mark a significant step toward creating safer, more inclusive sports environments.

#Halt4Kids supports the protocol and the framework, an important step towards addressing the peculiar concerns while handling safeguarding issues related to children and young athletes. These guides shall equip the safeguarding officials and people working with children in responding and handling the concerns in a more effective and efficient manner.

Halt4Kids was represented at the event by its partner UFEC, attended by Alla Krinitsyna and Prashant Kumar, project managers of the International and Social Action Department. You can read more about the launch event in the official press release and also download the framework protocol and the guide (though in Catalan) here: <https://govern.cat/salaprensa/notes-premsa/636122/conseller-berni-alvarez-presideix-presentacio-del-protocol-marc-proteccio-dinfants-adolescents-davant-violencies-lambit-esportiu-guia-breusport-segur>



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## **New Austrian documentary titled “Children in Elite Sport”**

The Olympics is definitely the paragon of human performance. But do we think about the background and life of the young athletes!

A newly released documentary on arte.tv titled Children in Elite Sport (Kinder im Spitzensport) revisits this issue and exposes the harsh realities behind the glittering world of elite sports, where children often sacrifice their childhoods for the pursuit of greatness.

From gymnasts to football players, young athletes face extreme training conditions that lead to devastating physical and mental health issues, with some suffering injuries and illnesses before they even turn ten. Despite the lessons of the past, including the inhumane training regimes of the Eastern Bloc, little has changed.

The documentary sheds light on the widespread abuse of children in elite sports, where excessive training, doping, and intense pressure result in lasting harm—stress fractures, depression, social isolation, and more. The voices of affected athletes, like those in the "Gymnasts for Change" movement, are now rising to demand justice. With international conventions failing to protect these young athletes, there is a growing call to apply the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to competitive sports.

This documentary, available in German and French (with subtitles in English, German, French, Italian and Polish) is a powerful reminder that the rights and well-being of children must come before medals and accolades.

Watch the documentary here: <https://www.arte.tv/de/videos/115069-000-A/kinder-im-spitzensport/>



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## **NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

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### **Updates from Cyber Abuse Protection Service News (IOC, Paris Olympics 2024)**

On the occasion of World Mental Health Day (10th October 2024), the International Olympic Committee (IOC) released the initial figures from the new artificial intelligence (AI)-powered cyber

abuse protection service that was put in place during the Olympic Games Paris 2024, the largest and most comprehensive service of its kind in sports history.

During the Paris Games, the online abuse protection service analysed 2.4 million posts and comments from the 20,000 athletes' and officials' social media handles, in real time and in over 35 languages. One of the most important achievements was that it flagged over 152,000 posts and comments as being potentially abusive via AI and tagged over 10,200 posts and comments as abusive, and reported these to the platforms for removal.

It was reported that in many cases these escalations were made even before they reached the athletes. Protecting athletes, especially young athletes from abuse and hate speech, including online abuse and bullying is key to creating a safe sporting environment.

Use of such technology and innovative tools are at the heart of #HALT4Kids project. Such initiatives are strongly supported and welcomed by the entire #H4K consortium.

Read more about the report of IOC about the cyber abuse protection service which was released on the occasion of #WorldMentalHealthDay here:

<https://olympics.com/ioc/news/world-mental-health-day-how-the-ioc-ran-the-largest-online-abuse-prevention-programme-ever-conducted-in-sport-at-paris-2024>



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### **Sport Integrity Australia launched 'Children's Activity Book' during their National Children's Week (October 2024)**

Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) has unveiled a new children's activity book, designed for ages 5-8, to promote positive and ethical behaviors in sport. The book emphasizes on the ideals for sport in a fun and engaging way and ensures those most vulnerable are getting the education they need to help build safe sporting environments.

The book is designed to empower future athletes with values like respect and integrity from the ground up, supporting the idea that instilling these values early on helps create safe and inclusive sporting spaces for all.

This initiative is very much in lines of the 'Digital Story Board' (see above) of #Halt4Kids project, which not only strengthens the importance of such tools but also helps prove the need of helping the kids of age 5-8 to become aware and identify harassment and abuse in sports, in a fun and interactive manner.

If interested, you can read more about the initiative of SIA and download their book here: [www.sportintegrity.gov.au/news/media-statements/2024-10/sport-integrity-australia-launches-childrens-activity-book](http://www.sportintegrity.gov.au/news/media-statements/2024-10/sport-integrity-australia-launches-childrens-activity-book)



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***HALT4Kids project is focused on developing awareness about harassment and abuse in sports among child athletes, coaches, athletes/former athletes, physical education students, physical education teachers and sport sector stakeholders.***

***Visit the website and follow the social media channels of the HALT4Kids project to keep yourself updated about the upcoming events and reports:***

Website <http://halt4kids.phed.auth.gr>

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100091602860387](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100091602860387)

INSTAGRAM: [www.instagram.com/halt4kids/](http://www.instagram.com/halt4kids/)

X (formerly TWITTER): <https://X.com/HALT4kids>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/halt4kids/>

***Don't want to miss any update from HALT4Kids? [Click here](#) to join the mailing list and receive this Newsletter and other updates about the HALT4Kids project straight to your inbox.***