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**S4IN**   
SAILING FOR INCLUSION

# **POLICY RECCOMENDATIONS**

## **FOR THE INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN SAILING ACTIVITIES**





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**Project Sailing for Inclusion - Sail4IN**  
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# 1. THE SAIL4IN PROJECT

By the year 2020, the EU is estimated to have 120 million people with disabilities, conditions which are often cited as reasons for not participating in sport(s) and physical activities. Sport's values in relation to social inclusion, and in particular the role of sport in promoting and achieving the integration of minorities and marginalized groups, can (both) play a major role.

The European Council also highlighted the importance in its conclusions of the access to sport(s) for people with disabilities. Sports should be specifically designed for persons with disabilities or adapted to enable access for persons with disabilities regardless of the type of impairment, be it physical, intellectual or sensory. In certain conditions, sports for persons with disabilities can be practiced alongside those without disabilities, which demonstrates its inclusive nature. Sport's values in relation to social inclusion, and in particular the role of sport in promoting and achieving the integration of minorities and marginalized groups, can (both) play a major role. In this context, the "Sailing for Inclusion" aims to ensure that people with disabilities (PWDs) have access to sport. In particular, the proposal aims to promote sailing for PWDs. Sailing is often considered not totally accessible both for people with and without disability) as a tool for social inclusion. The inclusiveness of the project idea lies in the involvement of both PWDs and other relevant stakeholders, such as families, educators, caregivers and staff members of sport organizations in sailing activities.



## 2. INTRODUCTION



Inclusion in sports and recreational activities is a fundamental principle of our society, embodying the values of diversity, equity, and social integration. With its unique blend of skill, teamwork, and connection to nature, Sailing represents an exciting avenue for including individuals with intellectual disabilities.

As coaches, yacht club managers, boat owners, and sailing program leaders, we have a vital role in ensuring that sailing is accessible to all, regardless of their abilities.

This document outlines the **vision of the SAIL4IN** project consortium for inclusive sailing and the actions and policies required to turn this vision into reality.

# 3. CURRENT LANDSCAPE



As we assess the current landscape of sailing and inclusion, it is essential to acknowledge the achievements and progress made in the realm of Paralympic sailing. Paralympic sailing has evolved into a well-established discipline, providing opportunities for individuals with various physical disabilities to compete at the highest levels. This success is a testament to the power of inclusive sporting practices and demonstrates that barriers can be overcome with the right policies and support.

However, it is equally crucial to recognize that, despite these advancements, individuals with intellectual disabilities continue to face significant barriers when it comes to participating in sailing activities. While Paralympic sailing has paved the way for individuals with physical disabilities to excel in the sport, society has not extended the same opportunities and support to those with intellectual disabilities.

This gap in access and participation for individuals with intellectual disabilities is a stark reminder of the remaining work. We cannot rest on our laurels and must strive for inclusivity across all population segments. The sailing community has the potential to be an exemplar of diversity and inclusion, and it is incumbent upon nautical facilitators and mentors to address these disparities and create a more equitable and inclusive sailing environment for all, regardless of their abilities. This document presents a roadmap to bridge this gap and ensure that individuals with intellectual disabilities have the same opportunities to experience the joys and benefits of sailing as their peers in the Paralympic sailing community.

# 4. POLICY FRAMEWORK

Our policy framework is rooted in a multi-faceted approach, drawing inspiration and guidance from various policy documents and international agreements that underscore the importance of inclusion in sports and recreational activities. In particular, we take into account the following key policy documents and principles:

1.

## **Articles 6 and 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU):**

These articles outline the competencies and actions of the European Union in the area of sport. They emphasize the promotion of European sporting issues while respecting the unique nature of sport, its voluntary structures, and its essential social and educational role. Our policy framework aligns with the spirit of these articles, recognizing the European Union role in fostering inclusivity in sports, including sailing.

2.

## **United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

We are guided by the United Nations 2030 Agenda principles, which encompasses 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We acknowledge the pivotal role of sport as an essential enabler of sustainable development, contributing to peace, tolerance, respect, and empowerment. Sport also plays a critical role in achieving health, education, and social inclusion objectives. Our policies aim to align with these global sustainability goals and leverage the transformative power of sports to enhance the well-being of individuals and communities.

3.

## **Regulation (EU) 2021/817 – Erasmus+**

We recognize the significance of Regulation (EU) 2021/817, which establishes Erasmus+: The Union Program for education and training, youth, and sport. Within this framework, the sport chapter holds particular relevance, and social inclusion is one of the key priorities. Our policies are designed to complement and integrate with the objectives outlined in this regulation, fostering educational opportunities, training, and youth development within the context of inclusive sailing.

4.

## **Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030**

Additionally, our policy framework is informed by the “Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030,” recognizing the importance of promoting the rights and inclusion of individuals with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities, in sports and recreational activities.

We aim to create a harmonized approach that aligns with broader European and international sports, sustainability, and education goals by grounding our policy framework in these key documents and principles. In doing so, we seek to maximize the positive impact of sailing activities for individuals with intellectual disabilities, ensuring that they have the opportunity to participate fully and contribute to the broader objectives of a more inclusive and equitable society.

# 5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Our policy recommendations are informed by scientific literature and practical observations during the SAIL4IN piloting events. The SAIL4IN Piloting Report provides a detailed description of the events carried in Italy, Croatia and Bulgaria.

Throughout these events, we had the opportunity to witness and validate firsthand the numerous benefits that individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) can gain from practical sailing experiences. These benefits align closely with the findings documented in the scientific literature. Key observations include improved physical well-being, enhanced mental health, strengthened social integration, skill development, and heightened community engagement. These experiences underscore the transformative potential of sailing as an inclusive activity, making it all the more imperative to ensure widespread access and participation.

These policy recommendations are specifically addressed to a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including Sailing international governing bodies, national sailing federations, the Paralympic Committee, the Para Sailing Academy of the FIV, sailing clubs, and private boat owners. We recognize the pivotal role of these entities in shaping the landscape of sailing activities.





Whether at the international, national, or local level, the commitment of these stakeholders is paramount in fostering the development of inclusive sailing programs that benefit their local communities. These recommendations serve as a comprehensive guide to navigating the path toward a more inclusive and equitable sailing environment, promoting social cohesion and personal growth while enriching the sailing community as a whole.

Results from SAIL4IN Piloting events allowed us to define the potential benefits that these recommendations can offer to each group of stakeholders:

## #1 Sailing International Governing Bodies

For international governing bodies of sailing, embracing inclusive policies can lead to broader and more diverse participation in sailing at the global level. This inclusivity not only aligns with the principles of equity and social responsibility but also strengthens the sport's global appeal. It opens doors to new talent and a wider fan base, fostering the growth and sustainability of sailing as a sport while enriching its cultural and social relevance.



## #2 National Sailing Federations:

National sailing federations stand to gain from implementing inclusive policies through increased membership and participation. By expanding their outreach to individuals with ID, these federations can tap into a previously untapped demographic of potential sailors and supporters. This growth contributes to a more robust and vibrant sailing community at the national level, with enriched diversity and a broader base of engaged stakeholders.

## #3

### Sailing Clubs

Sailing clubs play a pivotal role as the frontlines of local communities. Embracing inclusion not only aligns with their mission of promoting the sport but also enhances their reputation as community builders. Sailing clubs that offer inclusive programs attract a diverse membership base and foster a sense of belonging for individuals with ID. These clubs become hubs for social interaction, education, and skill development, thereby contributing to the broader well-being and unity of the communities they serve.



## #4

### Private Boat Owners

Private boat owners, who often serve as the backbone of local sailing communities, can experience personal satisfaction by actively participating in inclusive sailing initiatives. By opening their vessels and sharing their passion for sailing, they become agents of change within their communities. Private boat owners also have the opportunity to form lasting friendships and connections, broadening their social networks while positively impacting the lives of individuals with ID.

Our policy recommendations are not only a means of promoting inclusion and improving the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities but also a pathway toward growth, enrichment, and social impact for sailing stakeholders at all levels. By working together to implement these recommendations, we can create a more inclusive and vibrant sailing community that benefits everyone involved.

## 6. FUNDING AND RESOURCES:

Implementing policies to foster inclusion in sailing activities for individuals with intellectual disabilities requires a strategic approach to secure the necessary funding and resources. These initiatives are not only socially and morally imperative but also hold the potential to yield significant returns for the broader community. Here, we explore various potential funding sources and strategies to ensure the successful implementation of these policies:

### #1 Government Grants and Programs:

Seeking financial support from government agencies at local, regional, and national levels is a key avenue for funding. Grants and programs focused on sports, education, youth, and disability inclusion can provide substantial resources. Policymakers and organizations involved in sailing should proactively engage with relevant government bodies to explore funding opportunities.

### #2 Corporate Sponsorships and Partnerships:

Engaging with corporate sponsors and establishing partnerships with businesses that align with the values of inclusion can be a fruitful funding strategy. Companies often support community initiatives as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts. Sailing clubs and organizations can approach local and national businesses for sponsorship and collaboration.

### #3 Philanthropic Foundations and Nonprofits:

Many philanthropic foundations and nonprofits are dedicated to promoting inclusion and supporting individuals with disabilities. Identifying these organizations and submitting grant proposals can provide funding for inclusive sailing programs. Foundations focusing on sports, disability advocacy, or youth development may be particularly interested in supporting these initiatives.

### #4 Crowdfunding and Community Fundraisers:

Engaging the local community through crowdfunding platforms and community fundraisers can generate financial support. These initiatives not only raise funds but also increase awareness and engagement within the community. Hosting events, auctions, or online crowdfunding campaigns can be effective strategies.

## #5

### Private Donors and Benefactors

Individuals who are passionate about sailing and disability inclusion may be willing to contribute as private donors or benefactors. Engaging with local philanthropists, sailors, or individuals who have a personal connection to the cause can lead to substantial donations and support.

## #6

### Regional Sports Funding Initiatives

Some regions have dedicated sports funding initiatives aimed at promoting inclusivity in sports. Investigating the availability of such programs and tailoring proposals to their specific requirements can be a strategic approach to securing resources.

## #7

### Erasmus+ Sport Chapter

As part of Regulation (EU) 2021/817, the sport chapter of Erasmus+ provides opportunities for funding education, training, and youth development in sports. Organizations involved in inclusive sailing initiatives can explore the possibilities within this framework and submit proposals to access resources.

## #8

### Local and National Disability Grants

Many countries offer grants specifically designed to support programs that enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities. Identifying and applying for these grants can be a valuable funding source for inclusive sailing projects.

Strategic planning and collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including government bodies, corporate partners, foundations, and the local community, are essential in securing the necessary funding and resources. By diversifying funding sources and engaging in proactive fundraising efforts, we can ensure the successful implementation of policies to promote inclusion in sailing for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

# 7. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

While our policy recommendations provide a comprehensive framework for inclusion in sailing for individuals with intellectual disabilities, successful implementation hinges on recognizing the diversity of needs and conditions at the local level. It is imperative to adopt tailor-made strategies that consider each community's unique characteristics and requirements. Here, we underscore the significance of adaptable implementation strategies:

## »» ASSESSING LOCAL NEEDS:

Begin the implementation process by thoroughly assessing the local community's specific needs, resources, and capacities. Engage with local disability advocacy groups, sailing clubs, and community organizations to gain insights into the existing infrastructure and opportunities.

## »» STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION:

Seeking financial support from government agencies at local, regional, and national levels is a key avenue for funding. Grants and programs focused on sports, education, youth, and disability inclusion can provide substantial resources. Policymakers and organizations involved in sailing should proactively engage with relevant government bodies to explore funding opportunities.

## »» CUSTOMIZING PROGRAMS:

Tailor sailing programs and activities to match the capabilities and preferences of community members with intellectual disabilities. Recognize that what works in one area may not transfer directly to another. Personalized programs are more likely to resonate with participants and lead to meaningful engagement.

## »» TRAINING AND EDUCATION:

Develop training programs and resources that cater to the needs of local sailing instructors and volunteers. Address the specific challenges and opportunities presented by individuals with intellectual disabilities in the local context. Training should promote sensitivity, inclusion, and adaptability.

## »» ACCESSIBILITY AND FACILITIES:

Evaluate the accessibility of sailing facilities within the community. Identify areas that may require modifications or improvements to accommodate diverse abilities. Prioritize efforts to ensure that individuals with disabilities can access and enjoy the benefits of sailing.

## »» AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS:

Launch local awareness campaigns to promote the benefits of inclusive sailing and dispel misconceptions. Engage with schools, community centers, and local media outlets to reach a broader audience and encourage participation.

## »» CONTINUOUS EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK:

Implement a system for continuous evaluation and feedback. Regularly assess the impact of inclusive sailing programs within the local community. Encourage open dialogue with participants and stakeholders to make necessary adjustments and improvements.

## »» ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY:

Acknowledge that circumstances and needs may evolve over time. Implementation strategies should be adaptable and flexible, allowing for adjustments in response to changing local dynamics, emerging challenges, or new opportunities.

By embracing the concept of tailor-made implementation strategies, we can better address the diverse needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities in different communities. Localized efforts foster a sense of ownership, empowerment, and sustained engagement, ultimately leading to the successful integration of inclusive sailing within the fabric of each unique locality.

# 8.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Ensuring the effectiveness of our policies is paramount. We propose ongoing monitoring and evaluation methods, including feedback mechanisms from individuals with intellectual disabilities and stakeholders.

By regularly assessing our progress, we can make necessary adjustments and continue on the path toward full inclusion in sailing.



# 9. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

The success of inclusive sailing policies and programs hinges on robust public awareness and advocacy efforts. By effectively communicating the importance of inclusion in sailing for individuals with intellectual disabilities, we can mobilize support, engage the community, and foster an environment of acceptance and enthusiasm. Here, we outline key strategies for raising awareness and advocating for inclusive sailing:

## 1 EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Launch educational programs aimed at schools, community centers, and youth organizations. These programs can introduce sailing as an inclusive and accessible activity while dispelling myths and misconceptions about individuals with intellectual disabilities. Invite guest speakers, conduct workshops, and organize school visits to engage and inspire students.

## 2 COMMUNITY EVENTS AND OPEN DAYS

Organize inclusive sailing events and open days to showcase the benefits of participation. These events can provide firsthand experiences to individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families, promoting understanding and enthusiasm within the community. Encourage local sailing clubs to host such events.

## 3 SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE CAMPAIGNS

Leverage social media platforms and online campaigns to reach a wider audience. Share success stories, videos, and testimonials from individuals who have benefited from inclusive sailing. Create engaging content that highlights the transformative power of inclusion and encourages participation.

## 4 COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS:

Form partnerships with local disability advocacy groups, sports organizations, and community influencers. Collaborative efforts amplify the reach of awareness campaigns and advocacy initiatives. Jointly organize events, workshops, and awareness-building activities to pool resources and expertise.



## **5 MEDIA ENGAGEMENT**

Engage with local media outlets, including newspapers, radio, and television stations, to cover stories about inclusive sailing initiatives. Highlight the achievements of individuals with intellectual disabilities in the sport and the positive impact on their lives. Use media as a powerful tool to spread the message of inclusion.

## **6 GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY GROUPS**

Support the formation and growth of grassroots advocacy groups focused on inclusive sailing. These groups can be instrumental in advocating for policy changes, raising awareness, and mobilizing local communities to embrace inclusive practices.

## **7 POLICY ENGAGEMENT**

Advocate for policy changes at the local, regional, and national levels. Engage with policymakers, legislators, and government officials to promote the integration of inclusive sailing into broader sports and disability inclusion agendas. Provide data and evidence on the benefits of inclusion to support policy advocacy.

## **8 PUBLIC SPEAKING AND WORKSHOPS:**

Organize public speaking engagements and workshops featuring individuals with intellectual disabilities who have excelled in sailing. Their personal stories and achievements can inspire others and serve as powerful advocacy tools.

## **9 INCLUSIVE REGATTAS AND COMPETITIONS:**

Host inclusive regattas and sailing competitions that attract media attention and showcase the abilities and accomplishments of individuals with intellectual disabilities. These events can serve as platforms for advocacy and public awareness.

## **10 INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL LEADERS**

Engage community leaders, local celebrities, and influential figures to champion the cause of inclusive sailing. Their endorsement and support can significantly boost awareness and advocacy efforts.

By implementing these strategies, we can not only raise awareness about the importance of inclusive sailing for individuals with intellectual disabilities but also create a groundswell of support that drives positive change at all levels of society. Public awareness and advocacy are powerful tools in our mission to ensure equitable access and participation in sailing for all.

# 10. CONCLUSION AND CLOSING REMARKS

In closing, our journey to advance inclusion in sailing for individuals with intellectual disabilities has led us through a comprehensive policy framework, the examination of funding avenues, adaptable implementation strategies, and an emphasis on public awareness and advocacy. Our collective efforts have been guided by international and local policy documents, the aspirations of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the sport chapter of Erasmus+.

As we reflect on this endeavor, it is clear that inclusion in sailing is not merely an aspirational goal but a tangible pathway toward personal growth, community enrichment, and societal advancement. The policies recommended here represent a strategic blueprint for change, underpinned by the belief that every individual, regardless of ability, deserves the opportunity to experience the joys and benefits of sailing.

We have recognized that inclusivity in sailing is not a one-size-fits-all proposition. Instead, it demands adaptable strategies that consider local needs, engage diverse stakeholders, and cultivate a sense of ownership within communities. It calls for an ecosystem of support, from government bodies to sailing clubs and private boat owners, each playing a unique role in fostering a more inclusive and equitable sailing environment.



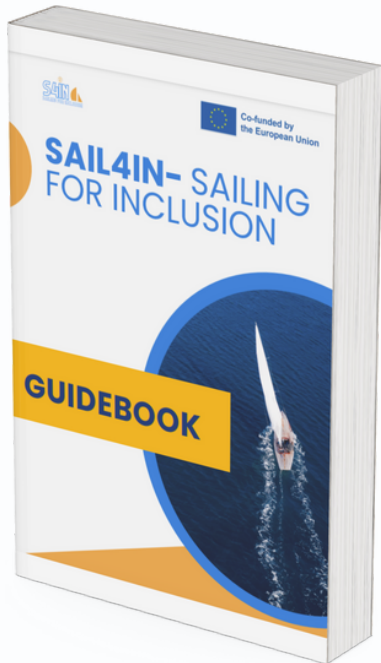
# 10. CONCLUSION AND CLOSING REMARKS



Through our advocacy and awareness-building efforts, we have sought to amplify the message that inclusion in sailing is not only a matter of social responsibility but also a source of personal transformation and community unity. By inspiring individuals, challenging stereotypes, and celebrating the achievements of those with intellectual disabilities, we can create a groundswell of support that transcends barriers and fosters acceptance.

In conclusion, these policy recommendations are a testament to our commitment to a future where sailing knows no boundaries and where every individual can set sail, realizing their full potential on the open waters. Our journey is far from over, but with perseverance, collaboration, and a steadfast dedication to the principles of inclusion, we are charting a course toward a more inclusive and equitable society, one sail at a time.

# 11. APPENDICES



## 1. THE SAIL4IN GUIDE

## 2. SAIL4IN PILOTING REPORT



# TESTI MONI ALS



- ★ Prof. Pencho Geshev
- ★ Yana Markova
- ★ Yavor Kolev
- ★ Nina
- ★ Duro Horvat
- ★ Zoran Špoljarić
- ★ Predrag Marinković
- ★ Bennardo Marioli
- ★ Fulvia Neri
- ★ Butterfly



★  
**Prof. Pencho  
Geshev**  
SAILING  
OFFICIAL

I wholeheartedly endorse the inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities in our sailing community. Sailing is a sport that embodies teamwork, skill, and the beauty of the open water. It's a sport for everyone, regardless of ability.

By fostering an inclusive environment, we not only enrich our sailing community but also provide individuals with ID the opportunity to experience the joy of sailing and all the physical, mental, and social benefits it offers. Through personalized training and support, we can unlock the potential of every sailor, celebrating their unique abilities.

*Inclusion is not just a commitment; it's our strength. Together, as a united sailing community, we can sail toward a future where everyone, irrespective of their abilities, can take the helm and navigate the seas of life with confidence and pride.*

As a national sailing coach, I strongly advocate for including children with intellectual disabilities in sailing. Through my work with children and youth, I have observed a noticeable rise in the number of individuals on the autistic spectrum, emphasizing the importance of promoting inclusive recreational activities. Sailing, with its unique blend of physical and mental engagement, offers an ideal platform for these children to thrive. Outdoor activities, like sailing, provide numerous benefits for those on the spectrum, fostering a connection with nature and the calming influence of open water.

Sailing demands concentration, problem-solving, and adaptability, aiding in the cognitive development and self-confidence of children with intellectual disabilities.



**Yana Markova**

NATIONAL SAILING COACH  
AND HEAD COACH OF OMK  
NESSEBAR

*Additionally, the team-based nature of sailing encourages social interactions, teamwork, and effective communication. Embracing inclusive practices in sailing creates an environment where every child, regardless of their abilities, can explore their potential and experience the joy of being on the water. Let's embrace the transformative power of sailing and ensure that no child is left behind!*



## Yavor Kolev

PRESIDENT AND HEAD COACH  
OF ULTRAMARINE SAILING  
SPORTS CLUB

As a sailing coach with firsthand experience in working with individuals with intellectual disabilities, I affirm that it's not only beneficial for the local community but also an incredible personal challenge. Engaging with this group opens up a world of positive experiences and rewards. The most exciting aspect is the opportunity to make a genuine difference on a personal level.

Witnessing their growth, progress, and sense of accomplishment as they navigate the waters is humbling and inspiring. However, coaching individuals with intellectual disabilities comes with unique challenges, requiring a patient and adaptable approach.

*Despite these challenges, the rewards far outweigh them, building bonds and fostering a sense of community. Being part of their sailing experience is an honor, contributing to their personal growth and overall well-being.*



*I am Nina and I practice swimming and basketball. Now I love sailing! Being on the boat feels amazing. The sea is my happy place. In the crew, holding the rudder, pulling ropes –it's pure joy! Sailing makes me feel strong, happy, and brave. I want to do it again!*



**Nina**

A PARTICIPANT IN THE  
SAILING COURSE



*For me, this was a wonderful experience and I look forward to every new sailing encounter.*



**Đuro Horvat**

KOPRIVNICA – PARTICIPANT

As sailing for people with intellectual disabilities was the topic of my PHD thesis, every project like this is more than necessary to rise the awareness of the importance of any kind of activity for the benefit of the participant. Sail4IN is IN



**Zoran Špoljarić**

OSIJEK (ISTARSKA SPORTSKA  
AKADEMIJA) - TRAINER



Every project that enriches the possibility of outdoor activities for persons with disabilities is more than welcome as the physical and mental benefits for every participant is priceless.



**Predrag  
Marinković**

PULA (ISTARSKA SPORTSKA  
AKADEMIJA) -  
COLLABORATOR

From the obvious expression of happiness mixed with curiosity, I could already tell the participants' enjoyment of sailing.

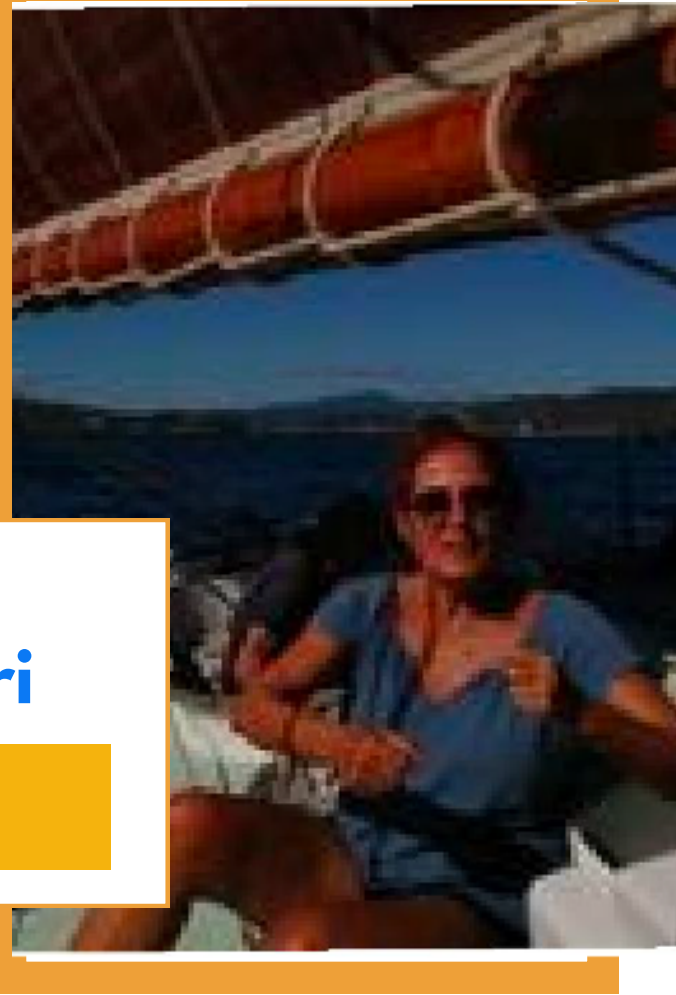
Their dedication to learning the particular movements to be made, the maneuvers to be done, the knots to be used, made me realize that sailing for them was not distant, any more than it can be for anyone. The thing that I generally feared most was the response to safety recommendations, and any distrust or fear of the water. Everything unfolded with the normalcy of any game and the careful response to the recommendations.



## Bennardo Marioli

THE SAILING INSTRUCTOR

*I found the sailing experience, very positive for the emotional response it gave to the participants. It definitely solicited new reactions, positive curiosity mixed with pleasure and joy. Definitely an experience to be repeated with certainty of the great contribution of positive emotions in the subjects.*



**Fulvia Neri**

THE EDUCATOR

*I liked it because I didn't think it was so much fun I enjoyed making new acquaintances. The people I met were very kind and courteous I learned a lot of things I didn't know about, and I am very grateful to the instructors and teachers who gave me the opportunity to participate.*



**Butterfly**

THE PARTICIPANT



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