

# E-PUBLICATION

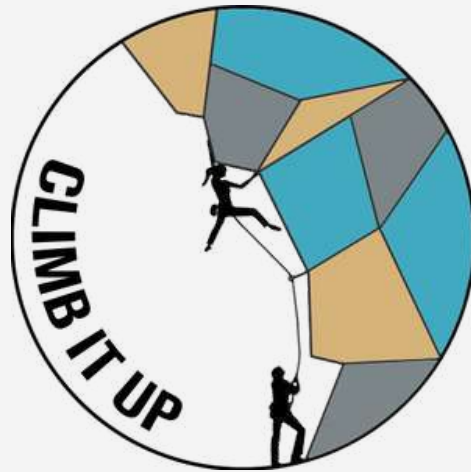
## Climbing for Social Inclusion & Diversity

### Final Study Report



Funded by  
the European Union





# E-publication

FINAL STUDY REPORT

2024 June



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**



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*Co-Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.*

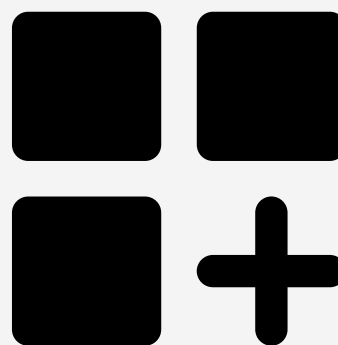


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# INTRODUCTION

This e-publication of the Final Study Report has been developed in the context of the project “Climb it Up: Climbing for Social Inclusion and Diversity”. Climb it Up is a 24-month project co-funded by the Erasmus+ KA2 Cooperation Partnership in the field of Sports and it aims to promote social inclusion and diversity in and through climbing. It also seeks to foster social and intercultural competences, essential for active participation in democratic life, social and civic engagement and to encourage participation in healthy sport activities.

The report summarizes the findings of comprehensive research study titled “Understanding the Benefits and the Barriers of Inclusion in and through Climbing”. The study delves into the advantages and challenges of inclusion within the climbing community, with a particular emphasis on migrants and ethnic minorities in partner countries (Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain).

In the subsequent sections of this report, you will find a detailed presentation of the research findings, which provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of inclusivity in climbing and the barriers that need to be addressed. The report concludes with a set of recommendations on fostering inclusion in and through climbing, which are drawn from our research findings and experiences throughout the project.



# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology encompasses desk research, surveys, and interviews conducted in project partner countries.

## Desk Research

The initial phase involved extensive desk research, which provided a foundational understanding of the climbing world. This phase included an introduction to climbing, outlining basic climbing disciplines, and examining the current situation of climbing in the countries of the project partners. Additionally, the relationship between climbing and soft skill development was explored, and detailed information about climbing communities across Europe was acquired.

## Surveys

The primary data collection method was a survey targeting migrants and ethnic minorities to explore the advantages and obstacles related to inclusion within the climbing community. The target groups were divided further in three sub-categories:

1. **Current Climbers:** Individuals actively participating in climbing activities. To understand the motivations driving active climbers and uncover opportunities to attract attention from minorities and ethnic groups across various countries. By identifying these motivations, tailored strategies can be developed to appeal to diverse communities and foster greater participation in climbing.
2. **Former Climbers:** Individuals who used to climb or have tried climbing at least once. To explore the reasons behind disengagement among former climbers and provide crucial insights into strategies for reigniting interest and making climbing more appealing. Addressing past concerns and rekindling motivations can help focus efforts on retaining and re-engaging individuals who have previously been involved in climbing.
3. **Never Experienced:** Individuals who have never tried climbing before. To investigate how climbing can be made attractive to those who have never tried it before and highlight opportunities to broaden the sport's appeal. Understanding the factors that could draw in new participants allows for the development of effective strategies, such as beginner-friendly initiatives and addressing entry barriers, to introduce climbing to a wider audience.



It is worth noting that some survey responses did not belong to the target demographic. However, if the country of the respondent was a partner organization, their responses were evaluated and included in the relevant country report during the analysis and reporting process.

Although this survey targeted migrants and ethnic minorities, broader feedback from the local climbing communities was also included. While their responses were excluded from the main analysis, their contributions are included in Section 5: Recommendations on Enhancing Inclusivity within the Climbing Community and are referenced in the relevant sections. For a detailed list of the survey questions, please refer to Annex A.

### **Interviews**

To complement the survey data, interviews were conducted with instructors, professional athletes, and non-professional athletes. The objective of these interviews was to gather insights into climbers' views and experiences concerning diversity and inclusiveness within the climbing community. These firsthand accounts provided a deeper understanding of the challenges and benefits associated with promoting inclusion in the sport. For a detailed list of the interview questions, please refer to Annex B. Before conducting interviews, each partner organization sent a consent form to the interviewees, ensuring that participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study and their rights as participants. For the consent form, please refer to Annex C.

To reach the target group, each partner organization was responsible for finding survey participants and interviewees by sharing the survey and call for interviews through their newsletters, social media accounts, and websites.

Overall, the mixed-method research approach, which combined desk research, surveys, and interviews, has provided a comprehensive perspective on the state of inclusion within the climbing community. This methodology has equipped us with valuable insights to inform our recommendations and drive meaningful change towards a more inclusive climbing environment.





# INTRODUCTION TO CLIMBING

Climbing is a popular sport and recreational activity practiced around the world, with a variety of disciplines such as sport climbing, bouldering, trad climbing and winter climbing, including ice climbing.

Moreover, the growing number of indoor climbing gyms has mitigated many of the barriers to entry to the sport and has rendered it accessible to millions of people worldwide. While climbing was traditionally an outdoor sport, its center of gravity has shifted to indoor venues. It is estimated that indoor practitioners now account for almost a third of all climbers.

Climbing has also been officially recognized as an Olympic sport. In 2021, the first Olympic climbing competition took place in Tokyo, comprising the disciplines of sport climbing, bouldering, and speed climbing.

In all its forms, climbing is a challenging and physically demanding activity that requires a lot of focus, perseverance, and communication, making it an excellent way to enhance a variety of soft skills.

This section of e-publication aims to facilitate access to the world of climbing by shedding light to the basic concepts and related disciplines of this diverse sport.



# BASIC CLIMBING DISCIPLINES

Based on factors such as rope/belaying technique, type of terrain, and equipment used, climbing is divided further in multiple sub-disciplines.



## BELAYING TECHNIQUE

Most styles of climbing require a belay partner to be conducted safely. A belay consists of a rope that runs from a climber to another person - the belayer - who can stop the climber's fall with the help of specialized gear such as harnesses and belay devices.

**Lead climbing** refers to climbing in which the leader, i.e., the person that climbs first is belayed from below while placing their own protection points as they ascend (on either permanent bolts or using removable devices).

Lead climbing is considered the standard form of climbing and experienced climbers prefer it due to its many advantages, such as providing complete freedom of movement, control, and a sense of autonomy. The main disadvantage of this style of climbing is that it can be dangerous if a given situation is not assessed correctly.

Since the climber climbs using his/her own rope, lead climbing may involve big falls more than double the distance between the leader and the last clipped protection point.



**Top roping**, on the other hand, refers to the style of climbing in which the climber is belayed from a rope above. Top roping significantly reduces the risk of a fall, since typically the climber falls only as far as the rope stretches.

Whereas in climbing gyms there are dedicated top-ropes, outdoors it may require an experienced lead climber to set up the ropes or in his/her absence it may require hiking or scrambling to access the anchor point from a different path and set the belay system prior to the climb, which may be cumbersome or impossible in a given terrain. Moreover, it requires hiking or scrambling to access the anchor point from a different path and set the belay system prior to the climb, which may be cumbersome or impossible in a given terrain. Both lead climbing and top roping can be done on either single or multi-pitch routes.



**Single pitch climbing** refers to relatively short routes, which can be up to half a rope length, or 40 meters at most. These routes usually have an anchor set at the top, which allows the belayer to lower the climber down once s/he has reached it.

**Multi-pitch climbing**, on the other hand, involves much longer routes that consist of many sections or pitches. In this type of climbing, when the leader reaches the first anchor point s/he belays the second from above, instead of lowering themselves back down. This sequence of leading a pitch and belaying the second from above is repeated as many times as needed to reach the top. Afterwards, both climbers either rappel or hike back down using a different path.

Finally, some climbing styles do not involve a rope at all.



**Bouldering** is a sport that involves climbing shorter routes (3–4 meters), using bouldering mats, or “crash pads,” for protection, rather than a rope. Bouldering routes require less endurance but often more power than other forms of rock climbing.

**Free solo climbing**, or **soloing**, refers to the extreme practice of climbing using neither a rope nor any other kind of protection. Free solo climbing is not to be confused with free climbing (see relevant section below).

## TYPE OF TERRAIN

Apart from rope and belaying technique, climbing can be divided into different disciplines based on the different types of terrain involved.

As the names suggest, **rock climbing** involves climbing up, across, or down natural rock formations, whereas **ice climbing** involves scaling an ice surface with specialized hand (ice axes) and foot (mountaineering boots) equipment. Combining elements of both rock and ice climbing is **mixed climbing**, which refers to the practice of climbing routes that involve a mixture of rock, ice, and snow surfaces.

On the other end of the spectrum, indoor climbing refers to a more modern approach to the sport. Prioritizing physical fitness and skill over adventure, indoor climbing involves scaling artificial vertical or steep walls within a specialized facility, or climbing gym.





rock climbing



ice climbing

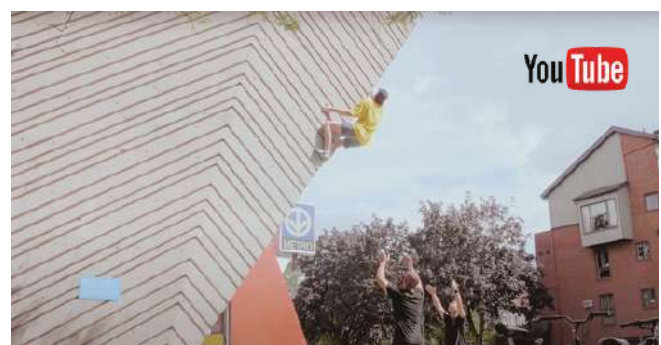


mixed climbing

Once thought of only as a training tool in preparation for climbing outdoors, the rise of indoor climbing as a distinct discipline is responsible for the growing popularity of the sport. Having mitigated many of the traditional barriers to entry, such as the remoteness of climbing destinations, a perceived lack of safety and the need for specialized gear, techniques, and a partner, indoor climbing has allowed many people worldwide to experience climbing, many of who later transition to the outdoors. That being said, indoor climbing is arguably a less staggering experience than its outdoor counterpart is. Removing the risks associated with climbing in nature also eliminates many of the unique and profound challenges that climbing has to offer. Finally, two different and less well-known types of climbing have begun gaining traction in recent years.

**Urban climbing or “bouldering”** is a form of climbing flourishing in cities and modern landscapes. Rather than real rock or artificial walls, bouldering refers to climbing concrete and other structures found in urban environments, such as buildings, bridges, or other architecture. Like in bouldering, urban routes are typically short in length and do not require the use of a rope. Also known as buildinging is the dangerous practice of ascending big buildings in a free solo style (without the use of ropes). This is a potentially fatal endeavor very different from its bouldering counterpart, which involves short structures and often the use of crash pads for protection.

**DISTURBAN - Urban Bouldering Montreal, @JACKALOPE**



You can access a nice short film on urban bouldering [here](#).

**Tree climbing takes** advantage of features found in the barks and branches of large trees to climb them using a blend of rock climbing techniques for protection, such as placing traditional climbing gear.

**Climbing Giants | Full Film, @Noah Kane.**



You can access an interesting film [here](#)





## EQUIPMENT

A final distinction can be made based on the usage of equipment, either for protection or as climbing aid. In general, climbing in all types of terrain can be practiced either as aid or as free climbing.

**Aid Climbing** dates back to the 19th century and is a form of climbing in which mechanical devices and equipment, such as nuts, cams, daisy chains and webbing ladders, are used to help ascend a steep mountain or rock formation. In this style, the equipment is not used solely for protection but also to stand on, hang on, and pull oneself up. Today, aid-climbing methods are mostly used in very long and hard, multi-day routes during which climbers often deploy a portaledge to sleep on.

**Free climbing** is any form of climbing in which climbers only use their own physical power to ascend, as opposed to utilizing mechanical aid. Climbing gear and other equipment is used in free climbing as well, but only as a form of protection in case of a fall. Free climbing should not be confused with free solo climbing, also known as soloing, and can be practiced as either sport or traditional (trad) climbing.

**Sport Climbing** is a type of free climbing on pre-bolted routes. Clipping quickdraws and the rope into pre-placed bolts emphasizes the physical aspect of the sport and allows climbers to attempt routes of higher difficulty without having to worry about placing portable protection gear. Focusing on the physical challenge rather than on exploration or adventure, sport climbing routes are relatively short, typically just a single pitch.

**Trad climbing** is another type of free climbing that involves carrying and placing portable protection gear rather than clipping only on pre-placed bolts. This type of climbing presents a different set of challenges than sport climbing, since there being no pre-placed bolts means that climbers must possess route-finding skills as well as the endurance, knowledge and mental fortitude to securely place protective gear themselves while climbing a route. While single-pitch trad routes definitely exist, most trad climbing involves longer, multi-pitch routes spanning hundreds of meters.

**Speed climbing** is a less popular discipline that can be performed either as free or aid climbing, in a single or multi-pitch route. Single pitch speed climbing in a standard (always the same) artificial route is a format made known through the Tokyo Olympics, which many argue that is a very different sport testing different attributes than other climbing styles.

Traditionally though, speed climbing referred to endeavors up big walls spanning hundreds of meters. This form of climbing is less popular because it pertains dangers akin to free soloing, since climbers would use less protection and take more risks in favor of a speedier ascend.



# CLIMBING IN PARTNERS' COUNTRIES

## SPAIN

Spain is Europe's premier winter-sun rock venue, mainly because of the tremendous number of routes the country has to offer. Being the second most mountainous country in Europe, Spain has great potential for the development of rock climbing. In the past ten years, many routes were set up in the country, making Catalonia the place with the highest concentration of hard climbs in the world. The climate also allows to climb all year long, which is why the destination has gotten so much attention lately.



**Pyrenes Mountains, Spain**



**Leonidio, Greece**

## GREECE

Similarly, in recent years, several new climbing sites have sprung up in Greece, particularly in the Peloponnese and on the islands. Sport climbing has also been used as a tool to revitalize the economy of certain areas following the decline of the industrial sector. This is the case of the island of Kalymnos, which attracts around 12,000 climbers every year, who come to test their skills and enjoy the island's routes ([National Geographic, 2021](#)). Today, there are about 3,900 routes of varying levels of difficulty on the island, and it is considered the second-best place to climb worldwide by the 2024 Guide to Finding the Best Rock Climbing in the World.

## ITALY

Italy is another place in which climbing has gained in popularity in recent years. In fact, since 2008, membership of the Italian Sport Climbing Federation has increased by five times, rising from 6,000 to 30,000. Most practitioners prefer mountain climbing over indoor climbing centers, but it is becoming more and more common to find climbing walls in regular fitness gyms. The Dolomites attract thousands of climbers every year, and it is considered the third-best place to climb worldwide by the 2024 Guide to Finding the Best Rock Climbing in the World.



**Gran Paradiso, Italy**



## GERMANY

Climbing is a highly popular sport in Germany. There are many climbing groups in the country, with nearly 400 natural climbing areas and more than 535 climbing gyms. The climbing community in Germany has grown significantly over the past three decades. In 1990, there were an estimated 70,000 active climbers in the European country. By 2021, around 600,000 active climbers were counted. Because of the weather, bouldering and indoor venues seem to be more popular than rock climbing, even though it has gained popularity over the past few years, becoming one of the most popular outdoor activities behind jogging and cycling. In Germany, the climbing tourism consumption model is dominated by the participation of families, most of whom are high-income earners (Qianru et al., 2021).



**Bastei - Basteibrücke, Germany**



**Tirol, Austria**

## AUSTRIA

Austria stands out as a premier climbing destination in Europe, captivating enthusiasts with its mountainous landscape that boasts approximately 600 peaks towering over 3,000 meters. This natural grandeur opens up a wealth of opportunities for diverse climbing activities including alpine mountaineering, long multi-pitch rock climbing routes, sport climbing, and bouldering.

The country's climbing scene is enriched by a storied heritage, highlighted by legendary figures such as Hermann Buhl and Peter Habeler, who have made significant contributions to the world of climbing and alpinism. Austria's passion for outdoor climbing is evident through its extensive network of via ferrata trails and over 3,000 climbing routes, particularly in the Tirol mountains, making it an ideal playground for climbers seeking both challenge and beauty. This vibrant climbing culture, set against the backdrop of Austria's stunning natural landscapes, ensures that climbers of all levels can find routes that inspire and test their skills.



# CLIMBING AND SOFT SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Climbing is a sport that is growing in popularity all around the world as an excellent way to find a supportive community while increasing one's self-confidence and providing a healthy workout. Lately, climbing is also gaining attention from an academic viewpoint, as a treatment for a variety of mental health issues and a method of experiential education. Research has shown that in addition to the physical benefits, climbing promotes various cognitive and emotional components that can be beneficial for social interactions.

We have identified several articles from various countries which lead to these findings:



## THERAPEUTIC CLIMBING

Therapeutic climbing involves using climbing to alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety. A study conducted on 1,536 Austrian mountain exercisers, including rock climbers, revealed a 14% prevalence of mental health problems among the participants, which is lower compared to the general European population. The researchers found that exercising outdoor was associated with lower psychological distress and could potentially serve as an associated treatment for individuals at risk or with mental health issues ([Niedermeier et al., 2017](#)).

As a matter of fact, several other studies have found that therapeutic climbing can play a significant role in mitigating symptoms of depression and anxiety as well as maintaining emotional stability.

Research conducted on patients of psychiatric hospitals in Germany used bouldering as an additional treatment for depression ([Luttenberger et al., 2015](#)).

It found that bouldering had a positive influence on the depressive symptoms of participants: they had a significantly higher feeling of self-efficacy than the control group.

Therefore, although it is not a cure-all, therapeutic climbing has been scientifically proven to help patients confront and overcome their fears in a safe and guided environment, leading to a stronger sense of self-confidence. Furthermore, climbing has a high emotional and motivational character, which can lead to higher therapy adherence ([Frühauf et al., 2021](#)).

## CLIMBING AS A METHOD OF EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

Numerous studies testify to the effectiveness of climbing in achieving positive youth development goals. While youngsters everywhere are faced with challenges that may hinder their successful transition to adulthood, climbing provides them with the opportunity to cultivate valuable skills that can prove advantageous both in the academic setting and in their everyday lives.

Specifically, the program examined by [Hansen et al. \(2009\)](#) targeted boys and girls who, for a variety of reasons, had not been successful in the traditional school setting. The activity aimed at helping participants to develop character, particularly in the areas of social and personal responsibility. It was implied that in this way, when faced with social and personal issues at home, at school, and within the community, they would become more accountable for their actions. The study found that rock climbing can be a powerful experience in determination and personal initiative: participants experienced feelings of frustration, weakness, and self-doubt. However, when small goals were met, such as putting on a harness, belaying a partner or climbing routes of progressive difficulty, they became increasingly motivated and enthusiastic, which pushed them to surpass themselves.

This required the abandonment of a “me first” attitude and the demonstration of a willingness to help others succeed. This approach to taking responsibility is a valuable quality for fostering inclusivity within society, as it requires ensuring safety for others. Similarly, in a more recent study ([Jane et al., 2022](#)), it was found that outdoor education focusing on climbing activities influence adolescent learning and personal experience.



Through interviews, students shared how climbing fostered mutual trust, independence, and a deep appreciation for the natural environment. Top-rope climbing encouraged students to work together and support one another while building their confidence in their climbing abilities. On the other hand, multi-pitch climbing provided a more introspective experience: participants were given a space to sit and think, allowing them to problem solve on their own. This created a strong sense of achievement through the process of paying close attention and being skillful in particular environments. Participating students explained that a highlight of the activity was the involvement of guides who provided expertise and support, enabling them to grow and learn.





## SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

These findings support the idea that climbing enables young people and marginalized populations in particular to develop a wide range of soft skills that is beneficial throughout their lives.

Specifically, it has been proven that climbing cultivates the following soft skills:



**Body awareness** – strengthened through learning a complex vocabulary of movement and discovering balance points as well as developing technical abilities ([Trifu et al., 2021](#)).

**Creativity** – enhanced through the need to imagine plans for the ascension and different ways to approach the wall, especially for harder routes.



**Leadership skills and interpersonal skills**, notably the ability to trust, work in a team, communicate effectively, and develop listening capabilities – strengthened through the various roles one plays when climbing, such as leading and belaying. In more detail:



**Focus and memory** – strengthened as climbers need to be mentally present in the moment of the ascent to reduce bad habits while initiating rituals that can enhance performance.



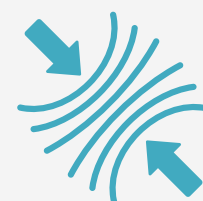
**Communication:** Communication is a crucial aspect of climbing, especially when climbing with a partner. Effective communication is required to ensure safety and coordinate movements. Climbing teaches individuals how to give and receive clear instructions, listen actively, and express their needs and concerns ([Frühauf et al., 2021](#)).



**Problem-solving skills and decision-making:** Climbing requires strategic thinking and problem-solving skills, sometimes under fatigue. Climbers must analyze their surroundings, identify the best route to the top, and adjust their plans as they encounter obstacles. This kind of critical thinking can help individuals develop problem-solving skills that can be applied in other areas of life ([Jane et al., 2022](#)).



**Resilience:** Climbing can be a challenging and frustrating activity, particularly when facing difficult routes or setbacks. However, overcoming these challenges can help individuals develop resilience, which is the ability to adapt and recover from adversity. Climbing teaches individuals to persevere through difficulties and to maintain a positive attitude even in the face of failure ([Luttenberger et al., 2023](#)).



**Teamwork:** Climbing can be a team sport, particularly when climbing with a partner or in a group. Climbers must work together to ensure safety and success, which can help individuals develop teamwork skills, such as collaboration, cooperation, and trust-building.



**Confidence:** Rock climbing can be a physically and mentally demanding activity, but successfully climbing a difficult route can provide a significant boost in confidence. This confidence can spill over into other areas of life, such as work or personal relationships, helping individuals feel more self-assured and capable ([Jane et al., 2022](#)).

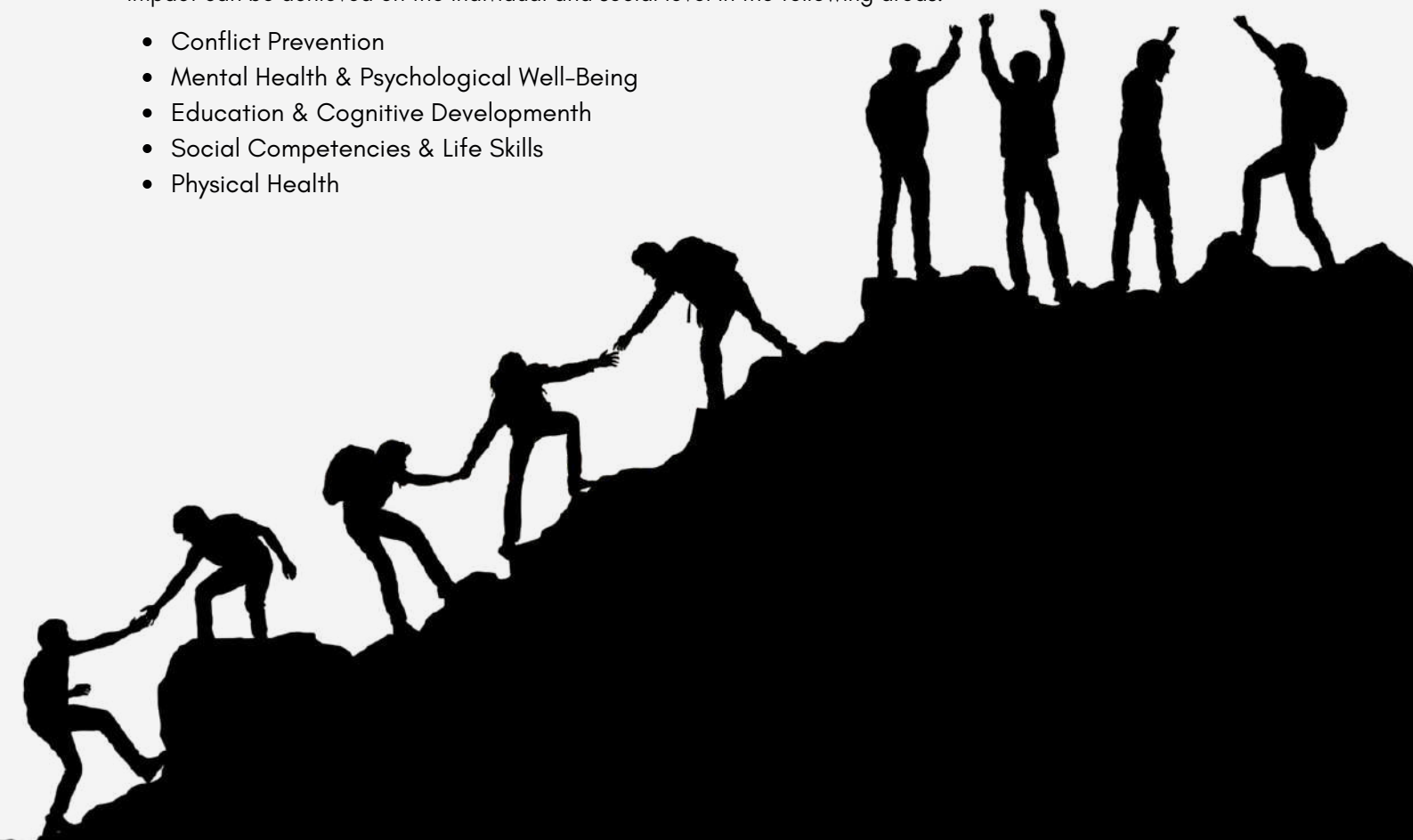


**Personal and social responsibility:** Climbing enables participants to engage in self-development processes and outcomes, such as self-motivation and goal setting (while sticking to those goals). At the same time, climbers take responsibility for and contribute to the wellbeing of others by respecting everyone's perspectives and abilities while ensuring safety for all ([Hansen et al., 2009](#)).



Finally, climbing is excellent for networking, overcoming fear, and fostering responsible social interactions across cultural and ethnic backgrounds. All the above is evidence that, through climbing activities, valuable impact can be achieved on the individual and social level in the following areas:

- Conflict Prevention
- Mental Health & Psychological Well-Being
- Education & Cognitive Development
- Social Competencies & Life Skills
- Physical Health





# THE CLIMBING COMMUNITY

Climbing is a sport that not only challenges an individual's physical strength and endurance, but also fosters a strong sense of community. Despite being an individual sport, climbing has a unique social aspect that brings people together. As a matter of fact, in order to climb safely, one must have a partner to belay them as they ascend vertical terrains and, given that they provide such security for one another, a great amount of trust and friendship is naturally fostered through these partnerships.



Image reference: <https://brocchisuiblocchi.com/brocchi-in-tour-con-lasportiva/>

Also, the inherent risk associated with rock climbing typically dissuades people from pursuing it without guidance. Therefore, mentorship is a major component of learning and progressing in the practice. These elements of the activity naturally require, build, and bind relationships, regardless of background or skill level. This is mixed with the empathy shared amongst climbers, which results in a strong communal experience that is unique to climbing. From such community building, the activity has developed into a subculture that consists of people with shared habits, verbal lexicons, and even clothing styles. Present, in the subculture, is a generalized mindset that community is highly valued, which, likewise, is beneficial to individual wellness. Through the shared experience of climbing, individuals can build meaningful friendships that extends beyond the activity (Naylor, 2023).

As an example, Brocchi Sui Blocchi is a thriving climbing community based in Italy, known for its passionate and inclusive approach to the sport. With an active presence on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Spotify, the community has created a space for climbers of all levels and backgrounds to come together and share their love for the sport, which helped to foster a strong sense of camaraderie and community among its members. The community's podcast features discussions about climbing and serves as a testament to the community's dedication to promoting the sport through a sense of sharing and inclusivity.

For the time being, climbing remains a sport that lacks diversity, given that it is mainly practiced by white, heterosexual, young, highly educated people living in households earning over 100,000 dollars a year.



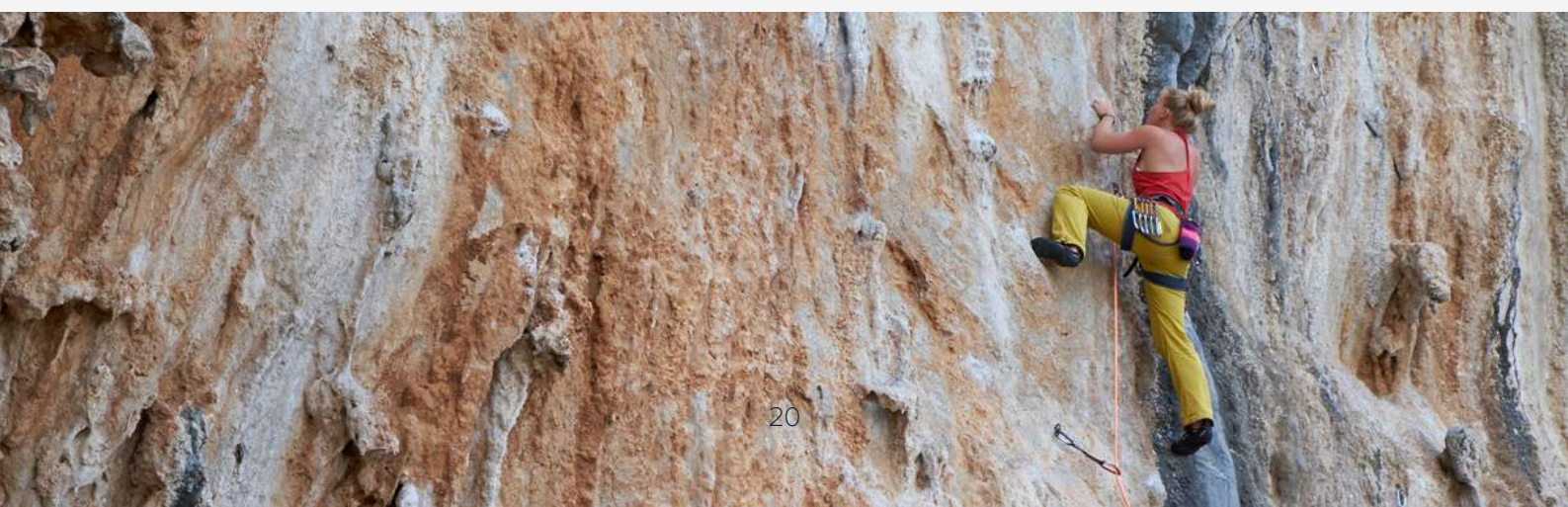


On the other hand, women, gender minorities, and racialized people all face heightened constraints to participate in climbing ([Wigfield et al., 2024](#)). However, because climbing fosters a sense of community and is accessible to all skill levels, it has the potential to contribute to mitigating social isolation by involving marginalized groups.

For example, it was shown that climbing can be useful for people with special needs or disabilities. In fact, because of its high demanding nature, it requires concentration, sequential thought and planning, which can help people who have physical and intellectual disabilities. When someone is climbing, they are aware of their body and movements, which can help internal regulation and motor processing. The specific psychological and physiological demands of climbing require participants to concentrate on the task at hand, which enhances focus and concentration, especially beneficial for individuals with attention deficit disorders ([Frühauf et al., 2021](#)).

Climbing activities involving both able-bodied and disabled individuals are often a success and enable them to build trust and friendships while learning about each other's abilities. This contributes to fostering empathy and understanding among participants, which is beneficial to individual wellness and a catalyst for community inclusion ([Sutherland et al., 2010](#)).

Similarly, ethnic and gender minorities can largely benefit from the community aspect of climbing, while adding diversity to existing communities. For instance, several studies have indicated that ethnic minority youth is less involved in organized sport compared to autochthonous youth. In Western Europe, this is especially striking for girls of Arab origin who are sometimes the victims of negative prejudice and prohibitions by society, but also by their families. As a way to integrate and socialize minority youth, climbing has the potential to contribute to bringing people closer together and decreasing prejudices ([de Knop et al., 1996](#)).



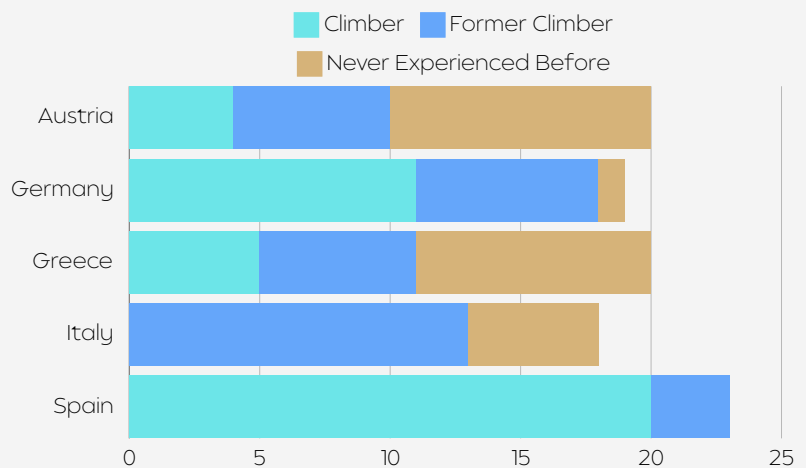




# SURVEY

## with Migrants and Ethnic Minorities

This section presents the findings from surveys conducted with three different groups: climbers, former climbers and persons who have never climbed. A total of 97 participants took part in the survey, originating from Austria (20), Germany (19), Greece (20), Italy (18), and Spain (20). Most of the participants are climbers, former climbers, and/or instructors.



The surveys are analyzed and the results are provided country by country. The section starts with the respondents' demographics and background, followed by their familiarity and interest in different types of climbing, and the factors influencing their interest. Then, insights from surveys are provided based on their climbing experience levels. For each experience level, specific questions were asked to gather detailed insights. For current climbers, barriers faced are examined. For former climbers, reasons for discontinuing and any barriers encountered are explored. For those who have never climbed, information on barriers to starting and their preferences for beginning climbing is gathered.



# AUSTRIA

In the survey from Austria 4 participants are current climbers, 6 are former climbers who used to climb or tried climbing at least once, and 10 have never experienced climbing. Among climbers, three participants had been climbing for 1-2 years, while one participant had over 10 years of **climbing experience**. In terms of **climbing frequency**, three participants reported climbing weekly, whereas one participant climbed occasionally. Out of all participants, 14 identified as female and 6 as male.

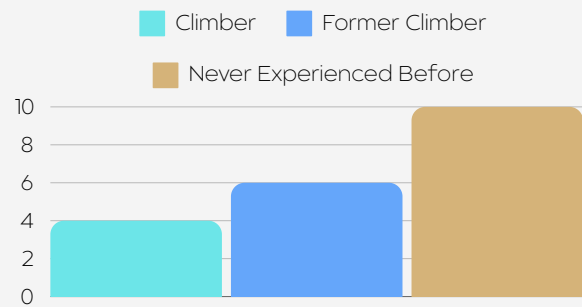
In terms of **current occupation**, 12 participants are students, 2 are graphic designer, one is an employee, one is a project manager, 2 are researchers, and one is a postgraduate student.

**The age range** of participants is as follows: 10 are between 18-25 years old, 7 are between 25-35 years old, and 1 is between 35-45 years old.

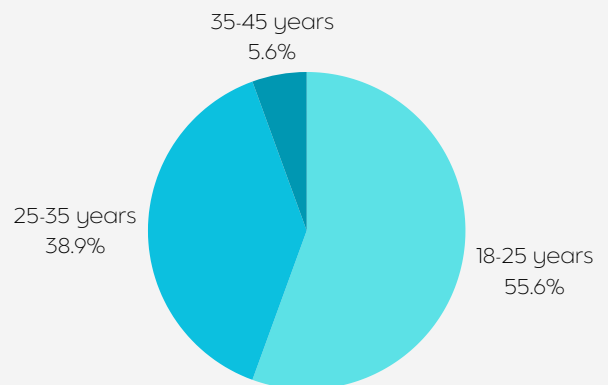
Participants indicated their **countries of origin** as follows: one from the United States, one from Italy, two from France, one from Turkey, one did not specify, one from Kazakhstan, two from Tajikistan, one from Afghanistan, one from Myanmar, one from Ukraine, one from Bosnia and Herzegovina, one from Egypt, one from India, one from Slovakia, one from the Netherlands, one from Germany, one from Turkey, and one from Pakistan.

Physical locations like climbing gyms and personal connections are the top **learning resources** for active and former climbers. Digital resources like instructional videos and online articles are particularly valuable to newcomers, suggesting a trend towards accessible and flexible learning methods. Social media and events help sustain community engagement, while personal training remains an underutilized resource.

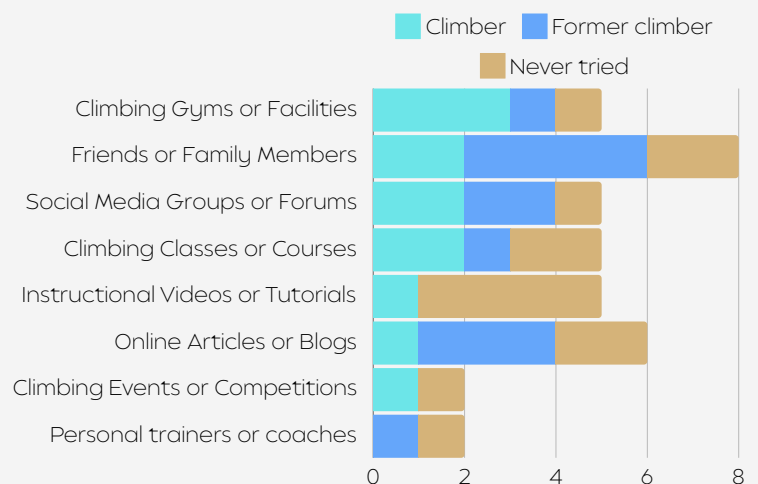
## Experience Level



## Age



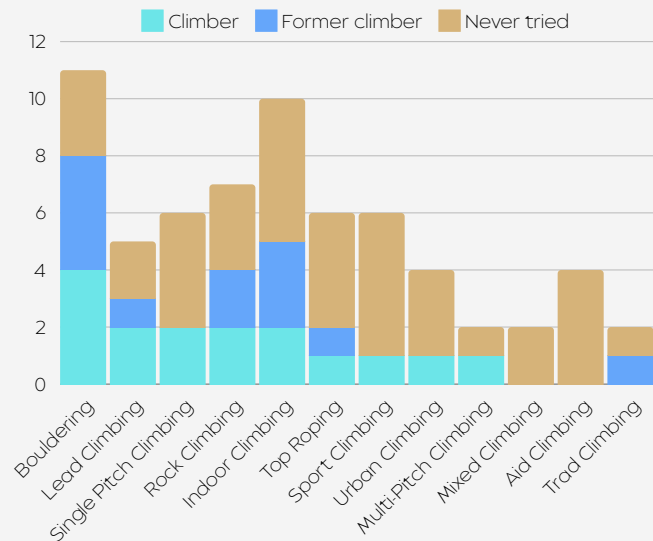
## Learning Resources for Climbing





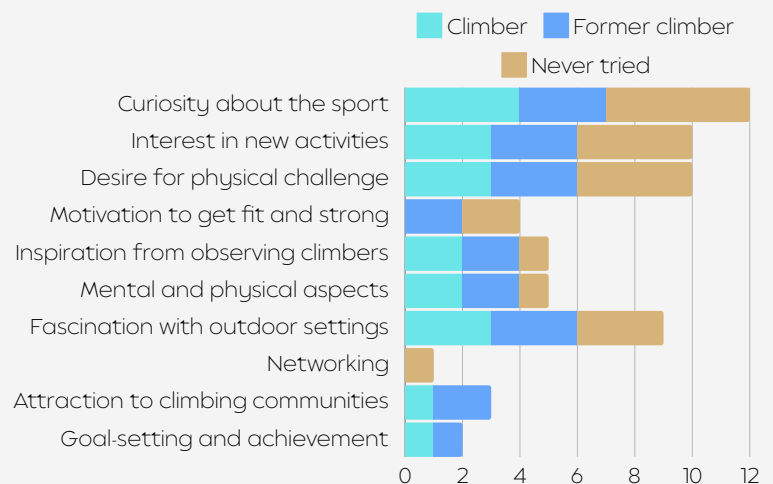


## Types of Climbing Familiarity & Interest



Bouldering is consistently popular **types of climbing** across current and former climbers. Indoor Climbing and Sport Climbing show high potential interest among those who haven't tried climbing. Activities like Urban Climbing/Buildering, Top Roping, and Aid Climbing have niche but notable interest in specific groups. Understanding these preferences can help tailor climbing programs and facilities to meet the diverse interests of climbers at various stages.

## Factors Influencing Interest



Curiosity about the sport, desire for a physical challenge, and fascination with outdoor settings consistently emerge as strong motivating factors across all groups. Interest in new activities is also significant, particularly for current and never-experienced climbers. Secondary factors include the mental and physical aspects of climbing, social influences, fitness motivations, and the attraction of climbing communities.

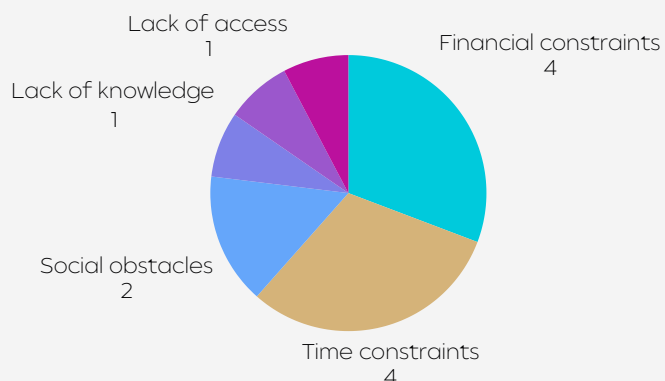


## Life Impact of Climbing

Participants in the survey of current climbers in Austria reported that climbing has significantly impacted their daily lives, with 75% noting improvements in body awareness, networking skills, and fear management. However, it had minimal effects on confidence, leadership, and cross-cultural communication for some. A few participants felt they lacked sufficient experience to fully assess its impact.

## Barriers

Financial constraints and time constraints or other commitments were the most prevalent barriers faced by participants, indicating the significant challenges individuals encounter in pursuing climbing activities.



## Recommendations for Inclusivity

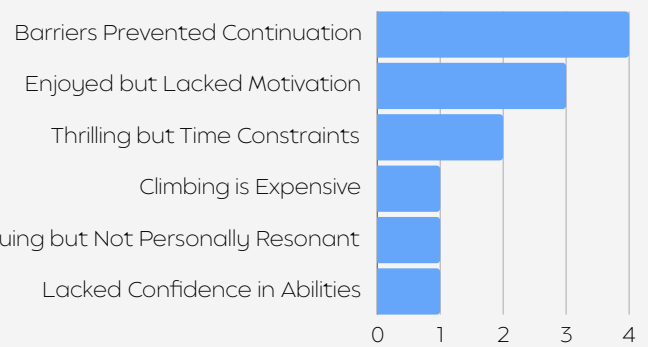
Out of all responses received, one participant mentioned the significance of combating toxic masculinity and macho behavior within the climbing community as a recommendation to enhance inclusivity. This response highlights a critical concern regarding inclusivity and respect within climbing culture. Addressing these issues is essential for creating a welcoming and supportive environment for all climbers.





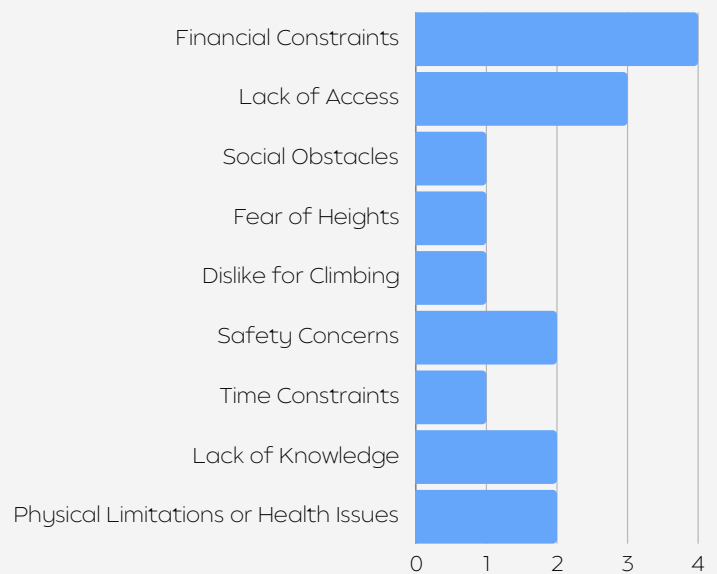
## Reasons for Discontinuing Climbing

The most frequently cited reason for discontinuation was encountering barriers that hindered their ability to continue climbing. These barriers could include physical, logistical, or personal challenges. For some participants, enjoyment alone was not enough to sustain interest; despite having fun, a lack of motivation significantly contributed to their decision to stop climbing.



## Barriers

The analysis of reasons for discontinuing climbing and barriers faced reveals that financial constraints were the most significant impediment, cited by 4 participants. This highlights the cost-related challenges such as equipment, membership fees, and travel expenses. A notable number of participants also struggled with a lack of access to climbing facilities (3 participants) and safety concerns (2 participants). One participant thinks the climbing community's exclusivity and unwelcoming environment for diverse backgrounds deter participation, but fostering inclusivity and removing barriers could encourage more individuals, with 3 out of 4 participants expressing interest if these issues were addressed.



## Recommendations for Inclusivity

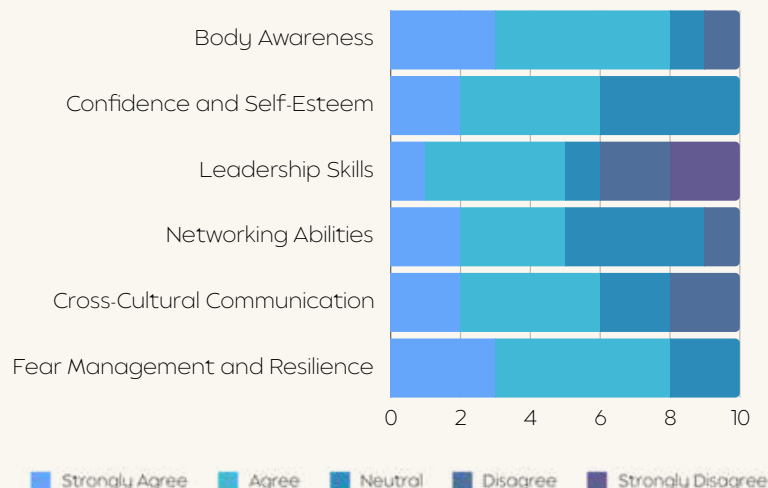
Here are a couple of recommendations by survey participants:

- **Collaborate with Local Schools and Community Organizations:** Host free climbing events, workshops, and demonstrations with local schools and community organizations to attract diverse participants and remove entry barriers.
- **Establish Scholarship Programs:** Create scholarship programs for memberships, classes, and gear rentals to improve financial accessibility for those facing economic challenges.
- **Cost-Effective Festivals:** Host free climbing festivals a few times a year to allow people to try climbing without financial barriers.
- **Targeted Audience Identification:** Identify and target the right audience for climbing initiatives, acknowledging that certain demographics.
- **Public Climbing Facilities:** Develop public climbing facilities with necessary gear and safety measures, and provide guides on where and how to climb.
- **Training Programs:** Offer training programs to equip newcomers with essential skills and knowledge for safe climbing.

## Potential benefits that climbing offers

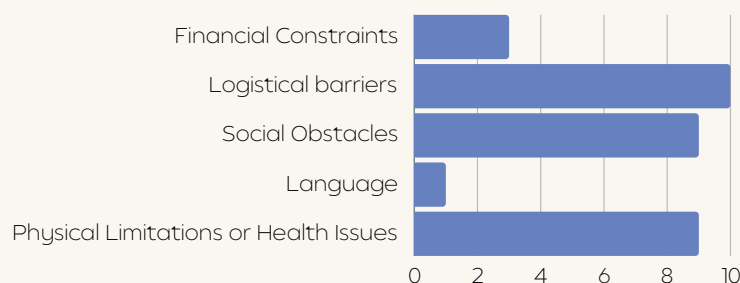
The **current perception** of never-climbed participants, as revealed by surveys, shows that 4 participants find climbing interesting but not for them, 5 would consider trying it if given the chance, and 1 is not interested.

The analysis of the survey results indicates that participants predominantly agree that climbing has a **positive impact** on body awareness, with 8 out of 10 participants expressing either strong agreement or agreement. Confidence and self-esteem also saw favorable responses, with 6 out of 10 agreeing to its benefits. Leadership skills received mixed reactions, as opinions were more evenly distributed across the spectrum, with significant disagreement from 4 participants.



## Barriers

The survey results reveal that out of those questioned about **barriers to starting sport climbing**, 4 participants have experienced some kind of barrier, 5 have not encountered any obstacles, and 1 participant cited laziness as a barrier.



Regarding physical limitations, 7 participants reported no issues, but 1 mentioned back pain and another fitness level concerns. Financial constraints were a factor for 3 participants, with specific mentions of being a student, the cost of climbing equipment, and other expenses. There were no logistical barriers reported, and only one participant felt social obstacles, finding it scary to start somewhere new. Cultural differences were not seen as a significant issue, with all 10 participants dismissing it as a concern. Similarly, only one participant perceived language barriers as a potential obstacle within the climbing community.

## Exploring Climbing Preferences and Accessibility

The ideal introduction to climbing activities, as envisioned by the survey participants, includes a range of preferences. Some participants prefer an easy and accessible start, such as a beginner-friendly course or an indoor setting with instructors. One participant appreciates having an introduction that covers the difficulties of climbing and the best practices involved. Additionally, there's an adventurous spirit among the group, with one person expressing a readiness to take on challenges if given the chance.

## Improvements to Encourage Participation in Climbing

To encourage more people to consider trying climbing, several improvements were suggested by the participants. The most frequently mentioned were programs specifically designed for beginners, noted by 7 participants. Additionally, 6 participants emphasized the need for more accessible and affordable facilities.

Participants suggest providing climbing equipment for those who want to try the sport and creating more basic indoor climbing areas to make the activity more accessible.





In the survey from Germany 11 participants are current climbers, 7 are former climbers who used to climb or tried climbing at least once, and 1 have never experienced climbing. Among climbers, two climbers had been climbing for less than 1 year, four participants had been climbing for 1-2 years, three participants had been climbing for 6-10 years, and two participants had over 10 years of **climbing experience**. In terms of **climbing frequency**, six participants reported climbing weekly, three participants climbed monthly, and two participants climbed occasionally. Out of all participants, 10 identified as male and 9 as female.

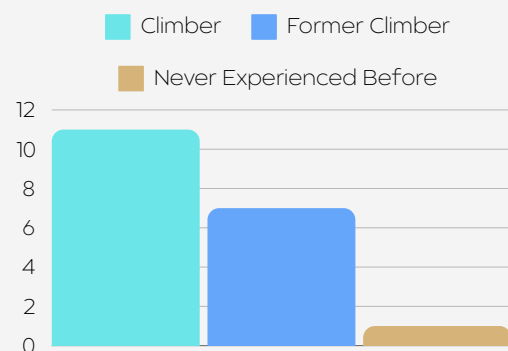
The respondents represented a diverse range of **occupations**, including an art director, artist, climbing trainer, construction worker, economist, graphic designer, humanitarian aid worker, landscape designer, NGO manager, painter and decorator, researcher, sports trainer, students, unemployed individuals, and warehouse workers.

**The age range** of participants is as follows: 4 are between 18-25, 7 are between 25-35, 7 are between 35-45 and 1 are between 45-55 years old.

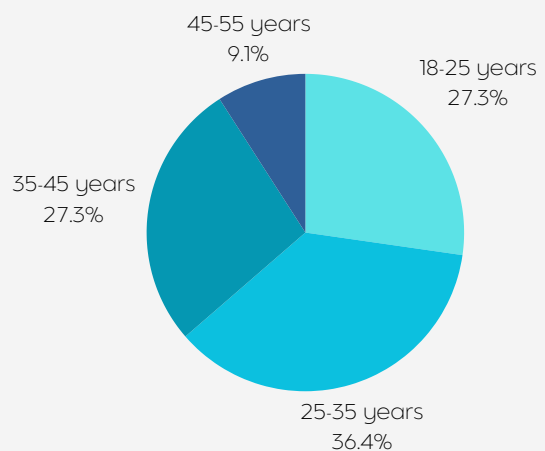
The survey participants represented a diverse range of countries, including 1 from Australia, 1 from France, 4 from Georgia, 1 from Greece, 1 from Italy, 1 from Kyrgyzstan, 4 from Mali, 2 from Russia, 1 from South Korea, 1 from Spain, and 2 from the United Kingdom.

Physical locations like climbing gyms and personal connections are the top **learning resources** for active and former climbers. Among current climbers, 8 participants reported utilizing climbing gyms or facilities, while 10 relied on friends or family members for their climbing experience. Additionally, 1 former climber learned about climbing through the Lernlabor Kletterfreunde Project.

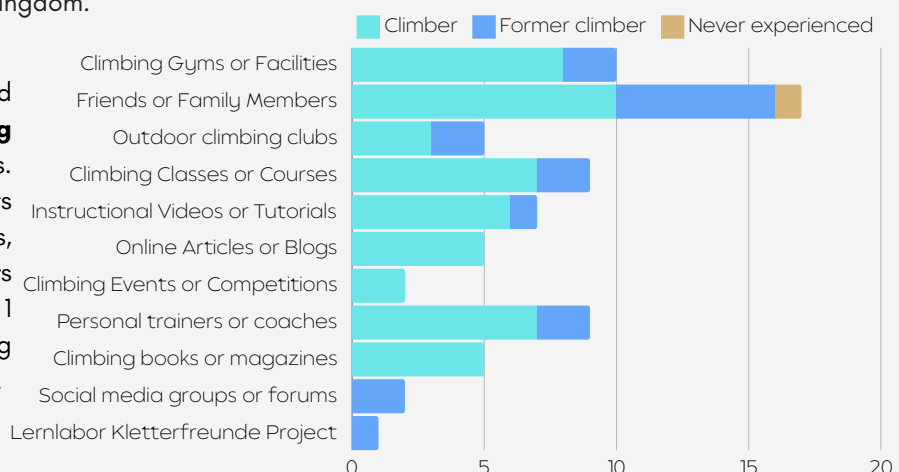
## Experience Level



## Age



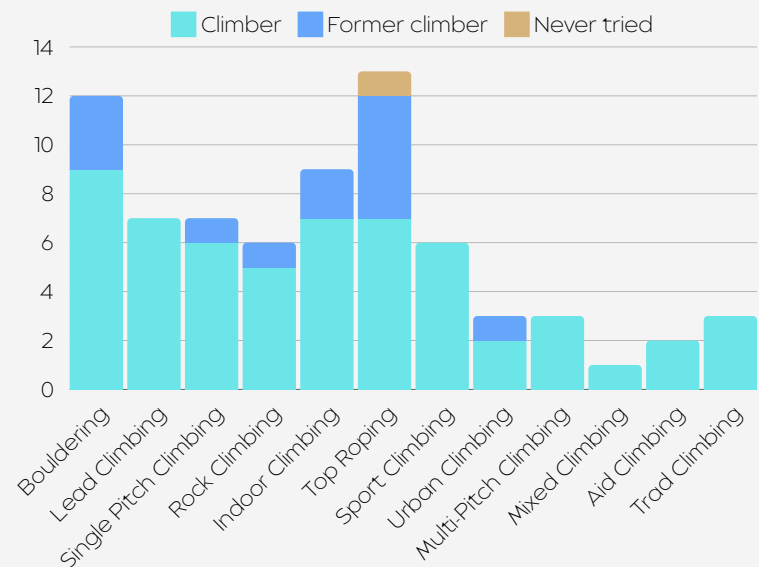
## Learning Resources for Climbing





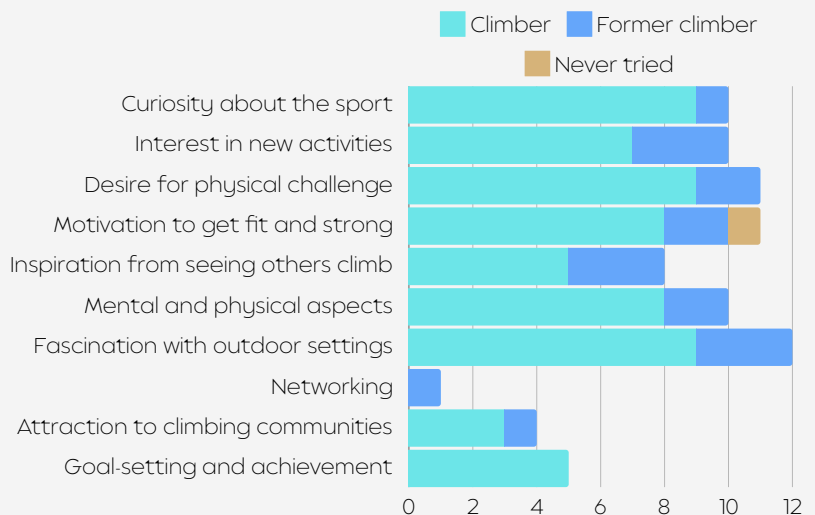


## Types of Climbing Familiarity & Interest



Current climbers engage in a wide variety of **climbing types**, with bouldering (9 participants), lead climbing (7), and indoor climbing (7) being particularly popular. Former climbers have a narrower focus, predominantly participating in top roping (5) and bouldering (3). Those who have never tried climbing display minimal engagement, with just one participant showing interest in top roping.

## Factors Influencing Interest



Current climbers are primarily driven by a curiosity about the sport (9 participants), a desire for physical challenges (9), and a fascination with outdoor settings (9). They also exhibit strong motivation to get fit and strong (8) and a keen interest in the mental and physical aspects of climbing (8). Former climbers show similar motivations but with less intensity, focusing on physical challenges (2), fitness (2), and the mental and physical benefits (2). The participant who had no experience in climbing is motivated by the desire to get fit and strong.





## Life Impact of Climbing

Participants in the survey of current climbers in Germany reported that climbing has significantly impacted their daily lives, with 10 out of 11 stating a definitive "Yes" to its positive influence. The activity has notably improved body awareness, networking skills, and fear management. However, it had minimal effects on confidence, leadership, and cross-cultural communication for some. One participant noted:

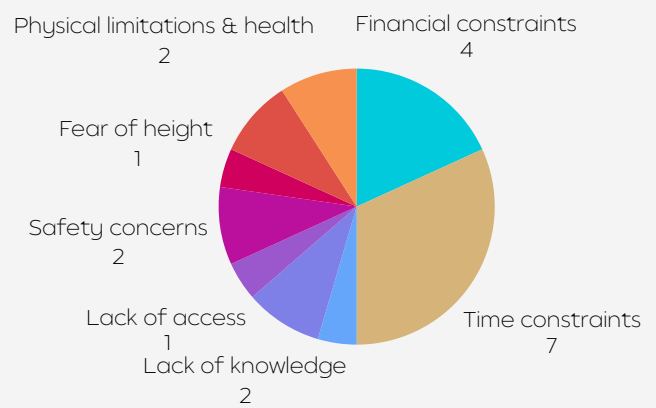
One participant emphasized the importance of connection with nature, while another participant highlighted the significance of trust awareness.



*"I have learned to be aware of and to respect my boundaries and limits and to accept these as a positive part of myself."*

## Barriers

The most common barriers or challenges reported by participants were time constraints or other commitments. Other notable obstacles included financial constraints (4 participants), lack of knowledge (2), safety concerns (2), physical limitations and health (2), and communication barriers (2). Social obstacles, lack of access, and fear of height were less frequently mentioned but still present challenges for some participants.



One participant mentioned weather as a barrier, while another participant cited a lack of support from friends or family, or not knowing others who climb, as factors affecting their climbing experience.

## Barriers affect participants' climbing activities

Participants expressed the various barriers they have faced during their climbing experiences.

- **Lack of Experience and Knowledge:** Participants reported that starting climbing with insufficient experience and knowledge can be challenging and frightening. Some noted that it can actually be quite dangerous without proper guidance.
- **Financial Constraints:** Respondents mentioned that climbing gym memberships are often overpriced given their financial circumstances. Additionally, the cost of climbing equipment and courses to gain skills safely was highlighted as a significant barrier. One participant pointed out that without the luxury of living an itinerant climber's lifestyle with low costs and easy access to climbing areas, climbing had to be squeezed in between work and other commitments, making their journey to attain skills and experience long and slow.
- **Finding Suitable Climbing Partners:** Some participants expressed difficulty in finding suitable climbing partners, which occasionally led to the inability to climb as often as they would like.
- **Time Constraints:** Time constraints due to personal responsibilities, such as having a child at a young age, were frequently mentioned. Although fear of heights was initially an obstacle for some, it was overcome through more climbing experience. Participants also cited too much work and too little time for climbing, along with bad weather conditions that often prevent outdoor climbing sessions.

## Strategies for Overcoming Challenges in Climbing Activities

**Instructor Guidance:** Having climbing teachers for technique, risk assessment, and motivation boosted participants' confidence and skills.

**Prioritizing Physical Activity:** Respondents highlighted the importance of making climbing a priority to stay committed and maintain a regular routine.

**Maintaining a Holistic View:** Participants stressed the need to keep a holistic view of progress to stay healthy and avoid injuries. Recognizing that progress is often slow helped them appreciate their achievements over time.

**Addressing Fear of Heights and Time Management:** Climbing more frequently and taking specific courses helped some participants overcome their fear of heights. Good week organization and effective time management were also crucial for managing time constraints.

## Recommendations for Inclusivity

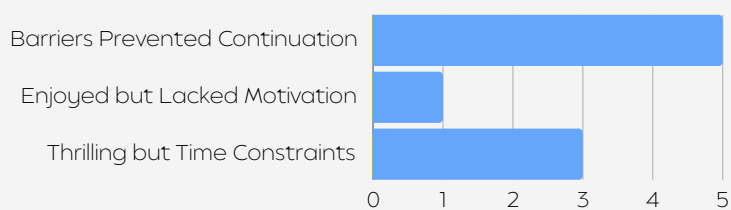
- **Guidance from Staff:** Participants emphasized the importance of having initial guidance from the staff, including how to assist climbers with different abilities and needs. Such support can significantly enhance the climbing experience for newcomers.
- **Financial Inclusivity:** In terms of financial inclusivity, respondents suggested that offering reduced fees or discounts to individuals who decide to regularly visit the climbing gym or to low-income individuals could help make climbing more accessible. Additionally, providing free courses for beginners in neighborhoods with a higher percentage of migrants would promote inclusivity.
- **Promoting Mixed Backgrounds and Experience Levels:** Participants recommended inviting people from mixed backgrounds and levels of experience to climb together, and prioritizing fun and the well-being of the group over a macho achievement-focused approach. They also suggested shifting the focus of prominent internet climbing content towards companionship and adventure rather than extreme physical challenges. This can help create a more welcoming environment for everyone.
- **Programs for Underrepresented Groups:** Developing programs specifically designed for individuals from underrepresented groups to give them a start in the sport was another key suggestion. Respondents believe that these programs can encourage diversity and inclusivity within the climbing community.
- **Educational and Therapeutic Approaches:** There were calls for more active engagement from alpine associations, such as the German Alpine Club, to provide additional support in this area. Participants also highlighted the need for more opportunities for educational and therapeutic approaches to climbing, which can make the sport more accessible and beneficial for a broader audience.





## Reasons for Discontinuing Climbing

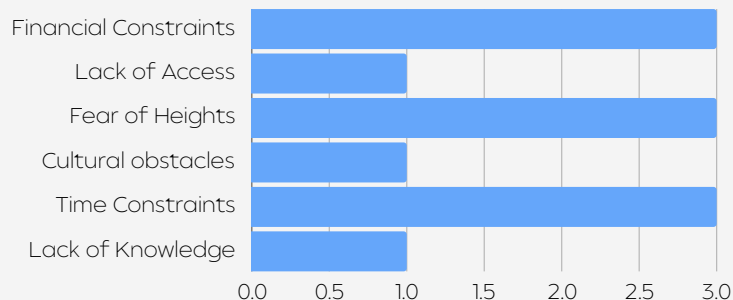
The analysis highlights that barriers, particularly time constraints and lack of motivation, significantly impact participants' ability to continue their climbing activities. Specifically, 5 out of 7 participants cited these barriers as critical factors leading to their discontinuation.



## Barriers

The analysis of reasons for discontinuing climbing and barriers faced reveals that financial constraints, time constraints and fear of height were the most significant impediment, cited by 3 participants.

One participant highlighted that climbing gyms or outdoor spaces often feel unwelcoming or unsafe for individuals from diverse backgrounds.



Additionally, the lack of visible diversity and role models within the climbing community discourages participation from underrepresented groups.

Another participant mentioned that the exclusive appearance of the climbing community makes it difficult for individuals with different cultural or social identities to feel a sense of belonging. Three participants are eager to join climbing activities if inclusivity is prioritized, while two might try climbing with more inclusive information and opportunities. If all barriers, including cultural and social ones, were removed, three participants would explore climbing, and twelve are keen to start without hesitation. One participant noted that fears can persist even after addressing these issues, but taking these steps helps significantly.

## Recommendations for Inclusivity

Here are a couple of recommendations by survey participants:

- **Supportive Community:** Creating a supportive community ensures inclusivity, focusing not just on climbing but also on fostering a sustainable network of collective care.
- **Free Trial Periods:** Offering free trial periods for climbing helps people decide if they like the sport, given the high cost of gyms and instructors and the need for a paid membership at German Alpine Club facilities.

One participant with no prior climbing experience, expressed uncertainty about the sport due to a lack of familiarity. He is motivated by the potential fitness and strength benefits of climbing and has gained information from friends or family members who climb. He perceives body awareness and confidence as valuable benefits, although he remains neutral about leadership, networking, cross-cultural communication, and fear management. This participant has faced several barriers, including financial constraints and logistical challenges like lack of nearby facilities, but has not encountered physical limitations or social obstacles. He believes cultural differences might influence interest in climbing but does not see language barriers as an issue. His ideal introduction to climbing involves sessions with an instructor and free trials. He is interested in top roping and suggests improvements such as more accessible and affordable facilities, beginner programs, diversity initiatives, representation from his community, and informative sessions on climbing basics and benefits.



In the survey from Greece 5 participants are current climbers, 6 are former climbers who used to climb or tried climbing at least once, and 9 have never experienced climbing. Among the climbers, one had been climbing for less than a year and four for 1-2 years of **experience**. Participants' **climbing frequency** varied, with one participant climbing daily, two participants climbing weekly, one participant climbing monthly, and one participant climbing occasionally. Among the participants, 12 identified themselves as female and 7 as male. 1 participants preferred not to say about their gender.

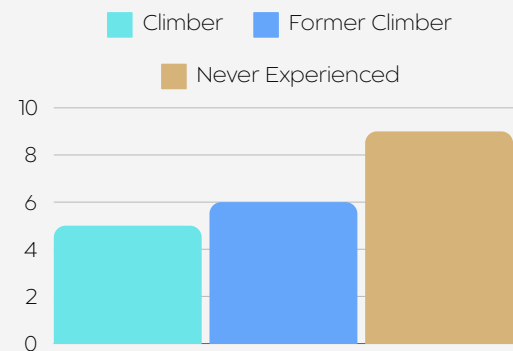
The survey participants included 6 students, 12 working professionals, and 1 participant with an ambiguous **occupation**, 1 participants didnt mention about thor occupation. The working professionals comprised various roles such as Electrical Engineer, Machinist, Teacher, Translator Freelancer, Secretarial Support, Consultant, Customer Service Representative, Piano Teacher and Babysitter, Cook, Tutor, and Assistant Project Manager. Additionally, there was one participant whose occupation was listed as "Athens," which was not clearly defined.

**The age range** of participants is as follows: 10 are between 18-25, 6 are between 25-35, 2 are between 35-45 and 2 are between 45-55 years old.

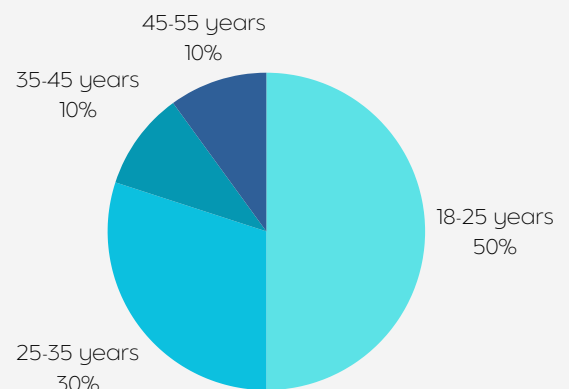
The survey participants represented a diverse range of countries, including 3 from Albania, 3 from Ukraine, 2 each from Iran, Russia, and the United States, and 1 each from Egypt, France, Gambia, Georgia, India, Italy, Nigeria, and Spain.

Friends or family members are the most popular learning resource for three climbers, five former climbers, and six non-climbers.

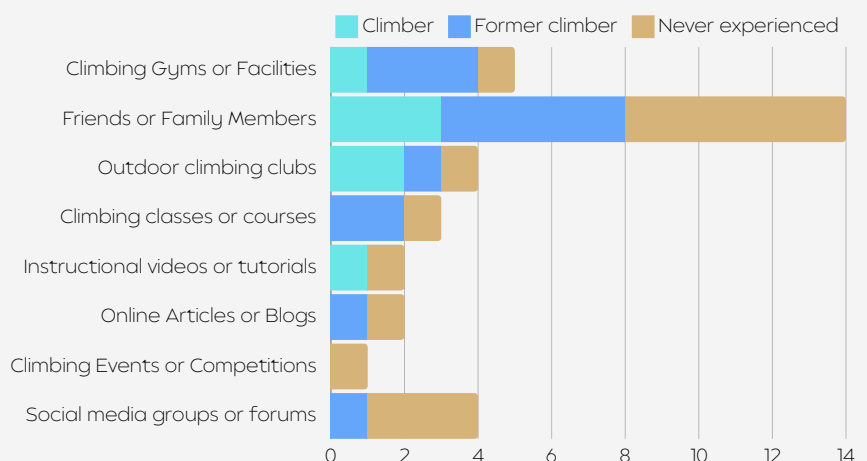
## Experience Level



## Age



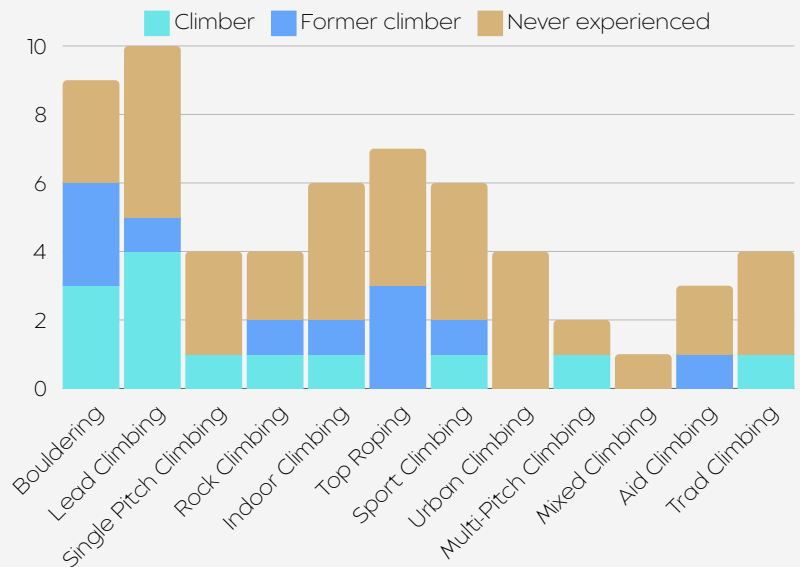
## Learning Resources for Climbing





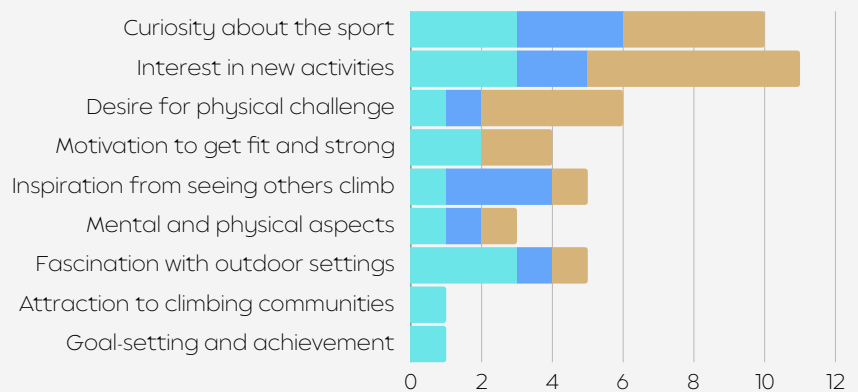


## Types of Climbing Familiarity & Interest



Climbers are most familiar with lead climbing (4) and bouldering (3), while other styles each have one climber. Former climbers are most familiar with bouldering (3) and top roping (3), with other styles each having one former climber. Participants who have never experienced climbing show the highest interest in lead climbing (5), followed by indoor climbing, top roping, sport climbing, and urban climbing (4 each), with notable interest in other styles as well.

## Factors Influencing Interest



Curiosity about the sport and interest in new activities are significant factors influencing both climbers and former climbers. They also show a notable interest in physical challenges and outdoor settings. For those who have never experienced climbing, interest in new activities is the strongest factor, followed by curiosity about the sport and desire for physical challenge.

One of the current climber indicate that having engaged in indoor bouldering in Germany since 2014. Upon relocating to Greece, they observed a more conducive environment for outdoor climbing activities. Encountering individuals in Greece who shared an interest in outdoor climbing, the participant was naturally inclined to pursue this form of the sport.



## Life Impact of Climbing

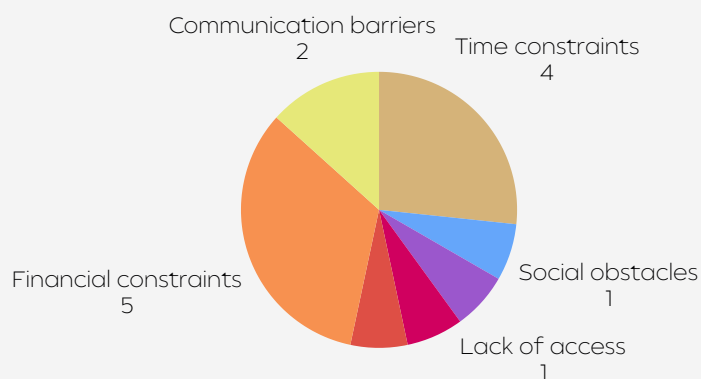
Among the five participants, the majority (3 out of 5) reported that participating in climbing has impacted their everyday life positively, stating a definitive "Yes." One participant expressed uncertainty about the impact, suggesting a possible influence with the response "Maybe in some way." Additionally, one participant provided a more detailed response, mentioning the specific impact of spending hours on training and pushing personal limits, indicating a significant engagement with climbing beyond mere participation.

## Additional benefits by responders

One participant acknowledges that climbing, in general, hasn't directly impacted their skills. However, they recognize that climbing can serve as a valuable tool to enhance soft skills. Fear management is the standout benefit they've experienced. Additionally, they emphasize the expansion of their social circle due to climbing. Another participant highlights several positive outcomes beyond skills. They appreciate living adventurous moments, connecting with like-minded individuals, setting new goals, and achieving physical strength and health through climbing. These benefits contribute significantly to their overall experience.

## Barriers

The primary barriers to climbing include financial constraints (5) and time constraints (4). The participants also expressed the barriers with more details. One participant expressed safety concerns related to their fear of heights, particularly when attempting multi-pitch or trad climbing. Despite these fears, they found sport climbing less intimidating. Language barriers occasionally arose at climbing schools or with fellow climbers, but they appreciated the inclusivity of others who were willing to translate.



Another participant cited long working hours as a significant obstacle to effective climbing practice. The lack of energy and time impacted their ability to engage in regular training. One participant faced several challenges: not having a car, limited proficiency in Greek, difficulty finding a climbing partner, and experiencing sexism directed at women while climbing. These factors collectively affected their climbing experience and opportunities.

## Recommendations for Inclusivity

According to one participant's recommendations, strategies for overcoming challenges in climbing activities can be categorized into pre-school and post-school phases:

### Pre-school:

- Prompt Registration: Enroll early for climbing schools to secure a spot, as availability fills up quickly.
- Openness and Curiosity: Maintain an open mindset towards people and experiences, fostering curiosity.
- Equipment Purchase: Invest in personal climbing equipment once prepared for the activity.

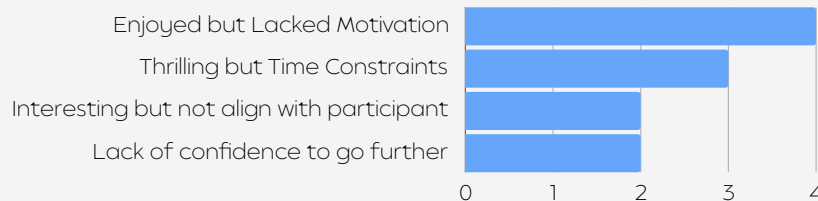
### Post-school:

- Effective Communication: Actively seek out a climbing group that aligns with your goals and preferences.
- Challenge Yourself: Be receptive to attempting more difficult routes alongside experienced climbers.
- Fear Management: Practice deep breathing techniques to manage fear during climbs.
- Know Your Limits: Understand personal limitations to avoid potential injuries.



## Reasons for Discontinuing Climbing

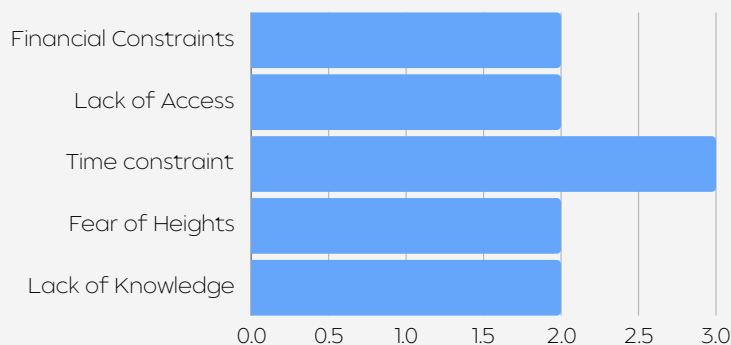
A summary of participant feedback indicates that 6 out of 4 participants enjoyed climbing but didn't feel motivated to continue, 3 participants found it thrilling but lacked the time to commit, 2 participants found it intriguing but felt it didn't resonate personally, and another 2 participants lacked confidence in their abilities and did not pursue it further.



## Barriers

The participants indicated that financial constraints (2), lack of access to climbing facilities (2), fear of heights (2), time constraints or other commitments (3), and lack of knowledge or experience with climbing techniques (2) are the main barriers.

One participant noted a lack of visible diversity and role models within the climbing community, which discourages participation from underrepresented groups.



Another participant observed that the climbing community appears exclusive, making it difficult for individuals with different cultural or social identities to feel a sense of belonging.

If the climbing community provided more inclusive information and opportunities, 2 participants might be encouraged to try it. Additionally, removing all barriers could lead 1 participant to explore climbing out of curiosity and another to start without hesitation.

## Recommendations for Inclusivity

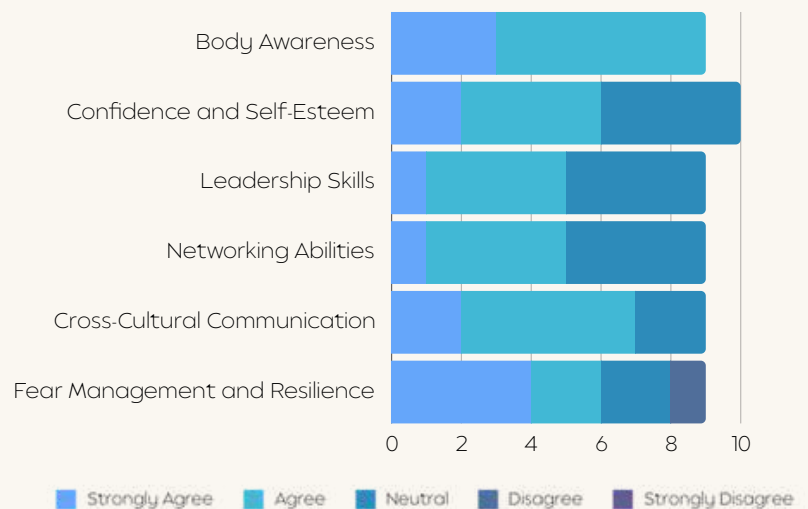
One participant suggested the provision of a structured program for beginners to enhance inclusivity and accessibility within the climbing community.



## Potential benefits that climbing offers

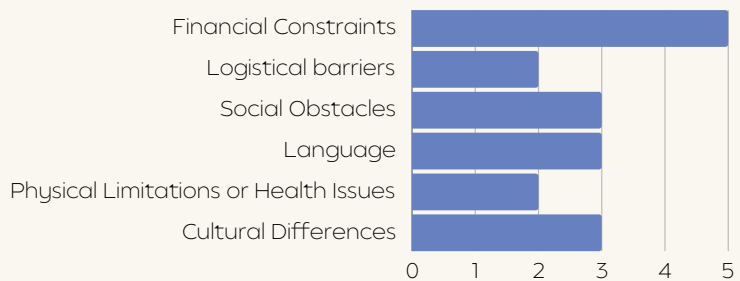
The current perception of never-climbed participants, as revealed by surveys, shows that 2 participants find climbing interesting but not for them, 6 would consider trying it if given the chance, and 1 is not familiar enough to decide.

The analysis of the survey results indicates that participants agreed or strongly agreed that climbing helped develop body awareness, confidence, self-esteem, and cross-cultural communication. Some also noted improvements in leadership skills, networking abilities, and fear management and resilience.



## Barriers

Out of 9 participants, 4 experienced barriers to starting sport climbing, while 3 did not. One participant highlighted the potential danger involved, and another mentioned they had never attempted it as an adult.



Participants identified several barriers to starting sport climbing. Physical limitations were a concern for some, with one participant worried about fitness levels and previous injuries, while another feared heights in addition to fitness concerns. Logistically, two participants were unsure where to find climbing locations. Socially, one participant noted a lack of nearby community support for climbing or outdoor activities, and another felt intimidated by the existing climbing community. Cultural differences also played a role, with one participant viewing climbing as a niche sport that is challenging to integrate into, and another echoing this sentiment about the community's exclusivity. A migrant participant highlighted limited free time due to financial responsibilities. Language barriers were also significant, with three participants struggling with the Greek language and one pointing out that comprehension issues can make seeking assistance difficult.

## Exploring Climbing Preferences and Accessibility



Participants expressed various needs and preferences to foster their interest in climbing. They suggested an informative and detailed presentation featuring videos and hands-on activities to help explore climbing. Taking gradual steps with the support of a welcoming community was also emphasized. One participant mentioned that financial constraints are their main obstacle despite their interest. Additionally, seeking a welcoming and supportive environment with skilled instructors was highlighted as crucial for mental comfort.





In the survey from Italy 13 participants are former climbers who used to climb or tried climbing at least once, and 5 have never experienced climbing. Among the climbers, one had been climbing for less than a year and four for 1-2 years of **experience**. Among the participants, 14 identified themselves as male and 2 as female. 2 participants preferred not to say about their gender.

The survey participants comprised 10 students, 4 working professionals, and 4 participants who did not specify their **occupation**. The working professionals held various roles, including beach assistant, salesperson, bricklayer, and intercultural educator.

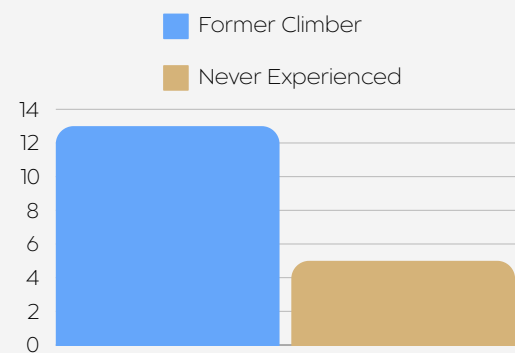
**The age range** of participants is as follows: 13 are between 18-25, 3 are between 25-35, 2 are under 18.

The survey participants represented a diverse range of countries, including 6 from Ghana, 4 from Marocco, 2 from Albania, 2 from Romania, 1 each from Iran, Iraq, Accra and Lebanon.

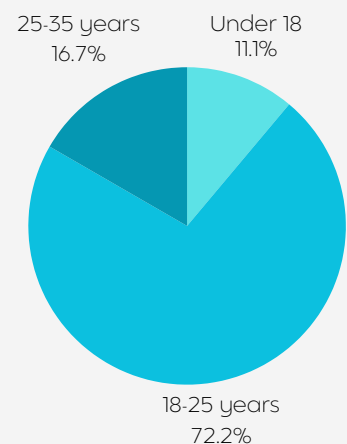
Former climbers predominantly utilized climbing gyms, instructional videos, and social media groups. Additionally, one participant relied on friends or family for support, and another took climbing classes. One former climber stated that they learned through firsthand experience due to their natural curiosity.

On the other hand, those who have never experienced climbing mainly used instructional videos and received some support from friends and social media groups.

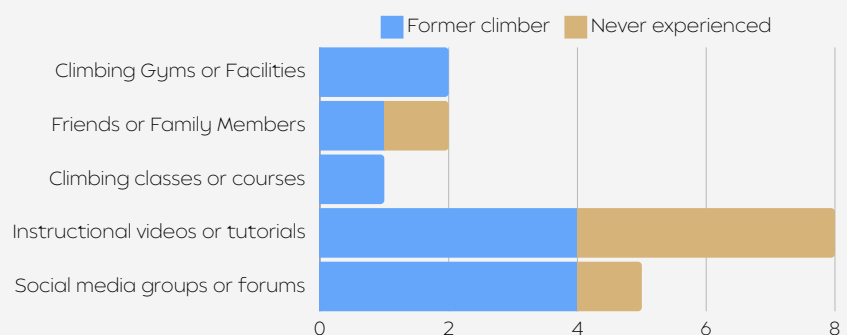
## Experience Level



## Age

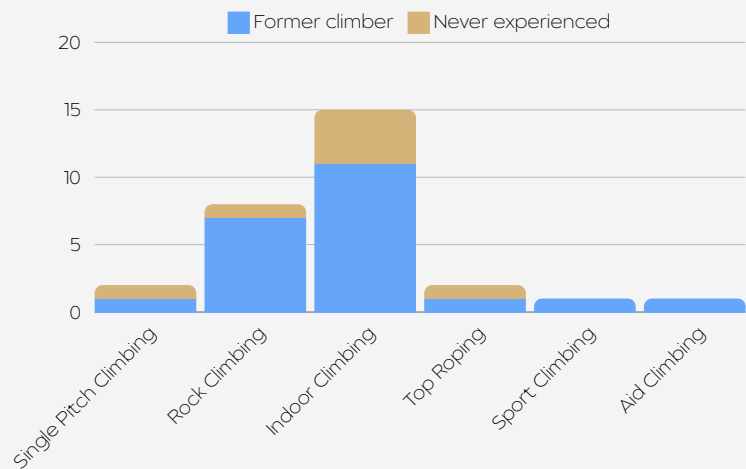


## Learning Resources for Climbing



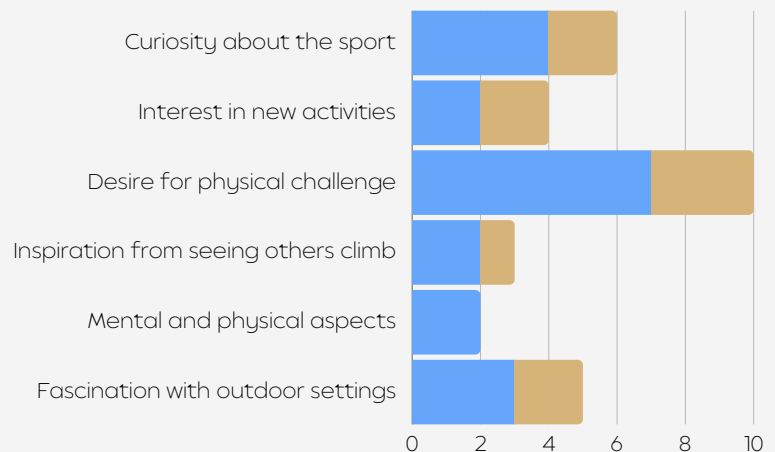


## Types of Climbing Familiarity & Interest



Most former climbers had experience with indoor climbing (11), followed by rock climbing (7). Fewer former climbers engaged in single pitch climbing, top roping, sport climbing, and aid climbing. Among those who never experienced climbing, indoor climbing was the most common climbing style they would like to explore (4), with minimal participation in other types.

## Factors Influencing Interest

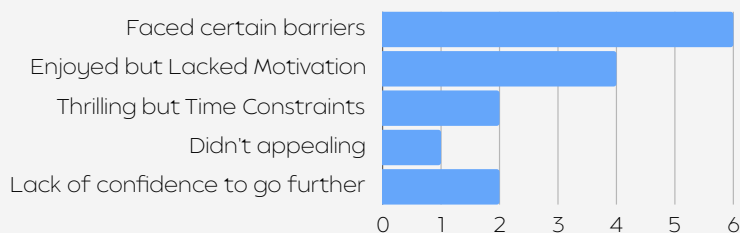


Desire for physical challenge are significant factors influencing both former climbers and never experienced participants. They also show a notable interest in curiosity about the sport and outdoor settings.



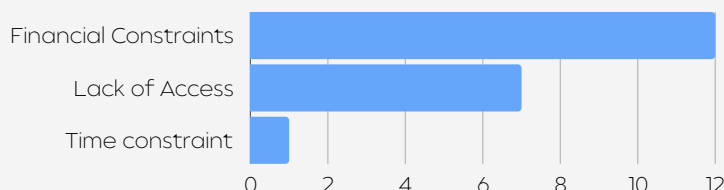
## Reasons for Discontinuing Climbing

Participants shared various reasons for not continuing with climbing. Four participants enjoyed it but lacked motivation to continue. Two found it thrilling but didn't have the time. Six faced barriers that prevented them from continuing, including financial constraints. Two lacked confidence in their abilities, while one simply didn't find climbing appealing or enjoyable.



## Barriers

The participants indicated that financial constraints (12), lack of access to climbing facilities (7), and time constraints or other commitments (1) are the main barriers.



Participants identified several social and cultural barriers within the climbing community. One participant felt that climbing gyms or outdoor areas might seem **unwelcoming** or **unsafe** for individuals from diverse backgrounds. Two other participants noted the **exclusivity of the climbing community**, making it difficult for those with diverse cultural or social identities to feel included. When asked about participation if inclusivity were prioritized, two participants were definitely eager to join, and two others said it could encourage them to try. Additionally, four participants expressed curiosity about exploring climbing if all barriers were removed, and five were keen to start without hesitation.

## Recommendations for Inclusivity

One participant proposed making it a more accessible opportunity, emphasizing the importance of initiatives like this project. Additionally, three participants echoed the sentiment, advocating for lower prices or free-of-charge options.

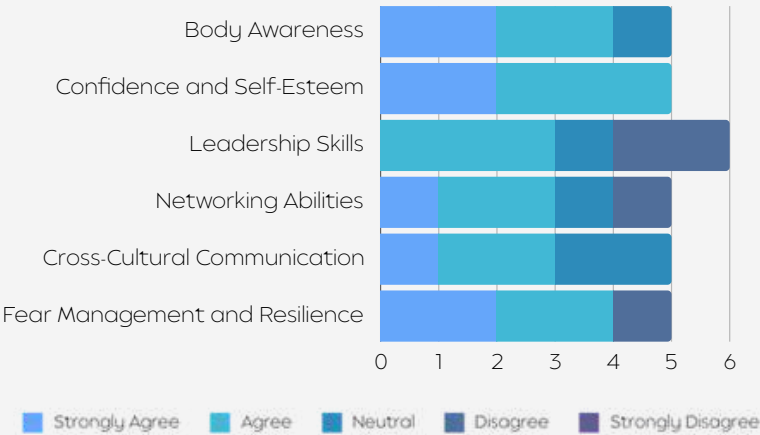




## Potential benefits that climbing offers

The current perception of never-climbed participants, as revealed by surveys, shows that 4 would consider trying it if given the chance, and 1 is not familiar enough to decide.

Climbers largely agree that climbing enhances body awareness, confidence, and self-esteem. It is also seen as beneficial for leadership skills, networking abilities, cross-cultural communication, and fear management and resilience.



## Barriers

Participants identified various barriers to starting sport climbing. Two participants experienced barriers, including financial constraints, while two did not. Physical limitations were not a concern for any of the five respondents. Financial constraints discouraged participation due to high costs of membership, equipment, and lessons. Logistical challenges included difficulty leaving city centers and lengthy travel times. While three participants did not see cultural differences as a barrier, one noted that friends who wear veils cannot participate. Lastly, while two participants did not perceive language barriers, one highlighted communication difficulties due to language differences.

Four participants mentioned the need for more accessible and affordable facilities. Another four highlighted the importance of programs specifically designed for beginners. Additionally, one participant suggested initiatives focusing on diversity and inclusion.







In the survey from Spain 20 participants are current climbers, and 3 are former climbers who used to climb or tried climbing at least once. Among the climbers, one had been climbing for less than a year, two for 1-2 years, six for 3-5 years, two for 6-10 years, eight for over ten years, and one participant had 40 years of **experience**. In terms of **climbing frequency**, three participants reported climbing daily, fifteen climbed weekly, one climbed occasionally, and one noted that their frequency varied, sometimes climbing every week for months and then not climbing for a month. Among the participants, 13 identified themselves as female and 10 as male.

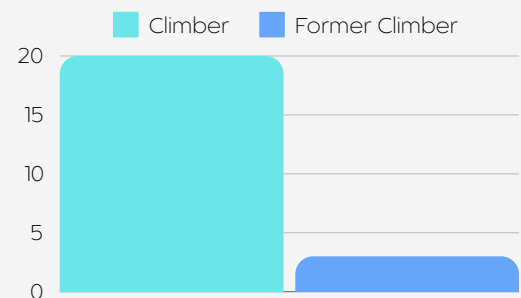
The respondents represented a diverse range of **occupations**, including an employee, speech therapist, German language teacher, climbing and mountaineering instructor and guide, lawyer, worker, mountain guide, social worker, nurse, canyoning guide, student and worker, professor, shelter guard, manager of a climbing wall, self-employed individual, coach and physical trainer, dental prosthetics specialist, educator, unemployed individual, and firefighter.

**The age range** of participants is as follows: 1 is between 18-25, 8 are between 25-35, 9 are between 35-45, 4 are between 45-55, and 1 is between 55-65 years old.

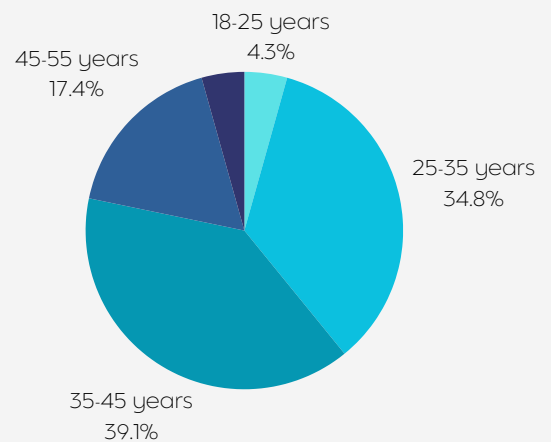
The survey participants represented a diverse range of countries, including 2 from Chile, 1 from Germany, 1 from Hungary, 18 from Spain, and 1 from Switzerland.

Current climbers and former climbers both rely heavily on climbing gyms or facilities (14 climbers, 1 former) and friends or family (14 climbers, 3 former). Outdoor climbing clubs are also popular (13 climbers, 1 former). Instructional videos, online articles, and climbing books are commonly used by both groups. Personal trainers or coaches and social media forums are less frequently utilized.

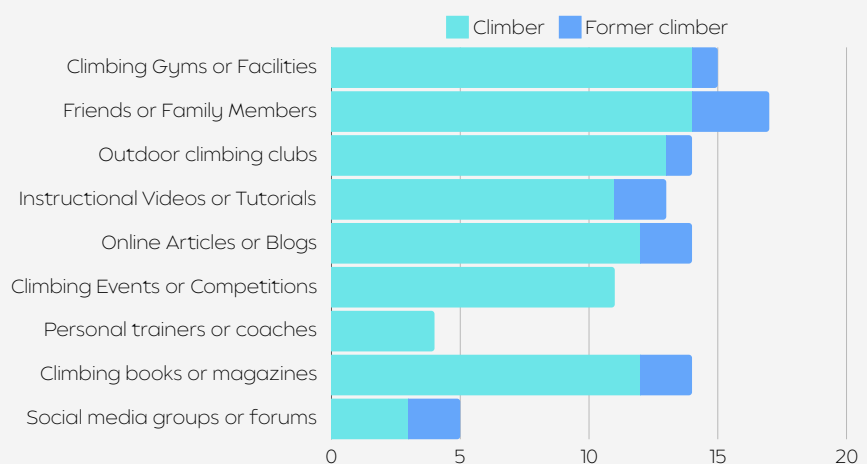
## Experience Level



## Age

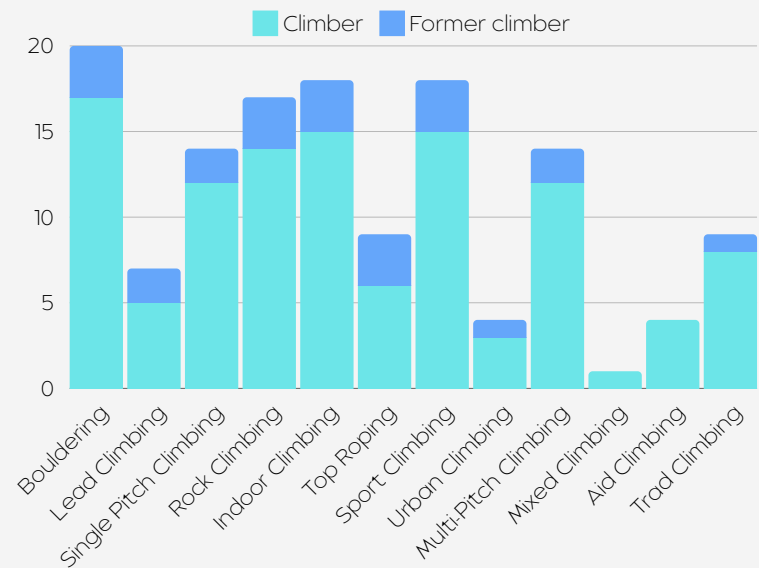


## Learning Resources for Climbing



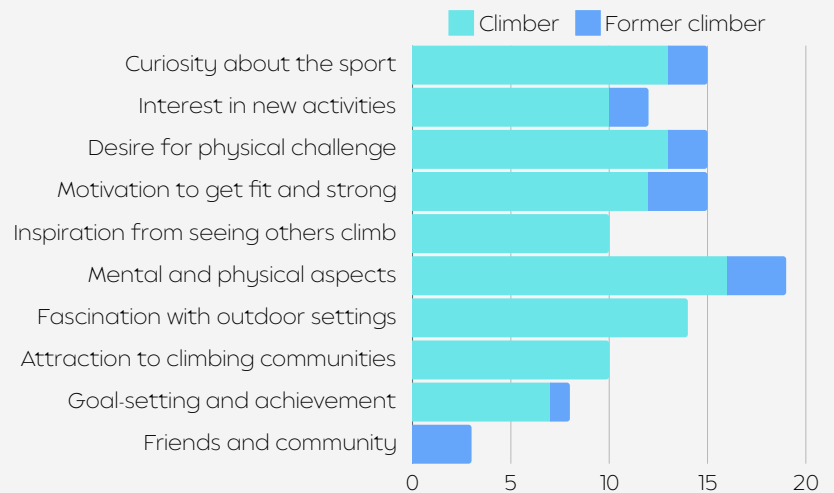


## Types of Climbing Familiarity & Interest



Bouldering, indoor climbing, and sport climbing are highly favored among both climbers and former climbers. Rock climbing and single pitch climbing also show strong participation. Top roping and lead climbing have moderate engagement, while urban, multi-pitch, and trad climbing see lower but notable involvement. Mixed and aid climbing are the least popular activities.

## Factors Influencing Interest



Current climbers are primarily motivated by mental and physical aspects (16), fascination with outdoor settings (14), curiosity about the sport (13), and a desire for physical challenge (13). They also seek fitness (12), new activities (10), and are inspired by others (10), with community attraction (10) and goal-setting (7) playing roles. Former climbers share similar drivers: mental and physical aspects (3), fitness motivation (3), curiosity (2), physical challenge (2), new activities (2), goal-setting (1), and friends and community (3).





## Life Impact of Climbing

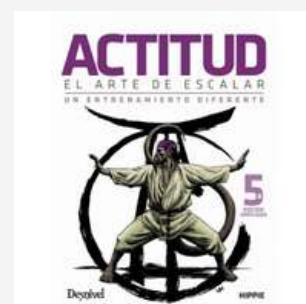
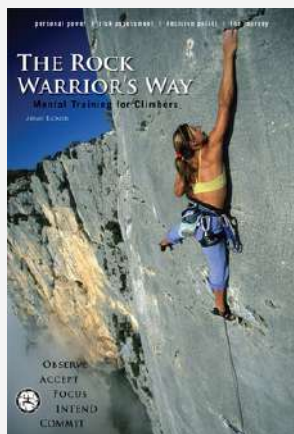
Participants in the survey of current climbers in Spain reported that climbing has significantly impacted their daily lives, with 20 out of 20 stating a definitive "Yes" to its positive influence.

Most participants experienced positive impacts in body awareness (19) and confidence and self-esteem (18). Leadership skills showed mixed results, with 7 positively impacted, 7 somewhat, and 6 not affected. Networking abilities had the least impact, with 10 reporting no change, 7 somewhat impacted, and 3 positively impacted. Cross-cultural communication and collaboration saw 9 positive impacts, 5 somewhat, and 6 no impacts. Fear management and resilience were positively impacted for 15 participants, while 5 reported being somewhat impacted.

## Additional benefits by responders

Participants highlighted that climbing offers benefits beyond physical fitness, including peace, enjoyment, and deep friendships. It promotes social relations and personal growth in a non-competitive environment. Climbing also teaches valuable life skills like goal setting, frustration management, responsibility, process planning, and teaching techniques. Furthermore, climbers develop emotional management skills, exposure to languages and cultures through travel, and improved concentration abilities.

“I would recommend the books **"Rock Warriors"** by Arno Ilgner and **"Attitude: The Art of Climbing"** by Hippiie XD, both of which summarise many of the lessons that can be learned through climbing. It is difficult to answer this question without going into too much detail because for me climbing teaches me every day and I try to extrapolate the maximum from each adventure, from the planning, the selection of objectives, the development of activities of different levels depending on the group or the evaluation of the activity itself.”

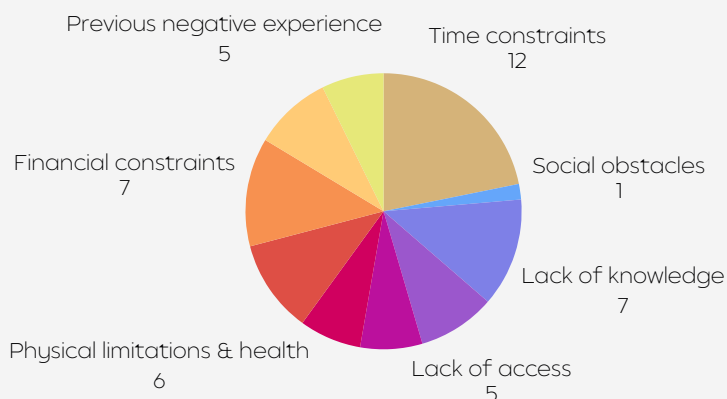


book recommendations by survey participant from Spain

”

## Barriers

The primary barriers to climbing include time constraints (12) and lack of knowledge and financial constraints (7). Physical limitations and health issues affect 6 participants, while lack of access impact 5. Other obstacles include lack of support (4), fear of heights (4), and communication barriers (4), with social obstacles being the least reported (1).



One participant mentioned *“Although the community of women climbers is growing there are still differences in the treatment of women within the climbing community which affects one's experience and skill development. Being a white European I personally do not face any other barriers but it is noticeable how little racial and cultural diversity there is within climbing.”*

## Impact of Barriers on Climbing Participation

Participants highlighted various barriers that significantly impacted their climbing activities. Injuries prevented prolonged participation, while the cost of equipment and climbing walls, especially in Madrid, was a financial hurdle. Fear, such as being scared and needing to put climbing aside, also played a role.

Participants noted social and logistical challenges, including a lack of trustworthy climbing partners and new responsibilities, such as motherhood, making it harder to find time. Limited information and language barriers in foreign countries hindered progress and development in the sport. Gender-related issues were significant; women participants felt marginalized, doubted for their abilities, and faced typical questions about their competence and safety awareness.

Feelings of insecurity due to a perceived lack of knowledge led to mental blocks, preventing further advancement. The masculinized environment among climbers left some participants feeling excluded, compounded by financial constraints limiting access to indoor climbing walls during winter. In summer, public outdoor climbing walls offered a more affordable and comfortable alternative.

For some, climbing evolved into a job, diminishing their enjoyment. Finding suitable climbing partners occasionally posed a challenge, restricting opportunities to climb as desired. Time constraints due to family responsibilities and work commitments, along with adverse weather conditions, further limited climbing sessions, underscoring the multifaceted nature of these barriers.

## Overcoming Barriers in Climbing

- **Fun and Safety Focus:** Participants found that prioritizing fun and safety over grades or performance demands enriched their climbing experience. This approach allowed them to appreciate the sport more fully, akin to enjoying life's diverse opportunities.
- **Mindful Approach and Flexible Goals:** Adopting a calm mindset and avoiding rigid goals proved beneficial. Climbers focused on enjoying each route, tuning into sensations, and practicing falls to reduce fear and tension, fostering a more fulfilling experience. Support from the climbing community, particularly towards newcomers, was highlighted as crucial.
- **Navigating Gender Challenges:** Climbing with other women and relying on internal resilience helped participants address gender-related challenges. Strategies such as conscious breathing, route analysis, and replacing negative thoughts with positive affirmations played a significant role. Supportive climbing partners also influenced their experience positively.
- **Community and Learning Together:** Connecting with peers of similar experience levels, such as women or queer individuals, and learning together was valued. To manage financial constraints, participants sought affordable climbing locations, shared season tickets, and utilized self-organized, free climbing walls.
- **Sensory Engagement:** Engaging senses like singing or immersing in environmental sounds and smells contributed to a more enjoyable and relaxed climbing experience. These diverse strategies collectively empowered participants to overcome obstacles and find greater enjoyment and fulfillment in climbing.





## Recommendations for Inclusivity

- **Family-Friendly Facilities:** Create breastfeeding rooms and baby areas to support parents who climb.
- **Inclusive Spaces:** Develop open spaces and reflection areas to encourage diverse participation and break down prejudices about the difficulty and risks of climbing. These initiatives can foster positive examples and allow climbers to voice their experiences, emphasizing that climbing is not just a sport but a lifestyle.
- **Community Training:** Implement age-specific training programs that are fun and utilize the knowledge of experienced climbers to mentor newcomers. Offering free climbing lessons to under-25s in towns and cities can help build supportive communities. Facilitate group meetings and transport to natural climbing sectors, promoting companionship over competition.
- **Accessible Information and Pricing:** Provide detailed, concise information on climbing culture and risks. Ensure prices are affordable and personalized, and offer communication aids tailored to the climbing environment.
- **Diverse Representation:** Increase the presence of women and other underrepresented groups in both climbing and instructional roles. Implement incentive programs for non-traditional climbing communities and sensitize sports brands and media to promote a more inclusive image of the sport. Fund programs that use climbing as a tool for social inclusion.
- **Balancing Accessibility and Safety:** While making climbing more affordable and accessible, also focus on educating climbers to reduce reckless behavior and improve problem-solving methods during climbs.
- **Focus on Enjoyment:** Shift the emphasis from competitiveness and achieving specific goals to enjoying the activity. Prioritize routes that require balance, agility, and playfulness over those focused solely on strength. Create spaces for dialogue and reflection within the climbing community to share experiences and ideas.



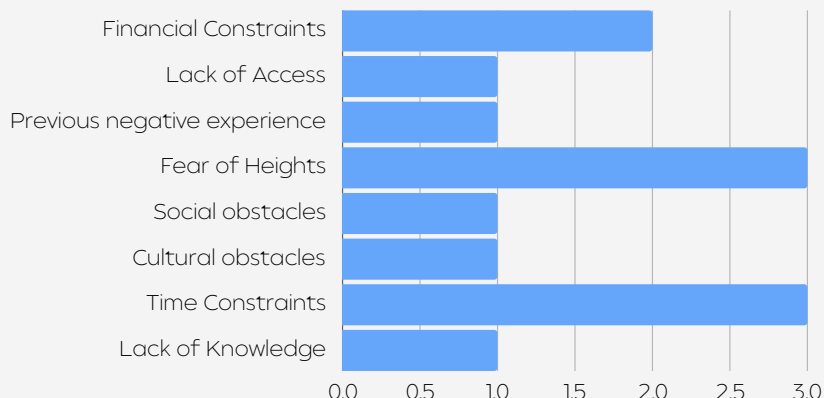
## Reasons for Discontinuing Climbing

The analysis of reasons for discontinuing climbing and barriers faced reveals that time constraints and fear of height were the most significant impediment, cited by all 3 participants.

### Barriers

The participants indicated that financial constraints (12), lack of access to climbing facilities (7), and time constraints or other commitments (1) are the main barriers.

Participants in the climbing community have observed several social and cultural barriers that hinder broader participation. One participant noted the difficulty for foreigners to find roped climbing teams, especially if they are not at a high skill level.



Another highlighted the lack of visible diversity and role models, which discourages underrepresented groups from participating. Despite these challenges, there is a strong interest in joining climbing activities if the community prioritized inclusivity. Two participants expressed eagerness to participate in an inclusive environment that offers more information and tailored opportunities.

## Recommendations for Inclusivity

To foster a more inclusive climbing community, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Free Activities in Diverse Settings:** Offer free climbing activities in a variety of settings and contexts to reach a broader audience.
- **Targeted Climbing Groups:**
  - **Women's Groups:** Organize climbing sessions specifically for women to create a supportive and empowering environment.
  - **Immigrants:** Provide climbing opportunities for immigrants to help them integrate and feel welcomed in the community.
  - **Beginners Needing Ropes:** Facilitate climbing groups for beginners who require ropes to continue their learning journey.
- **Inclusive Climbing for Children:**
  - **Children with ADHD:** Promote climbing activities for children with ADHD, as it has been shown to help with concentration.
  - **Children with Autism:** Use climbing as a platform for developing social skills in children with autism.







# INTERVIEW

## with Climbers and Climbing Instructors

This section presents the findings from interviews conducted with climbers across five countries. Here is a summary of the number of interviewees by country: Austria (3), Germany (6), Greece (6), Italy (6), and Spain (5). Most of the participants are climbers, former climbers, and/or instructors. For a detailed list of the questions asked during these interviews, please refer to Annex B.

The section begins with an exploration of the *Climbing Benefits Across Five Countries*, including unique advantages of different climbing types and skill improvements over time. Following this, the results are detailed on a country-by-country basis, highlighting specific themes such as *Diversity in Climbing* and *Responses to Discrimination*.

Given the similarities in recommendations for enhancing inclusivity within the climbing community, the responses have been consolidated to eliminate redundancies and provide clearer insights.

# CLIMBING BENEFITS ACROSS FIVE COUNTRIES

“For many, climbing is more than just a sport; it is a way of life that shapes identity and worldview. Each climb, from scaling sheer rock faces to navigating uncertain terrain, offers opportunities for self-discovery and personal growth, blending elements of athleticism, adventure, and mental fortitude.”

- Climber participant from Austria

This encompasses the broader advantages that climbing offers to individuals beyond just skill development. According to the interviewees, here are the benefits mentioned by them:

## Personal Growth and Perseverance

- Climbing cultivates traits such as perseverance, goal-setting, and the ability to manage failure.
- Mental resilience is particularly evident in bouldering, which fosters resilience through repeated attempts and failures.
- Setting and achieving personal goals motivates individuals.
- The choice of climbing type often depends on personal goals and preparedness.

## Psychological and Emotional Well-being

- Climbing boosts confidence and social skills, helping climbers manage stress and anxiety.
- Overcoming fears through collective support and teamwork is a recurring theme.
- Facing the risk of falling can boost self-esteem and promote self-improvement, positively impacting all aspects of life.
- It helps individuals recognize their strengths, limits, and fears.
- Climbing requires being present in the moment, enhancing mindfulness.







## Connection with Nature

- Climbing encourages an appreciation for the environment, especially for urban dwellers.
- It often leads to increased social responsibility towards environmental protection

## Physical Health

- Climbing activates muscles often neglected in modern lifestyles, promoting strength, endurance, and flexibility.
- It has positive effects on mental health, particularly for those dealing with mild depression or other mental disorders.
- Initially, climbers may doubt their abilities, but they soon realize their potential and see improvements in their physical condition.

## Social and Community Aspects

- Climbing fosters trust and communication skills, with relationships strengthened through shared experiences such as belaying each other.
- It brings together individuals from diverse backgrounds, emphasizing support, acceptance, and spreading the discipline.
- Climbing helps individuals become part of a cohesive group.
- Climbers support one another in a non-judgmental environment, fostering a sense of community.
- Knowing how to belay partners promotes safety and teamwork.

## UNIQUE BENEFITS OF DIFFERENT CLIMBING TYPES

Each style of climbing provides unique advantages, making it a versatile pursuit for those seeking varied forms of development. Below are the key insights provided by the interviewees:

## Bouldering

- **Controlled Environment:** Typically done indoors on shorter walls without ropes, providing a safer and more controlled environment.
- **Physical Preparation and Strength:** Focuses on short, powerful moves, helping climbers develop strength and technique.
- **Social Engagement:** Described as more social, encouraging healthy competition within larger groups.

## Lead Climbing

- **Strategic Thinking and Risk Management:** Requires decision-making skills and the ability to assess and mitigate risks.

## Top-Rope Climbing

- **Ideal for Beginners:** Promotes confidence-building and skill development in a supportive environment due to its safety features.



## Outdoor Rock Climbing

- **Athleticism and Adventure:** Offers a blend of athleticism and adventure, requiring strength, agility, and adaptability.
- **Connection to Nature:** Participants noted its calming effect and strong connection to nature.
- **Community Building:** Connects participants to nature, promoting a lifestyle of travel and camping.



## Trad, Alpine, and Multi-Pitch Climbing

- **Focus on equipment, skills, long-term goals, and preparation.**
- **Mental Fortitude:** Develops problem-solving, organizational skills, and effective communication, addressing fears and managing adverse conditions.

## Sport Climbing

- **Involves managing fear and learning proper breathing techniques.**

## Traditional Climbing

- **Respect for Nature:** Fosters a deeper respect for nature and the environment.
- **Decision-Making Under Stress:** Challenges individuals to confront extreme situations and make decisions under stress.



# SKILL IMPROVEMENT OVER TIME



This focuses specifically on how climbers' abilities develop with regular practice and experience. Participants reported significant improvements in their skills over time, identifying key areas of development:

## **Technical Skills:**

- Environmental Assessment: Better assessment of environmental factors such as wind direction, sun position, temperature, and the degree of the climb.
- Technique Mastery: Mastery of techniques ranging from delicate footwork to dynamic movement.
- Route Reading: Enhanced route reading and efficient movement.

## **Life Skills:**

- Outdoor Survival: Improved outdoor survival and navigation abilities.
- Perseverance and Patience: Development of valuable life skills such as perseverance, patience, and the ability to stay calm under pressure.
- Resilience and Adaptability: Enhanced resilience and adaptability, applicable to everyday challenges.

## **Personal Skill Enhancements:**

- Regular training and practice lead to significant improvements in climbing skills, as noted by many respondents.
- Continuous learning highlights the motivation to enhance their teaching methods and personal skills.

### **Commitment and Entrepreneurship:**

- Climbers often recognize the great commitment required to develop technical skills and physical abilities.
- The climbing world, being less widespread, encourages individuals to undertake entrepreneurial ventures, such as starting projects or gyms from scratch, especially in contexts with few opportunities and resources.

### **Autism and Inclusivity:**

- For individuals with autism, pattern following is crucial. Climbing opens doors to new experiences and relationships, helping those with low self-esteem improve through practice.
- Climbing helps unite individuals regardless of language barriers, fostering connection through shared activities and visual cues.

### **Overcoming Reluctance and Building Confidence:**

- Students initially reluctant to engage in different practices gradually become more confident and feel stronger over time, emphasizing the long and progressive nature of this improvement.
- Teachers highlight the need for more specific tools and guidance to work inclusively with people with disabilities and those at risk of exclusion.

### **Psychological and Social Benefits:**

- Development of self-confidence, goal-setting, fear and stress management, self-regulation, problem-solving, focus, and responsibility.
- Shared anecdotes of individuals with mental illnesses gaining confidence and responsibility through climbing, experiencing both physical and mental benefits.

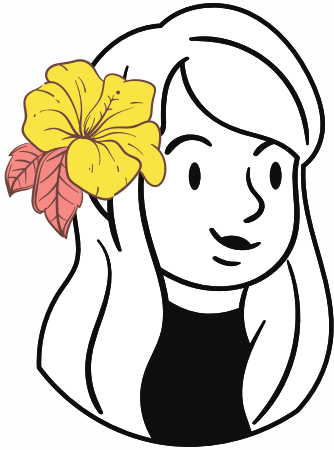
### **Support and Community:**

- The benefits of climbing depend significantly on the support from those who accompany the process.
- Climbing fosters teamwork and support from peers, enhancing mental and social skills.





# INTERVIEWS: AUSTRIA



## Climber Mountain-to-Boulder Adventurer

*"I believe that diversity enriches the climbing experience by introducing different techniques, problem-solving approaches, and cultural insights, leading to a more well-rounded and inclusive environment."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** The participant has been climbing since they were a child, growing up in a mountainous area where rock climbing was a normal part of life. After moving to Austria years ago, they kept rock climbing now and then and discovered bouldering. This new type of climbing is especially fun and challenging for them because it offers different levels of difficulty.

**Memorable Anecdote:** One interesting thing the participant noticed is how easily people from mountainous countries fit into climbing teams. Their natural confidence and skills help them feel less shy and more connected with the group.

**Key insights:** This climber emphasizes that diversity enriches the climbing experience and helps build a supportive, inclusive community. Their proactive approach to tackling discrimination and promoting inclusivity through language support and community involvement offers practical steps for creating a more welcoming environment. They also call for more research to understand the barriers faced by underrepresented groups and to develop strategies to increase their participation in climbing.

### Diversity in Climbing

The participant has climbed with individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds, noting that those from mountainous regions exhibit more confidence and integrate well into teams, while ethnic minorities often show empathy and support, contributing to a positive atmosphere. The participant highlighted the underrepresentation of women in climbing and suggested further investigation to identify and address barriers to participation.

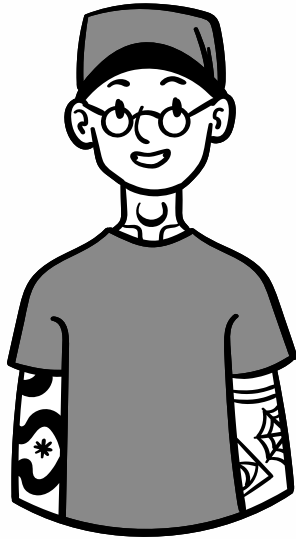
*Diversity in climbing*, as described by the participant, enriches the community by introducing varied experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds. This fosters different techniques, problem-solving approaches, and cultural insights, creating a well-rounded and inclusive environment. A *diverse team* offers enhanced networking opportunities, exposure to different cultures, and personal growth, encouraging the sharing of experiences and improving techniques.

To *promote inclusivity*, the participant uses their multilingual skills to assist non-native speakers and advocates that climbing transcends language and cultural barriers. They emphasize raising awareness about climbing's inclusive nature and supporting newcomers, implying that climbing with diverse individuals can enhance social skills through teamwork, communication, and mutual respect.

### Responding to discrimination

The participant expressed a strong commitment to addressing unfair treatment based on ethnicity or cultural background. They would immediately intervene to understand the situation, support the marginalized individual, clarify misunderstandings, defend the affected person's rights, and ensure discriminatory behavior is corrected. While the participant did not recount specific incidents of discrimination, they acknowledged its potential presence and stressed the importance of vigilance to maintain a respectful and inclusive environment. They noted the underrepresentation of women climbers but did not identify other marginalized groups, suggesting more research is needed to understand and address this trend to encourage greater participation from underrepresented groups.

## Climbing Instructor, Passionate Climbing Teacher



*"I observed that individuals from different ethnic backgrounds bring unique perspectives and problem-solving approaches to climbing. For instance, climbers from warmer climates often adapt quickly to outdoor conditions due to their familiarity with intense sun and heat."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** The participant has been a climbing instructor for over 15 years, starting out as an enthusiastic climber in their teenage years. After a shoulder injury limited their ability to climb at high levels, they shifted to instructing. They began teaching in a small local gym and eventually moved on to outdoor guiding and instructional courses across Europe. They have mentored climbers of all ages and backgrounds, helping them build technical skills and a passion for the sport.

**Memorable Anecdote:** The instructor shared a touching story about a student from a refugee background who had never experienced climbing before. The student was initially apprehensive but gradually gained confidence through the supportive environment the instructor fostered. This culminated in a successful climb that brought tears of joy and a newfound sense of belonging to the student.

**Key insights:** The instructor highlights the importance of diversity in enhancing the climbing community and creating an inclusive, supportive atmosphere. By actively addressing discrimination and promoting inclusivity through targeted initiatives, they provide valuable guidance for fostering a welcoming environment. Their experiences highlight the ongoing need to support underrepresented groups and improve the inclusivity of the climbing community.

### Diversity in Climbing

The instructor has worked with climbers from various backgrounds, noting that cultural diversity enriches the climbing community by bringing unique perspectives and problem-solving approaches. For example, climbers from warmer climates often adapt quickly to outdoor conditions due to their familiarity with intense sun and heat.

Despite climbing becoming more inclusive, barriers remain for certain groups such as women, ethnic minorities, and individuals with disabilities, who are underrepresented and often need to make extra efforts to feel accepted and supported.

*Diversity* involves including people from various backgrounds, abilities, and experiences, fostering innovation and growth by encouraging different perspectives and techniques. This inclusiveness breaks down stereotypes and builds a more supportive environment.

A diverse team offers benefits like increased creativity, a broader range of problem-solving techniques, and better communication and teamwork skills, leading to improved climbing performance and a more cohesive community.

To promote inclusivity, the instructor organizes community events and outreach programs targeting underrepresented groups, and mentors novice climbers, offering extra support to those who may feel marginalized.

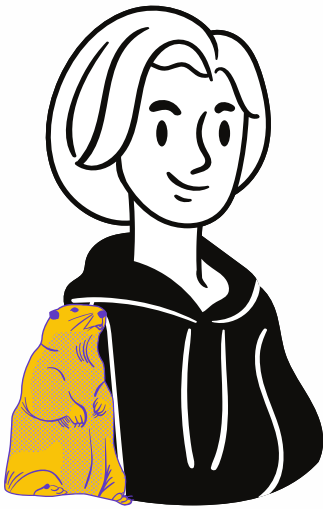
By fostering a welcoming environment and encouraging open dialogue, they help bridge gaps within the climbing community.

### Responding to discrimination

The participant is proactive in addressing any form of discrimination within the climbing community. They would intervene immediately to support the affected individual and address the issue with the involved parties. One notable instance involved a skilled African climber who was overlooked for a sponsorship in favor of a less talented European climber, likely due to racial bias. Another example was an Indigenous Australian participant facing microaggressions and exclusionary remarks during a workshop. The participant stresses the need for inclusivity training and a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination to ensure a welcoming environment for all climbers. The participant highlighted the challenges faced by women, ethnic minorities, and individuals with disabilities. They noted the importance of creating more opportunities and providing targeted support to these groups to enhance their participation in climbing. This includes offering specialized training programs and ensuring accessible facilities.



## Former Climber Curiosity-Driven Alpinist



*"Diversity is a cornerstone of the Austrian climbing ethos, reflecting the rich tapestry of cultures, traditions, and perspectives that defined the country's alpine heritage. By embracing diversity in all its forms, climbers could enrich their experiences, broaden their horizons, and foster a sense of unity and belonging within the community."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** The participant's journey into climbing is deeply rooted in their Austrian heritage. Growing up in a beautiful Alpine village, they were introduced to climbing at a young age, exploring the rugged terrain with a sense of wonder and curiosity. What began as a childhood hobby soon grew into a lifelong passion. They actively climbed until their university years and even helped organize climbing events and competitions. Though their participation lessened due to a demanding professional career, they continue to support the climbing community through volunteer work.

**Memorable Anecdote:** The participant fondly recalls a pivotal moment in their climbing journey during a solo expedition. Battling fierce winds and unpredictable weather, they reached the summit teetering on the edge of exhaustion and exhilaration. This triumphant achievement was a humbling reminder of nature's raw power and the indomitable spirit of the Austrian climbing community.

**Key insights:** This participant's journey from an Alpine village to mountain summits illustrates the transformative power of climbing in shaping identity and building community. They emphasize the role of diversity, inclusivity, and social justice in climbing, showcasing its potential as a catalyst for positive change in Austrian society. By embracing diversity and fostering an inclusive culture, they believe climbers can create a vibrant, resilient, and compassionate community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and reach new heights, both on and off the rock.

### Diversity in Climbing

The climbing journey exposed the participant to a diverse array of individuals, each with their own stories and backgrounds. From fellow Austrians seeking solace in the mountains to international climbers drawn to the allure of the Alps, they forged connections that transcended cultural and linguistic barriers, united by a shared passion for adventure and exploration.

While climbing has the power to unite people from all walks of life, the participant acknowledged the underrepresentation of certain groups within the Austrian climbing community. They expressed a desire to see greater diversity and inclusivity in the sport, recognizing the need for targeted efforts to break down barriers and create a more welcoming environment for all climbers.

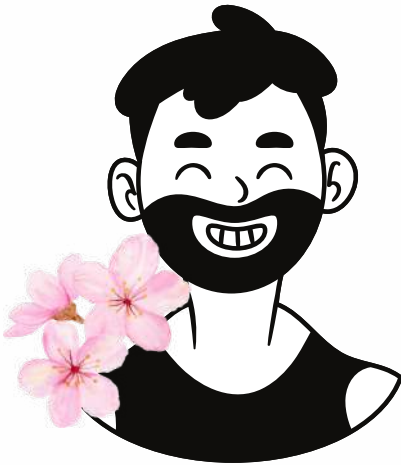
A diverse climbing team not only offers a wealth of skills and experiences but also fosters camaraderie and mutual respect. Bringing together individuals from different backgrounds and cultures allows teams to tap into a reservoir of creativity and innovation, elevating their collective performance to new heights.

The participant believes that inclusivity is not just a goal to be achieved but a responsibility to be embraced. By fostering a culture of acceptance and belonging, climbers can create a safe and supportive space where everyone feels valued and empowered to pursue their passions, regardless of age, gender, or background.

### Responding to discrimination

The participant was committed to standing up against discrimination in all its forms, using their platform to advocate for equality and justice within the climbing community and beyond. They vowed to challenge stereotypes and biases wherever they encountered them, promoting a culture of respect and inclusivity that reflected the core values of Austrian climbing culture. While the participant had not personally witnessed any overt acts of discrimination, they remained vigilant and attuned to the subtle biases and prejudices that could undermine the spirit of inclusivity within climbing spaces. It is important to keep reminding fellow climbers to remain vigilant and proactive in addressing discrimination wherever it may arise, ensuring that everyone felt welcome and respected in the mountains. The participant recognized the importance of amplifying the voices of marginalized groups within the Austrian climbing community, including women, people of color, and individuals with disabilities. They called for greater representation and support for these communities, advocating for systemic change to ensure equal opportunities for all climbers, regardless of background or ability.

## Climber Cherry Top Climber



*"The climbing community is incredibly respectful; if you need help, they are always there for you. Due to the nature of the people in climbing, I think it can improve social inclusion. It's pretty hard to make friends in Austria, but the nature of the sport makes it easier."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** The participant has been actively involved in climbing for about a year, focusing mainly on bouldering. They were introduced to the sport by a friend and quickly developed a passion for it. Climbing has become a significant part of their social life, offering a healthier alternative to social drinking. This shift represents a major lifestyle change for the participant, emphasizing the importance of physical activity and social interaction.

**Memorable Anecdote:** The participant fondly recalled childhood experiences of climbing a large cherry tree to eat cherries, which sparked their interest in climbing. This early fascination with climbing and the satisfaction of overcoming the fear associated with it played a significant role in their later decision to pursue bouldering. They mentioned how the thrill of reaching the top of the tree and the reward of fresh cherries were early motivators that influenced their later love for climbing.

**Key insights:** The participant thinks that climbing offers significant physical and mental benefits, enhancing fitness and social connections. It is a holistic activity that promotes overall well-being. The structured environment of bouldering provides a safe entry point for new climbers. This controlled setting allows beginners to build skills and confidence gradually. While the participant's experience with diverse ethnic backgrounds was limited, they observed the inclusive nature of the climbing community. This inclusivity is a key strength of the climbing culture.

### Diversity in Climbing

The participant primarily climbed with Austrians but observed that older individuals and women often excelled, showing that physical fitness and skill transcend age and gender. They found it inspiring to see diverse climbers excelling, reinforcing climbing as an inclusive sport.

While noting challenges for older, less fit beginners, the participant found the climbing community generally inclusive and supportive, easing integration for new climbers. They defined diversity as including people from various backgrounds and experiences, enriching the climbing experience through different perspectives and fostering innovation and support.

The participant did not see nationality as significant but acknowledged that diversity brings strengths like varied skill sets and creative problem-solving. They emphasized the importance of being welcoming and supportive to all climbers, striving to foster an inclusive atmosphere and contribute to a culture of mutual respect and camaraderie.

### Responding to discrimination

The participant did not have direct experiences with discrimination in climbing but expressed a strong commitment to supporting anyone facing unfair treatment. They emphasized the importance of kindness, understanding, and standing up against discrimination. Their approach would involve immediate intervention to support the affected individual and address the discriminatory behavior.

The participant did not observe specific instances of discrimination within the climbing community. They noted the community's generally inclusive and supportive nature. However, they remained aware of the potential for discrimination and the need for vigilance to maintain a respectful environment.

The participant did not identify specific marginalized groups within the climbing community but acknowledged that more research is needed to understand potential barriers and develop strategies to encourage participation from underrepresented groups. They mentioned that women and older individuals might face unique challenges and that targeted support could help these groups thrive in the climbing community.



# Climbing Instructor Fearless Facilitator



*"I think a diverse climbing team enhances learning opportunities as team members share their unique approaches and techniques. It also supports mutual respect and understanding, creating a more cohesive and supportive team environment."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** The participant is a seasoned climbing instructor with seven years of experience in the field. They began their climbing journey with rock climbing and later incorporated bouldering into their repertoire. Their extensive experience spans both indoor and outdoor environments, teaching climbers of all ages and skill levels. The participant has a deep passion for climbing and is committed to fostering a welcoming and inclusive community.

**Memorable Anecdote:** One memorable story the participant shared involved a climbing expedition with a group of teenagers from diverse ethnic backgrounds. During a challenging rock climbing session, one of the teenagers, who had initially been very reserved, overcame their fear and completed a difficult climb. The participant observed how the encouragement and support from the diverse group helped this individual achieve a personal milestone, highlighting the power of inclusivity and teamwork in climbing.

**Key insights:** The participant's insights the importance of diversity in enhancing the climbing experience and fostering a supportive and inclusive community. The participant's proactive stance on addressing discrimination and their commitment to inclusivity through language support and tailored training programs offer practical steps to promote a more welcoming climbing environment. Their observations underscore the need for further research into barriers faced by underrepresented groups and the development of strategies to encourage their participation in climbing.

## Diversity in Climbing

The participant has extensive experience climbing with individuals from various ethnic backgrounds, noting that diversity enriches the climbing experience through unique techniques and problem-solving strategies.

As an instructor, they work with students from diverse nationalities, addressing challenges like language barriers and cultural differences with visual aids, repeated demonstrations, and an open environment for questions.

They observed specific difficulties for women and older adults, such as gender biases and physical limitations, and have implemented tailored training sessions and supportive peer groups to assist these climbers.

The participant defines diversity as including various ethnicities, genders, ages, and skill levels, believing it brings valuable experiences and perspectives, making the community more vibrant and innovative.

A diverse climbing team enhances learning, fosters mutual respect, and improves communication and teamwork skills. The participant actively promotes an inclusive environment by ensuring all climbers feel welcome and valued, addressing discriminatory behavior, and fostering mutual encouragement and camaraderie.

## Responding to discrimination

The participant is committed to addressing any instances of unfair treatment based on ethnicity or cultural background. They would take immediate action to support the marginalized individual, ensure their concerns are heard, and address the discriminatory behavior. The participant believes in fostering an environment where everyone feels safe, respected, and included.

While the participant did not recount specific incidents of discrimination, they acknowledged its potential presence within the community. They emphasized the importance of being vigilant and proactive in addressing any form of discrimination. The participant is dedicated to creating a respectful and inclusive environment for all climbers.

The participant identified women and older adults as groups that are often marginalized in climbing. They pointed out that these groups face specific challenges, such as gender biases and physical limitations. The participant is actively working to support these groups by offering tailored training programs and fostering a supportive community.

## *Recommendations on Enhancing Inclusivity within Climbing*

- **Leverage Multilingual Abilities:** Encourage instructors and community members to use their multilingual skills to assist non-native speakers, making them feel more comfortable and included.
- **Promote Climbing as an Inclusive Sport:** Emphasize that climbing transcends cultural and language barriers by showcasing stories of diverse climbers to inspire and attract a broader audience. Highlight the universal appeal of climbing to encourage participation from diverse groups.
- **Encourage Diverse Teams:** Advocate for forming diverse climbing teams to enrich the community with varied experiences and perspectives.
- **Actively Address Discrimination:** Be proactive in confronting and addressing any instances of discrimination through strict policies and training to maintain a respectful and supportive environment.
- **Support Underrepresented Groups:** Develop initiatives to support and encourage participation from underrepresented groups such as women, ethnic minorities, and individuals with disabilities. This can include offering scholarships, mentorship programs, and adaptive climbing opportunities.
- **Provide Accessible Resources:** Ensure climbing resources and facilities are accessible to individuals from all backgrounds and abilities, including those with physical or cognitive disabilities.
- **Celebrate Diversity:** Highlight the stories and achievements of diverse climbers to inspire future generations and challenge stereotypes. Use success stories of climbers from various backgrounds to motivate others and serve as powerful testimonials.
- **Educate and Empower:** Offer educational programs and workshops to raise awareness about diversity, equity, and inclusion issues, empowering climbers to become agents of change within their communities.
- **Create safe space:** Ensure climbing gyms and events are safe and welcoming for all, regardless of background or experience level. Implement policies and practices that promote respect and inclusivity, and train staff to handle any issues of discrimination or exclusion.





## Climber Tree-to-Alpine Climber

*"What climbing allows in many ways is to level the playing field to a common activity and leads to people, myself included being able to overcome barriers even without a shared language."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** The journey began with climbing at friends' birthday parties in the early 2000s at a climbing gym/indoor beach in Düsseldorf. Sporadic climbing continued until age 16 when a tree-cutting job led to receiving climbing gear and starting a small tree care business. Regular climbing picked up after moving to Berlin in 2016 for an internship, frequenting bouldering gyms. A pivotal moment came in 2021, with training through Lernlabor leading to lead climbing and climbing trips. Now considering becoming a climbing instructor, they are also exploring Alpine climbing.

**Memorable Anecdote:** The participant acknowledged efforts by organizations like Kletterfreunde to enhance accessibility but pointed out that maintaining engagement in climbing requires significant time and financial investment. This has led to some individuals discontinuing their participation, highlighting persistent challenges in fostering broader inclusivity within the sport.

**Key insights:** The participant noted that diversity enriches the climbing community by offering various perspectives and fostering learning. However, they pointed out that sustained engagement in climbing often requires significant time and resources, posing a challenge for those with limited means. The participant emphasized that efforts to make climbing more accessible should focus on lowering barriers and providing support for diverse communities. Addressing discrimination and fostering an inclusive environment, they believe, is crucial for the health and growth of the climbing community.

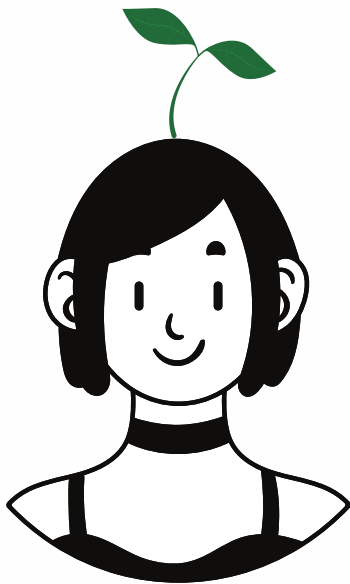
### Diversity in Climbing

Interviewee's climbing journey has highlighted that ethnicity does not significantly impact the dynamics of climbing; effective communication and trust are key, even without a shared language. They noted that Germany's climbing community remains predominantly white despite efforts by groups like Kletterfreunde to increase accessibility, which often require substantial time and resources for sustained engagement. Economic barriers pose significant challenges, making it difficult for those without sufficient resources to continue climbing. The participant stressed that diversity in the climbing community should include various attributes such as sex, age, social background, culture, and ethnicity. Openness and welcoming attitudes towards diverse members enrich the community by offering various perspectives, fostering learning opportunities, and contributing to a stable group atmosphere. Having a diverse climbing team enhances learning opportunities and creates a robust group dynamic. To foster inclusivity, active efforts must be made to welcome and engage more communities.

This can be achieved by lowering entry barriers through providing knowledge, funding for equipment and entrance fees, and creating engagement opportunities without long-term commitments.

### Responding to discrimination

The participant expressed a strong commitment to standing up against discriminatory behavior in climbing. They would ally with the unfairly treated person without undermining their authority if the situation is ongoing. Afterward, they would discuss the situation with the person to understand their perspective and then confront the perpetrator, giving them a chance to apologize. If an apology is not forthcoming, they would escalate the situation and work to remove the perpetrator. The participant did not provide specific incidents but emphasized the importance of addressing unfair treatment and fostering an inclusive environment. They noted that those unable to invest sufficient time and resources are often marginalized in climbing and believe more support is needed to help these groups sustain their engagement in the sport.



## Climber Mindful Mountain Climber

*"Sport climbing easily creates a feeling of togetherness while you are climbing a group you're hanging out together, because it's a sport where you have a lot of breaks in between the climbing, where you can chat and get to know each other."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** Starting in 2014, this participant has celebrated a decade in the sport. It all began during a volunteer year in social service in France, with weekly indoor climbs and summer rock climbing in the Vosges mountains. They have experienced intense climbing phases, regularly climbing outdoors with friends or associations, and have climbed in North Italy and Berlin. For them, climbing is about encountering and managing fear, which aids in stress management and mindfulness.

**Memorable Anecdote:** The climber noted that climbing helps to manage stress, especially in moments when their mind says they are secure, but their body and intuition signal danger. The participant highlighted the importance of working with breath and relaxation, learning to control and overcome fear, and the broader significance of these skills in their life.

**Key insights:** The participant noted that diversity enriches the climbing community by offering various perspectives and fostering learning. However, they pointed out that economic barriers pose a significant challenge to accessibility in climbing. The participant emphasized that efforts to make climbing more accessible should focus on lowering barriers and providing support for diverse communities. Addressing discrimination and fostering an inclusive environment, they believe, is crucial for the health and growth of the climbing community.

### Diversity in Climbing

The participant highlighted the importance of diversity within the climbing community, noting that climbing with people from diverse ethnic backgrounds brings fresh perspectives and helps bridge prejudices and gaps through shared goals. This communal objective fosters unity and understanding among climbers.

However, they acknowledged that climbing remains a privileged sport due to high costs, especially for outdoor climbing, which requires expensive equipment and classes. These financial barriers limit accessibility more than ethnic diversity does, leading to participation mainly from similar socio-economic backgrounds.

Diversity within the climbing community includes ethnicity, socio-economic status, and culture, enriching the community by providing multiple perspectives and fostering a stable, healthy group atmosphere. A diverse climbing team enhances learning opportunities, creates a robust group dynamic, and fosters social interactions and a sense of togetherness.

*To promote inclusivity,* the participant stressed the importance of welcoming diverse communities while lowering entry barriers. Making climbing accessible to a wider audience can help create a more supportive community. For the participant, climbing also significantly contributes to social skill development by encouraging trust, cooperation, and effective communication among participants from different backgrounds, essential for building strong interpersonal relationships.

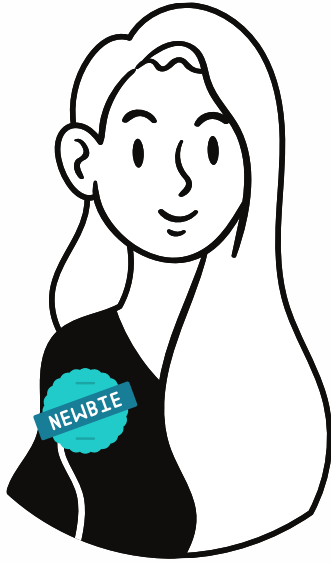
By fostering a welcoming environment and encouraging open dialogue, they help bridge gaps within the climbing community.

### Responding to discrimination

Participant also did not provide specific incidents but emphasized the importance of addressing unfair treatment and fostering an inclusive environment. They highlighted that economic barriers marginalize certain groups within the climbing community and suggested that more support is needed to sustain these groups' engagement in the sport.



## Climber, Newbie Boulder Climber



*"Climbing connects, whatever community you come from. Geeking out and sharing tips on a certain boulder problem really makes you forget your differences and makes you bond over the issue at hand."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** Engaging in climbing for around one and a half years, this climber primarily focuses on bouldering and some indoor sport climbing, with minimal outdoor experience. Introduced to climbing by a good friend and flatmate, they have found a new community in the sport.

**Memorable Anecdote:** The participant expressed how climbing provides opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and serves as a rewarding activity for forming friendships and meeting new people.

**Key insights:** The most significant findings from this interview include the recognition of climbing's mental and physical benefits, the strong community aspect of bouldering, and the calming effect of outdoor climbing. While the community is generally welcoming, economic barriers prevent broader inclusivity. The participant highlighted the importance of diversity for learning and improving skills and emphasized the need for efforts to make climbing more accessible to a diverse population.

### Diversity in Climbing

The participant has climbed with people from various ethnic backgrounds and finds that climbing fosters a strong sense of community. Differences fade as climbers bond over shared challenges, exchanging tips and problem-solving approaches, which enriches their collective experience.

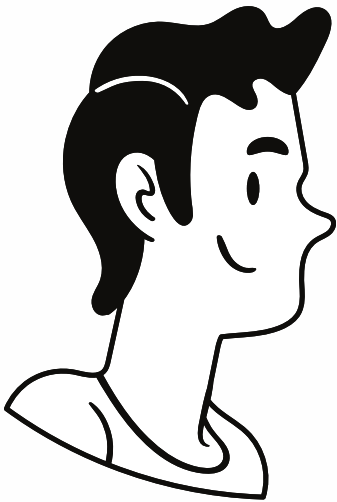
Despite its inclusive nature, climbing can be expensive, often resulting in a predominantly white demographic at major competitions. This cost barrier limits the sport's accessibility to a more diverse population. Diversity in climbing includes different ethnic groups, skill levels, socio-economic backgrounds, genders, and abilities. It helps recognize shared experiences, understand different perspectives, and promotes mutual learning, enriching both personal and community growth.

For the participant, diverse team offers numerous advantages, providing opportunities for members to learn from each other's strengths and improve their skills by adopting different techniques and strategies.

The participant believes the climbing community is generally inclusive but acknowledges the limiting role of cost. They suggest openness and proactive communication as key to fostering a more inclusive environment.

### Responding to discrimination

The participant did not provide specific instances of witnessing discrimination but emphasized the generally inclusive and welcoming nature of the climbing community. They noted that while the community is welcoming, the high cost of the sport can be a barrier, leading to a lack of diversity in competitions and professional settings. Economic barriers marginalize those who cannot afford climbing, making it less accessible to a broader, more diverse group of people.



## Climbing Instructor All-Round Climber

*"The climbing scene could take lessons from some other sports here, for example from powerlifting, where I have heard there can be a very inclusive atmosphere where everyone is working on themselves and celebrated for overcoming personal challenges rather than competing with one another."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** This climber began their journey as a child with family outings. They started climbing regularly at age 20, roughly 12 years ago. With experience in bouldering, sport climbing (both indoor and outdoor), trad climbing, and multi-pitch climbing, they have been teaching climbing for 6 years, beginning at a boulder gym in Berlin.

**Memorable Anecdote:** The participant noted that such diversity brings a range of complementary skills and experiences. Additionally, individuals who operate in international contexts often possess valuable experience in overcoming communication challenges, which can greatly benefit a climbing team.

**Key insights:** The climbing community is evolving towards greater inclusivity but still faces significant challenges, particularly economic and cultural barriers. Achieving inclusivity requires active efforts and structural changes within the community.

### Diversity in Climbing

The participant frequently works with students from various nationalities, including those from European countries such as Romania, Greece, Portugal, and Belgium, as well as individuals from Turkey, Australia, and India. They also engage with refugees and people from diverse social backgrounds through funded projects. While cultural differences are minimal in commercial courses, they become more noticeable in social projects. However, enthusiasm and communication are generally not problematic, particularly in courses for refugees.

There are no significant differences noted between demographic groups, though individual differences in learning can arise due to spatial reasoning and fitness levels. Female-socialized individuals often initially lack confidence but tend to improve over time. The participant acknowledges the ongoing changes towards inclusivity in the climbing community and emphasizes the importance of reducing financial and cultural barriers to participation.

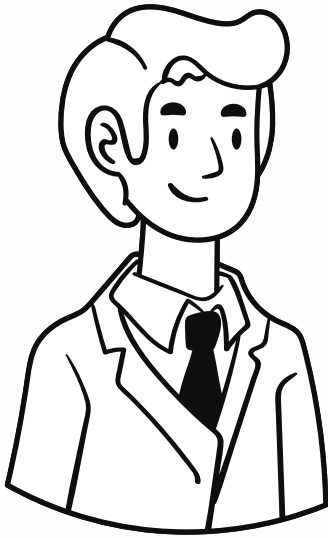
A diverse team brings various skills and experiences that can enhance team dynamics, and the participant values the ability to overcome communication difficulties within these teams.

They promote climbing as a personal activity that supports the development of a supportive and inclusive atmosphere. Additionally, climbing is seen as a way to improve trust, confidence, and group dynamics.

### Responding to discrimination

The participant witnessed discrimination, including uncomfortable attention and microaggressions towards BIPOCs. They emphasized the need for climbing spaces to promote discussions on racism and offer training to staff. They observed that BIPOCs and WINTA\* individuals face marginalization, and economic and cultural barriers hinder participation for certain groups. Financial barriers and a performance-focused culture discourage people with disabilities and less athletic body types. Marginalized groups mentioned include BIPOCs, WINTA\* individuals, economically disadvantaged people, and those with physical disabilities.





## Climbing Trainer Climbing Business Founder

*"I would say that climbers are really friendly and open-minded, and open to others. I guess they would also say, 'Hey, come along!' And if you ask somebody here, 'Hey, can I go with you on the rope?' maybe there's a lot of people who would say, 'Yeah, of course you could join us and come with us.' So they're really welcoming and open still."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** Starting at age 19 in 2003, inspired by a friend who discovered climbing in the U.S., this climber initially climbed outdoors in their hometown, borrowing and renting equipment before purchasing their own gear. They quickly transitioned to becoming a trainer and youth leader and expanded their expertise to include multi-pitch climbing, winter ski touring, and ice climbing in the Alps. In 2015, they started their own climbing business in Rathen due to insufficient salary as a guide.

**Memorable Anecdote:** The climber started by borrowing and renting equipment in their first year, eventually purchasing their own gear. They ventured into a climbing hall about four or five years later but cherished outdoor climbs with friends, fostering a deep passion for the sport. Shortly after starting, they became a trainer and local youth leader, which fueled their passion for teaching and enabled them to acquire equipment from the alpine club for their group.

**Key insights:** The most significant findings include the strong personal and social benefits of climbing, the importance of trust and communication, and the need for greater inclusivity within the climbing community. The participant's experience highlights the therapeutic aspects of climbing and the positive impact of a supportive and diverse climbing environment.

### Diversity in Climbing

The participant's early climbing experiences were primarily with local Germans. In the second phase of their career in Saxony, they still mostly climbed with locals but did have some interaction with international groups, predominantly from Europe. Although the participant noted limited experience with climbers from diverse nationalities, positive interactions were common when they occurred. Language barriers were addressed by offering courses in English.

The participant observed that the local climbing scene in Swiss Saxony is not very diverse, partly due to historical climbing practices and the local political climate. Foreigners may feel intimidated by the region's political situation, which affects inclusivity. They define diversity as involving people of all ages and backgrounds and believe it is essential for fostering a welcoming environment and enhancing the communal experience.

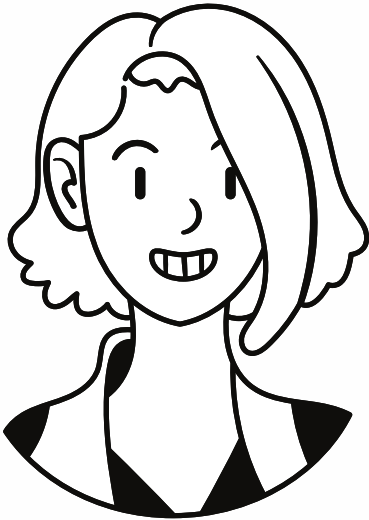
A diverse team enhances the climbing experience by bringing different perspectives and creating a more inclusive and supportive community.

To create a more inclusive environment, the participant suggests welcoming climbers of all backgrounds and ensuring everyone feels secure. They highlighted the importance of interpersonal skills and trust in fostering inclusivity. Participant also noted that Climbing has helped improve social skills by requiring climbers to communicate effectively, trust each other, and work together.

### Responding to discrimination

The participant has not observed significant discrimination within the climbing community and believes climbers are generally open-minded and welcoming. They did not mention specific incidents of discrimination but emphasized the friendliness and openness of the climbing community. While there was no direct mention of marginalized groups, the participant noted that the local political climate might deter foreigners from participating in climbing activities in Saxony.

## Climber Dedicated Climber



*"I have experience with international groups, and for me in climbing, what does matter is that you trust the person who is belaying you, and I think it's not really important where they're from."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** Influenced by their father, an alpinist striving to develop climbing in their Russian region, they began climbing at age five. Serious climbing resumed at age 15 using a small school climbing wall without professional guidance. Relocating to Krasnoyarsk for university, they benefited from a new professional climbing wall, prompting serious training at ages 17–18. Training involved two days per week on the wall and one day per week on outdoor rocks, especially during the climbing season. Despite interruptions due to relocation to Berlin and personal circumstances (pregnancy and child-rearing), they continued learning from a professional instructor in Berlin.

**Memorable Anecdote:** The participant expressed that, as a mother, climbing feels exclusive. It's challenging for mothers without support to manage both climbing and childcare, as most climbers come in pairs and focus solely on climbing. She noted the lack of support for mothers and mentioned rarely seeing small children climbing walls.

**Key insights:** Economic barriers significantly limit access to climbing, particularly in Berlin. The climbing community needs to address inclusivity, especially for parents with children. Diverse backgrounds in climbing promote trust and collaboration but require better economic accessibility to truly include everyone.

### Diversity in Climbing

She has extensive experience climbing with international groups and emphasizes that trust in climbing partnerships is more important than ethnic background. They observed a higher proportion of European climbers compared to those from Arabic countries. The participant did not detail their experiences with instructors.

They highlighted economic barriers in Berlin, noting that the high costs of accessing climbing walls limit accessibility for many. The participant views diversity primarily in terms of social class and economic accessibility rather than ethnicity, stressing the importance of inclusivity, particularly regarding economic accessibility for children in Russia.

Although specific benefits of a diverse team were not mentioned, the participant believes that providing more support for parents, especially mothers, would enhance inclusivity. They pointed out that the lack of child-friendly climbing facilities and support structures makes it difficult for parents to participate.

### Responding to discrimination

She did not report direct experiences of discrimination but noted the importance of economic accessibility for inclusivity. They did not specify incidents of discrimination based on ethnicity or cultural background within the climbing community. The participant identified economic barriers as a significant factor in marginalization within the climbing community in Berlin.



# Recommendations on Enhancing Inclusivity within Climbing

- **Accessibility and Affordability:**
  - Provide free or affordable access to climbing facilities and equipment, especially for children.
  - Lower entry fees and reduce financial barriers to make climbing more accessible.
  - Offer funding opportunities for equipment and entrance fees.
- **Supportive Environments:**
  - Create supportive environments for parents, particularly mothers, by offering child-friendly climbing options and support structures.
  - Foster an inclusive environment where all climbers feel supported and valued.
- **Community and Outreach:**
  - Actively welcome and invite more diverse communities.
  - Promote inclusivity and diversity actively within the community.
  - Conduct active campaigns against discrimination.
  - Develop outreach programs and cooperate with schools and funders to reduce barriers.
- **Education and Engagement:**
  - Provide courses in multiple languages to make climbing more accessible to people from various backgrounds.
  - Encourage the sharing of knowledge and skills across different climbing groups.
  - Create engagement opportunities that do not require long-term commitment.
- **Learning from Other Sports:**
  - Learn from inclusive practices in other sports like powerlifting.
- **Outdoor Climbing:**
  - Promote outdoor climbing for its team-building and empowering potential.
- **Reducing Barriers:**
  - Focus on reducing financial barriers and performance pressure.
  - Address any political or cultural barriers that might prevent people from joining the sport.

# INTERVIEWS: GREECE



## Climber Nature-Loving Mountaineer

*"Climbing is a way to escape the hustle of the city and get physically active. I see it as more than just a sport and a part of mountaineering in general, as a connection to nature and the mountains."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** The participant, a 27-year-old male, has been climbing for 3.5 years. His interest was sparked during childhood trips to the Alps, where he saw climbers scaling mountains. This initial fascination was reignited much later during a visit to Samothrace, where he met climbers who encouraged him to join a climbing school in Athens. Although COVID-19 disrupted these plans, he began climbing with friends and has continued ever since.

**Memorable Anecdote:** One memorable experience for the participant was climbing with diverse individuals from various countries, including India, Albania, Georgia, and Kenya. Despite language barriers, the universal nature of climbing fostered mutual understanding and cooperation.

**Key insights:** Climbing provides both physical and mental challenges, fostering community and trust among climbers. It transcends language barriers and social status, bringing together diverse people. Although he hasn't witnessed discrimination, he emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and would stand against it. Noting that climbing equipment can be expensive, he acknowledges his privilege in affording the necessary gear. He suggests climbing schools incorporate discussions on diversity and emphasizes that instructors should promote an inclusive culture by leading by example.





## Assistant Climbing Instructor & Mountain Guide

*"Through climbing, I've learned perseverance, set personal goals, and embraced a non-competitive spirit that's vital for personal growth and connecting with nature."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** From childhood camps where climbing was suggested, and influenced by friends and a general curiosity about mountains, the participant, a male with 20 years of climbing experience and active as an instructor for 1 year, primarily engages in Alpine climbing and rock climbing in Greece. Despite not being a full-time instructor, he appreciates the training aspect and the sport's non-competitive nature, emphasizing personal growth and connection with nature as crucial benefits.

**Memorable Anecdote:** Climbing with individuals from diverse backgrounds, including migrants, highlighted the sport's ability to foster relationships and mutual respect, even across language barriers.

**Key insights:** Climbing cultivates perseverance, goal-setting, and social responsibility, particularly through interaction with nature. The participant notes challenges faced by women and migrants in climbing, advocating for greater inclusivity within clubs and gyms. He stresses the importance of overcoming stereotypes and promoting diversity education in climbing schools and organizations.

### Diversity in Climbing

The interviewee perceives climbing in Greece as generally inclusive but acknowledges limitations, particularly regarding outreach to Roma and migrant communities. He emphasizes efforts to bridge language gaps and ensure safety in training, expressing readiness to confront any discriminatory behavior among students.

### Responding to discrimination

While observing overall inclusivity in Greek climbing, the participant acknowledges potential barriers faced by marginalized groups like migrants and women due to societal stereotypes. He stresses the role of climbing clubs in expanding outreach and fostering a more inclusive community, highlighting ongoing efforts in education and training to address diversity issues.



## Mountain Guide and Climbing Instructor

*"Climbing has been a lifelong passion, offering not just recreational benefits but also fostering confidence, social skills, and a deep connection with nature."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** With nearly 40 years of climbing experience and 33 years as an instructor since 1991, the participant's journey in climbing began early, inspired by childhood hikes with his mother. His expertise spans rock climbing in various forms, including sport, traditional, mountain rock, and winter climbing.

**Memorable Anecdote:** The participant highlights the evolving landscape of climbing, particularly the increased participation of women over the past decade, marking a significant shift from its historically male-dominated status.

**Key insights:** While acknowledging challenges such as language barriers, the participant views Greece's climbing community as relatively inclusive, especially with international climbing destinations like Kalymnos and Leonidio. He emphasizes the need for more discourse on diversity issues within the Greek climbing community, particularly concerning migrants and suggests establishing communication channels like websites or magazines to facilitate such discussions.

### Diversity in Climbing

The interviewee perceives climbing in Greece as generally inclusive but notes limitations, particularly regarding the underrepresentation of migrants in climbing groups. He advocates for more proactive discussions and actions to address diversity issues within the climbing community, highlighting the potential benefits of integrating diverse perspectives and experiences.

### Responding to discrimination

*"While Greece's climbing community has become more inclusive, there are still challenges, especially regarding the integration of immigrant climbers. More proactive measures and discussions are needed to ensure equal opportunities and treatment within climbing circles."*

This statement encapsulates the participant's view on the current state of inclusivity and his advocacy for further steps to enhance diversity awareness and integration within the Greek climbing community.



## Climber Advocating for Inclusivity



*"Climbing is not just a sport for me; it's a community that fosters trust and communication skills, despite lingering challenges."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** With 2.5 years of climbing experience, the participant initially explored bouldering and sport climbing before gravitating towards sport and multi-pitch climbing. Climbing now consumes a significant portion of her week, blending personal growth with outdoor adventure.

**Memorable Anecdote:** The participant recounts encountering climbers from diverse backgrounds, including climbers from Hong Kong now residing in Greece, highlighting the sport's international appeal and its potential for multicultural integration.

**Key insights:** While acknowledging climbing's inclusive principles in Greece, the participant critiques existing gender disparities and underrepresentation of migrants within climbing communities. She advocates for systematic changes to address sexism and promote gender equity in climbing standards and practices.

### Diversity in Climbing

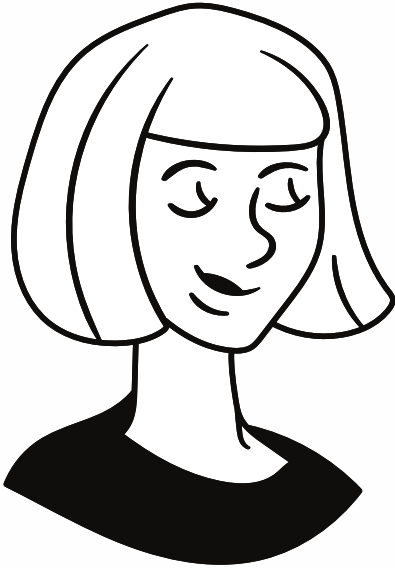
In Greece, climbing is perceived as generally inclusive in principle, yet challenges persist, particularly concerning gender biases and limited migrant representation. The participant calls for proactive measures from climbing federations and organizations to foster inclusivity through structured events and international networking.

### Responding to discrimination

*"While Greece's climbing community embraces international standards, subtle gender biases and territorial behaviors still exist. Addressing these issues requires systematic changes and collective efforts from climbing organizations."*

This statement encapsulates the participant's advocacy for addressing discriminatory behaviors and fostering a more inclusive environment within Greek climbing circles.

## Assistant Climbing Instructor & Advocate for Diversity and Inclusivity in Climbing



*"As a mother, assistant instructor, and dedicated climber, I emphasize the importance of challenging discriminatory behavior and fostering a supportive climbing community."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** With over 15 years of climbing experience and more than a decade as an instructor, the participant's journey into climbing began through caving and evolved into a passion for various climbing styles, including sport, alpine, traditional, and bouldering.

**Memorable Anecdote:** The participant highlighted her experience with students from diverse backgrounds, including those from Israel and Palestine. Despite potential challenges, she noted their integration into climbing classes was smooth, reflecting the inclusive nature of climbing communities.

**Key insights:** Climbing not only provides physical challenges but also serves as a platform for building trust and camaraderie among climbers. It transcends cultural and linguistic barriers, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual respect within the global climbing community. Interviewee emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and believes that climbing should be accessible to everyone, regardless of background or identity.

### Diversity in Climbing

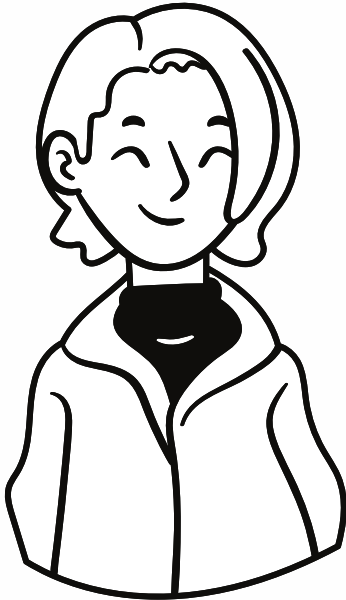
In her experience, climbing in Greece embraces diversity to a significant extent, welcoming climbers of all nationalities and genders. While she hasn't personally encountered racism, she acknowledges that gender disparities and societal norms can pose challenges for female climbers, requiring ongoing efforts to promote equality and inclusivity.

### Responding to discrimination

The participant actively opposes discriminatory behavior within climbing circles. She believes in speaking out against sexism and other forms of prejudice, advocating for a supportive and respectful environment for all climbers. Through her actions and involvement in the community, she strives to promote awareness and foster a culture of inclusion.



## Climber and Aspiring Instructor Advocating for Diversity



*"Climbing is more than a sport; it's a transformative journey that fosters inclusivity and personal growth."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** A 27-year-old male, rediscovered climbing around 2.5 years ago in Barcelona, Spain, after a hiatus since childhood. His initial exposure to climbing was through his parents, who were avid climbers themselves. Moving to Spain reignited his passion, leading him to explore various climbing styles such as bouldering, sport climbing, multi-pitch, and traditional climbing (trad). His goal is to become a climbing instructor, drawn to the professional standards and inclusivity of European-accredited climbing schools.

**Memorable Anecdote:** One standout experience was climbing alongside individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds in Barcelona, including climbers from across Europe and Latin America. Despite language differences, the shared passion for climbing created a strong bond among them.

**Key insights:** Climbing offers physical challenges that engage neglected muscles and provides mental health benefits by fostering confidence and overcoming fears. Socially, it facilitates connections and trust among climbers, creating a supportive community where diversity is embraced without prejudice.

### Diversity in Climbing

The interviewee finds that climbing communities in both Greece and Spain generally embrace diversity, although the degree of inclusivity may vary across different age groups. Spain, particularly Catalonia, is noted for its progressive approach, exemplified by diverse setter teams in climbing gyms that accommodate various anatomical characteristics and ensure inclusivity. In contrast, Greece is evolving but lags behind in terms of gender diversity among climbing instructors and overall representation.

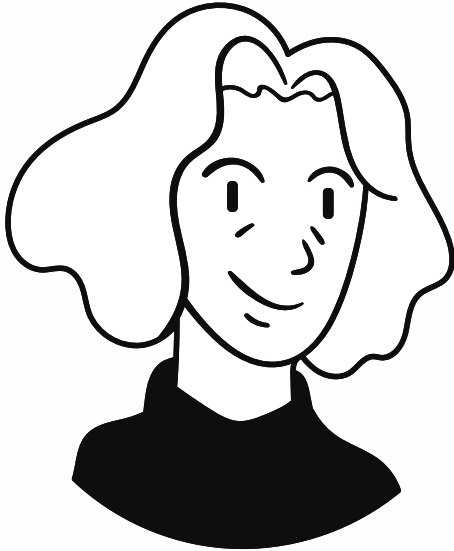
### Responding to discrimination

While he hasn't personally encountered discrimination, he acknowledges the potential challenges faced by marginalized groups such as the LGBTQ+ community in Greece historically. He believes in the transformative power of climbing to foster social inclusion, particularly for migrants and refugees seeking community and belonging.

## *Recommendations on Enhancing Inclusivity within Climbing*

- **Promote Diversity and Inclusion:**
  - Incorporate more discussions on diversity and inclusion to foster a welcoming climate within climbing groups.
  - Instructors should lead by example, promoting inclusivity within the climbing community.
- **Educational Initiatives:**
  - Add diversity and inclusion themes in climbing schools.
  - Teachers should learn not just the technical aspects but also have the educational background to teach people of different ages, cultures, etc.
- **Community Outreach:**
  - Develop outreach programs to engage Roma children and immigrant communities.
  - Partner with local organizations to create inclusive climbing events and programs.
- **Financial Support:**
  - Provide financial assistance or equipment loans to lower the entry barrier for underprivileged groups.
- **Addressing Language Barriers:**
  - Offer multilingual instruction and resources to help non-native speakers feel more comfortable and included.
- **Combatting Sexism:**
  - Implement training and policies to address and reduce sexism within the climbing community.
  - Promote gender equality by highlighting female climbers and providing equal opportunities for all genders.

# INTERVIEWS: ITALY



## *Climber & Instructor, Ice and Rock Pioneer*

*"Listening, listening and listening also to what does not speak"*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** This participant has been a climber for 29 years, having been introduced to mountaineering at birth through the CAI (Club Alpino Italiano). His journey began with trekking, via ferratas, and high-altitude trails, eventually leading him to rock climbing in the Dolomites. He quickly engaged in both single-pitch and multi-pitch free climbing. Over the years, he became a certified free climbing instructor with CAI (IAL) and later a sports climbing instructor with USACLI Montagna. His passion for climbing also extended to ice climbing, where he completed an icefall course to further hone his skills.

**Key insights:** Since 2008 he has mixed climbing professionals with boys and girls with pathological addictions and withdrawn adolescents with the belief that the courage to get involved in precarious situations (which they call "the rock warrior") is an art that must be trained in every human. The teacher is climbing.

### **Diversity in Climbing**

The interviewee claims that the experimental practice of climbing is like a rehabilitation and treatment tool; every discomfort, difference teaches something.

### **Responding to discrimination**

The participant emphasizes the importance of halting to re-establish dialogue with those who have been excluded and actively involving them. If the issue persists, he advocates taking a direct approach to combat discrimination.

His main approach is to listen and confront without judgment, avoiding excessive interpretations or investigations, and refraining from providing solutions or paternalistic support for others' problems. He believes in the surprising trust and hope that each person is a resource for themselves and others. His philosophy involves setting the stage and observing the outcomes.



## *Climber, The Therapeutic Mountaineer*



**Climbing Journey and Experience:** This participant has been climbing for almost 30 years. He began with outdoor rock climbing, then moved on to mountaineering and indoor climbing. He became an FASI instructor in 2004 and an IAMA instructor in 2010. He has led educational projects through climbing and Montagna Terapia, focusing on minors with social and economic hardships and disabilities. From 2011 to 2016, he served as the president of the Montagna Terapia association. He also collaborated on research with ASL RMH and child neuropsychiatry, using climbing to foster social integration and boost self-esteem. In the past eight years, he and his student Luigi Conte developed the YamaDo project, which uses climbing for personal growth. Luigi Conte now leads this project.

**Memorable Anecdote:** At 16, while attending a mountain camp in Gran Paradiso park, a guide's bouldering demonstration inspired him. When they struggled, the guide told him that climbing was not for him, making him feel excluded—a sentiment they only fully understood years later.

**Key insights:** According to him, climbing is the challenge of the unlikely but possible. He built his experience as an instructor on the idea of leading others to do things that they thought were impossible or too much for them, demonstrating and exploiting these beliefs to their advantage, managing to do something that they considered impossible.

### **Diversity in Climbing**

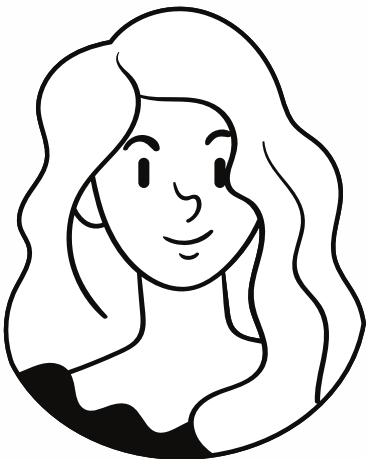
He declares that climbing and diversity are a very interesting topic. Faced with the same route, the same rock, everyone can find a different interpretation. We are different in weight, height, physical strength, personal beliefs, mentality, attitude and despite all these differences, the rock is the same for everyone, and becomes a mirror, a screen on which to project one's differences and compare them.

At the same time, precisely by respecting these differences, everyone can find a way on which they can test themselves. Even the person furthest from what in the imagination could be the most suitable physicality for climbing can find the terrain on which to test themselves. In this the rock makes everyone equal. But the challenge that an overweight beginner faces on a 5a is not far from what an experienced and trained climber might experience on a 7b or the professional on an 8c. At least on a theoretical level, in the difference in their trials, they can experience the same challenge.

### **Responding to discrimination**

In the presence of situations of discrimination, according to him, the first thing is to act promptly, and to act with one of the simple mechanisms of climbing, namely 'bonding' with each other. Climbing is an intimate experience. The relationship you establish with your climbing partner transcends ethnicity and culture.

## Climber The Crag Enthusiast



**Climbing Journey and Experience:** This participant has been a climber for 20 years. As the daughter of a climber, she frequently visited crags from a young age.

**Memorable Anecdote:** During competition circuits, she has noticed an increasing number of boys and girls from diverse ethnic backgrounds participating, which she sees as a positive sign of growing inclusivity in the sport.

**Key insights:** What she has learned is that climbing is a very inclusive sport, you always learn from and with others. No one dominates the other, you almost never enter into competition but rather help others.

### Diversity in Climbing

In her gym all the instructors are trained and usually the courses to become an instructor include an introductory part which also explains how to deal with diversity in general. Staff meetings are also organized to deal with these topics in order to improve the offer to all people. If this sensitivity is developed, continues the interviewee, inclusiveness comes naturally, obviously facilitating an atmosphere of wellbeing and organizing activities that can bring members closer together.

### Responding to discrimination

The participant mentions that, in his experience, no significant incidents have ever occurred. There would certainly be an initial phase of addressing those who discriminate. He has consistently fostered a climate of dialogue, inclusivity, and attentiveness in his gym. For example, he translates all the regulations into different languages to promote participation among everyone who attends. The only strict rules are related to safety.



## *Climber & Instructor The Inclusive Leader*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** This participant has been a climber for 14 years. He began as a trainee in a bouldering gym at the age of 15, became a FASI Level 1 instructor in 2018, and advanced to a Level 2 instructor this year. From ages 15 to 22, he primarily climbed indoors, with some sporadic outdoor experiences. Between ages 22 and 25, he focused more on crag climbing. In the last four years, his climbing activity has reduced due to family and work commitments, but working in a bouldering gym allows him to stay engaged with the sport.

**Memorable Anecdote:** Over the past two years, he has been running courses for disabled kids, prompting them to rethink their methods and objectives. They recall a film, likely seen at Banff, about an American bouldering gym in a poor neighborhood dedicated to pulling kids off the street by engaging them in climbing and gym operations. He found this approach inspiring as a way to help and transform the community.

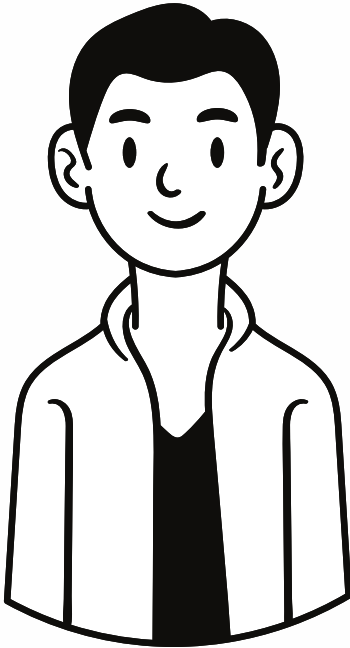
**Key insights:** He expresses the metaphor of the rock wall that must be studied from different angles to find the right grip, so diversity also expresses the possibility of looking at the world from multiple points of view, and therefore grasping aspects that we otherwise would not see.

### **Responding to discrimination**

The response to discrimination starts with a firm and assertive stance that shows the parties concerned that everyone must take sides so that discriminatory acts no longer occur.



## Climber & Instructor The Adventure Educator



*"For me, every climbing experience is linked to diversity and inclusiveness. Every trip has led me to the discovery of the 'different from me' and often it is not related to where you come from, but when you bond with a person you already know that you are bonding with an identity different from your own and every occasion is a great opportunity to discover the other. "*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** This participant has been actively climbing for 10 years. He began with Federico Magnaguagno at IAMAS, Paolo Caruso's school. After several years of training, He earned first and second-level certifications as an indoor sports climbing instructor for the OPES association and became an Alpine Rescue Officer for the Latina station through CNSAS Lazio.

He also completed the Caruso Method climbing instructor course, becoming a certified instructor specializing in rock climbing techniques after training with Paolo Caruso.

Over the past decade, he has practiced various forms of mountaineering, including alpine snow, summer mountaineering, and sport routes at Gran Sasso, Mount Terminillo, and Gaeta, among other locations in northern Italy. He frequently engages in free climbing at crags and boulders across Italy and has tackled challenging paths like the GR20 in Corsica and the French Camino de Santiago.

Currently, he works as a climbing instructor with the Gymnazen association, managing courses for children aged 4 to adults around sixty, and overseeing about ninety members weekly. He is also a graduate student in Training and Educational Sciences at the University of Roma Tre.

**Key insights:** The participant believes that diversity is one of the unique characteristics of climbing. He explains that during training, they tell the kids that climbing is a bit like life: there are simpler moments and more difficult ones. For example, he thinks that as brothers, they can support each other through these challenges, but they can't face them for anyone else. He notes that, as equal human beings, climbing confronts everyone with their own difficult points. Like a mirror, each person reflects their innermost feelings on the wall, which bonds them with different people. This experience provides the opportunity to share those moments with a variety of cultural perspectives, allowing them to redefine their own views as well.

### Diversity in Climbing

One of the key concepts addressed according to the interviewee is the meaning of fear. The fear you feel in front of a wall. That fear is the same for everyone, differences are broken down, everyone has their own goal, knowing that their partner is there for them and together with them in front of that fear. When working with young people with discomfort, the tendency is to deny the fear or demonstrate that one is not afraid of anything but, once they leave, it is natural to have to deal with the fear, in the face of which all the barriers fall away, even the cultural ones.

### Responding to discrimination

It is important that as instructor or facilitator, one creates a context where everyone is considered beyond their level of experience in climbing, as well as cultural or ethnic differences, trying to provide space for discussion of their experiences but also emotions. It is essential to practice inclusiveness daily, including by showing who you are and talking about yourself and your experiences.



## Climber & Instructor The Ostia Gym Pioneer

*"Our gym has always been open to everyone, we are like a big family and whoever crosses that threshold becomes part of it."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** This participant has been a climber for 15 years. He started by attending indoor courses, where he learned the basics of technique and safety maneuvers. His growing passion for climbing led him to start climbing outdoors and eventually open a gym in Ostia. He further pursued their passion by becoming certified as an instructor through Opes and Fasi.

**Key insights:** One of the factors that he considers fundamental in the development of climbing, and of that context of well-being and hospitality, is accessibility, whether economic or logistical, to the sport.

### Diversity in Climbing

Regarding the growth of his gym, the interviewee emphasizes that there isn't a formal study underpinning his philosophy. The rules are straightforward: everyone has the right to train and express their thoughts, provided they do not harm others or show disrespect. The goal is to foster an environment where climbers feel a sense of shared experience without barriers—whether ethnic or generational—when they climb.

### Responding to discrimination

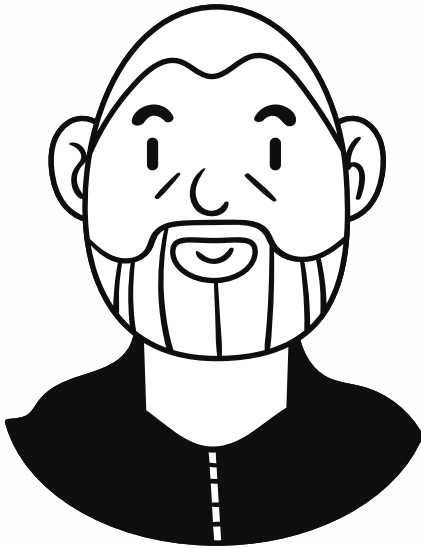
In his experience, the climbing gym is considered a more inclusive and comfortable environment than many others, and you usually hear about everything, travel, sport, culture, cinema, but never discuss racism, politics or religion. This seems to be the first step to avoid generating discrimination.

## Recommendations on Enhancing Inclusivity within Climbing

- Interviewees reported that even though climbing is not an expensive discipline, financial support from institutions could help start projects in small local areas.



## Climber & Instructor The Olympic Climbing Coach



*"Climbing exposes you to daily challenges and every climbing problem is a different world, so climbing is a help to enjoy every moment"*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** The interviewee, a male, has 25 years of experience in different types of climbing. He has a degree in science of physical activity and sport. Because of his training he started to dedicate himself as a climbing coach and in 2016 he created a climbing school in Alicante. In addition, he was coach of the Canadian team for the Olympic Games.

Currently he mainly practices indoor climbing, ice climbing, mountaineering, outdoor climbing, rock climbing, although less frequently he practices bouldering because it is not close to him. On Saturdays and Sundays he dedicates himself exclusively to rock climbing.

In addition, the interviewee has a background in climbing rescue, climbing training, and above all, a university education. With a university education, he was able to validate his degree in France, as an instructor-trainer. Then, in his master's thesis, he dedicated himself to studying and researching how to include mental ability in climbing. He is now a private trainer of athletes and a teacher of adapted physical activity for people at risk.

**Memorable Anecdote:** The interviewee recounts several situations that he has found memorable. For example, he currently works with people with Parkinson's disease and climbing is used as a tool to alleviate pain and combat the feeling of social isolation. He has observed how through climbing the quality of life of these people improves significantly. On the other hand, he has worked with migrant women and has observed that in the case of foreign women, they tend to get together with other foreign women; in this sense, it depends on the teacher who is playing the role and is able to take advantage of this first interaction, which is the social impact that can be achieved. Therefore, the role of the professional is important.

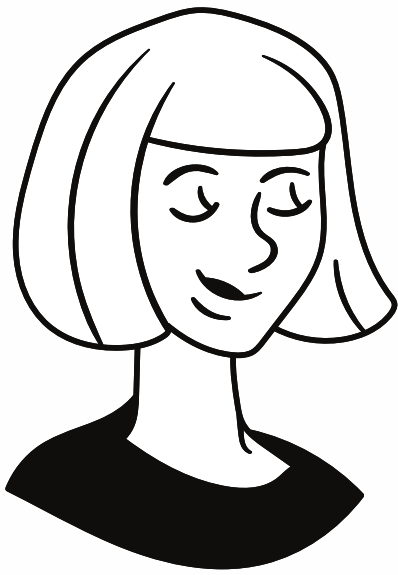
### Diversity in Climbing

The interviewee has a lot of experience with the migrant population and in particular with children. Although he has not had to witness situations of discrimination based on origin, he has observed that sometimes children can be made fun of because of the way they speak or expressions of other nationalities. This is how, through the escalation, she has been able to see the unity of young migrants. Climbing unites and even if you don't speak the language, you see colors or shapes, so you don't need to have the same language or previous knowledge. What he has observed is that climbing becomes social climbing.

### Responding to discrimination

Similarly, the interviewee observes segregation; those who are better will naturally want to be with the strong and groups will form. On the other hand, with respect to gender, he expresses that it is not because one or the other is a man or a woman that one or the other will have more or less potential. He states that today it is possible to see almost a greater percentage of women, who have great flexibility and ability. In addition, he has observed that women create more social bonds. Today what strikes him most is the percentage of male-female participation; today we see many women in climbing.





## Climber The Family Bond Climber

*"Climbing has changed the way I am and the way I spend my free time, it also changes the way you think about your holidays because you look for a place to go climbing."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** The interviewee is 24 years old and has been climbing all her life with her family, climbing is the family sport. Her parents are climbers so she inherited the practice as an activity. She studied Physical Activity and Sport Sciences and currently works as an instructor in a climbing center in the city of Madrid. She regularly practices bouldering and rock climbing. For her climbing is something familiar because you want to climb with the same people and it becomes a bond of companionship all the time.

**Memorable Anecdote:** The interviewee has observed that some of her students were reluctant to do different practices at first, but as time goes by they start to feel more confident, they feel stronger. It is a long and progressive work, but it is beneficial to see how you have progressed. For example, in one block you work on fear, and it's a long process.

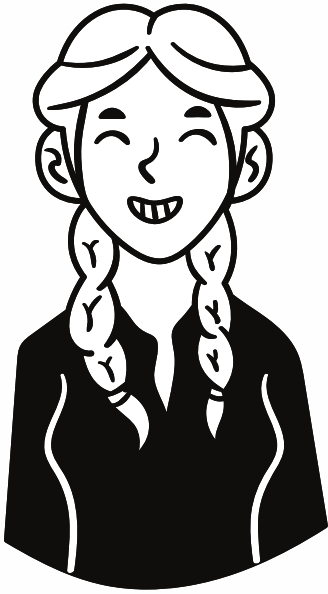
**Key insights:** One of the aspects highlighted by the interviewee is the concept of family that is developed through climbing. This makes it possible to generate and strengthen bonds of trust through the practice of sports. At the same time, it incorporates the perception of gender when thinking about the exclusion that women may suffer in the practice of climbing.

### Diversity in Climbing

The interviewee believes that by sharing space and being part of a close-knit collective, there will always be people you can lean on and join. With the support and closeness that exists in the practice it can help you meet new people, get out of your comfort zone, meet different, diverse people and develop self-confidence. In terms of gender, the groups are becoming more and more heterogeneous, at the beginning there were fewer girls, but now you see more girls on the climbing walls.

### Responding to discrimination

The interviewee has not observed discriminatory practices, but considers that in the face of these practices, teachers lack training to work with people with disabilities and people at risk of exclusion, they lack more specific tools to work on certain problems that may arise and to guide in the best way so that no one feels excluded. Perhaps with some classes we could improve in these aspects.



## Climber The Climbing Community Builder

*"Climbing allows only being in the present, mindfulness pure and simple."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** The interviewee is a 31-year-old Chilean woman who has been living in the city of Madrid for two years. She is a non-professional climber and currently practices sport climbing and bouldering. She started climbing on weekends with a friend in Chile and thanks to her she began to get into the world of climbing and then felt the desire to improve and perfect her technique, equipment management, how to know how to climb in sport, in different modalities, how to equip a route, among other aspects. Not only technically, but also physically, which also allowed her to enjoy climbing and nature much more.

During her life in Chile she trained two or three times a week, then on weekends and as the country is mountainous it is quite easy to access. For her it became a self-improvement project, a way to achieve goals. When she arrived in Spain, she wanted to continue with this lifestyle, but the first few months it was difficult because of the distances and the cost since her income as an immigrant is not so high. It was difficult for her to access and she feels limited by the access.

**Memorable Anecdote:** The interviewee recalls an activity she conducted in Chile, where they took a group of families in vulnerable situations to the rock for climbing. The goal of the activity was to bring climbing closer to people in situations of exclusion and, at the same time, to create an activity for families and promote unity among them. She considers it to have been a complete success; the families enjoyed it, engaged in physical activity, and experienced a new activity.

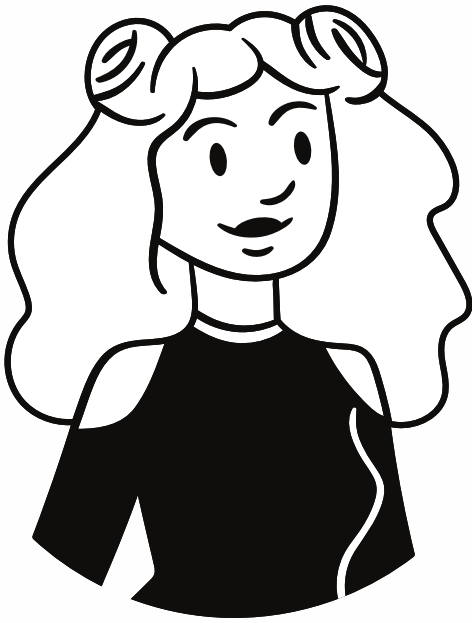
**Key insights:** Among the aspects highlighted by the interviewee as a foreign climber and woman is the difficulty in accessing climbing centers, as well as the high cost of accessing materials. Although there is no language barrier, there is an access, economic and social barrier as a migrant.

### Diversity in Climbing

As a foreign woman she feels that it is more complex to meet people and that is why immigrants tend to look for each other. So in the climbing wall it is common for migrants to look for each other to form a community and trust each other when climbing. Climbing has changed the way I am and the way I spend my free time, it also changes the way you think about your vacations because you are looking for a place to go climbing.

### Responding to discrimination

She considers that there is a type of unconscious discrimination because the gyms are not adapted for people with different abilities, for example, people with autism or disabilities. There are many stimuli, shouts, lights that can cause sensory hyper-reactivity, in some there is no access for wheelchairs, they are not very adapted to the different types of needs that exist. There are adaptations, but in different capacities there are still deficiencies.



## Climber The Mindful Climber

*"The good thing about climbing for me is that you combine many things, the physical, the technical, the social, the mental, you can get a lot out of it depending on what you want to work on."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** The interviewee is an economist and economic analyst. When she moved to Barcelona she was involved in another type of sport and before COVID she got to know climbing and signed up for a climbing course. Then came the COVID, she was hooked, she started to do several courses, constantly going out to the mountain and at the same time she left her profession, her partner is also a climbing instructor. She started climbing therapy and it was a discovery for her and she began to implement it. She left her job and started training as a mountain and climbing guide.

Currently she is involved in projects on how to use climbing for social issues, social dynamics, people with mental problems, but also with fully functional people. She goes on regular outings with groups. She usually climbs on rock, a little in a climbing wall, sport climbing and multi-pitch climbing, both traditional and equipped, what she likes most is the traditional long route because it is a very complete activity, you have to plan the whole day, climb big walls, the concept of the team, it is teamwork, it is a beautiful relationship and the challenge of finding the route, it is a full day dedicated to the activity, what she likes most is to dedicate the whole day to it. It is less physical effort, it is more technical and mental, as well as social. She also practises sport climbing, you go with several people and climb, you rehearse movement, it's about how you are able to reach your maximum in a short time.

**Memorable Anecdote:** The interviewee recalls that during a trip to the mountains, not for climbing, some of the boys said they did not feel comfortable going to the mountains because they felt they could be discriminated against because of their origin and skin color. She remembers that this was an issue to be addressed because the mountain environment and the villages they were going to visit could look negatively on this group of young people with backpacks wandering around. Additionally, the fact of confronting young people who have had a complex migratory history means they do not want or have not wanted to confront them with a complex situation.

**Key insights:** For the interviewee it has been very important, it has gone from being a hobby to her profession. It is also a contribution on a social level as it develops around climbing. On a personal level, it has helped her to feel more at home in the natural space, she feels more connected to the environment. She considers that it is also a process of inclusion, it is her home, an important pillar.

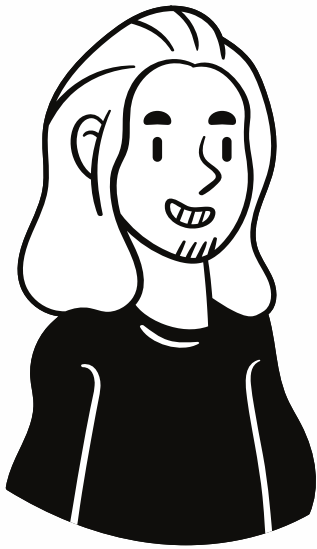
### Responding to discrimination

She considers that it is useful to include issues of social inclusion, but what she observes is that not even teachers are trained, it is a sensitive issue and it is a challenge, but it is still a topic that is not dealt with.

In general, she considers that in Spain the community is quite white, you see very few black people, of Asian origin, it is a community that has little, in this sense, there are few non-white referents. You don't see a lot of rocodromes either.

In terms of gender, it is more balanced. Consider that you have to be a bit transgressive when you don't see any faces that resemble you. Also, in economic terms it is difficult because you need materials, a car to get to the rock, so you have to be a person with a more stable economic situation to be able to access it.





## Climbing Mentor

*"There is a family atmosphere, you meet them and interact with them, most of the people who climb are non-judgmental, who take care of the environment, who take care of the routes, who have respect for climbing."*

**Climbing Journey and Experience:** The interviewee is a man with 14 years of climbing experience. He started as a leisure and free time instructor, attended mountain sports camps, and one of the sports was climbing on natural rock. From that moment on, he began to train children. He has been involved in mountain climbing for more than 20 years, mainly in Spain, without reaching very high grades.

**Key insights:** Among the aspects highlighted by the interviewee is the importance he attaches to self-training to improve his skills in the area of attention to diversity.

### Diversity in Climbing

The interviewee considers that one way to make climbing inclusive and diverse is first to create a bond between the people who lead, namely the instructors, and the participants. One of the aspects inherent in mountain sports is commitment. They believe that if these things do not exist, it is necessary to work on them. Access to equipment must be facilitated, followed by a sequence of content, and then the qualities of each individual should be encouraged.

### Responding to discrimination

The interviewee has not witnessed discriminatory acts. However, they consider climbing to be a closed group that is difficult to enter, but once you are in, it is easy to integrate. It's straightforward to mingle with other groups. They also believe there is another group that goes more for taking selfies and doesn't take care of the routes as much, nor does it show as much respect for climbing; they are not aware of the values of climbing and need to work on that. They do not discuss discrimination.

# Recommendations on Enhancing Inclusivity within Climbing

## **Motivation and Training:**

- Emphasize the motivation trainers can provide to participants.
- Hold meetings or courses through various associations in Madrid to share knowledge with other trainers or people at risk of exclusion. Examples include associations like Girls for Climbing.

## **Social Interaction and Accessibility:**

- Create campaigns to establish spaces for social interaction between people from Spain and other cultures.
- Improve access to climbing at the family level, allowing whole families to use climbing walls, thereby fostering stronger family bonds.
- Take climbing to the people by organizing rock climbing trips, spending days in nature, and sharing meals. For instance, in Chile, organizing trips for families in vulnerable situations to promote family unity.

## **Climbing and Education:**

- Encourage climbing through educational systems, specifically in physical education curriculums and as an extracurricular activity.
- Integrate climbing into public physical education programs, both during teaching and non-teaching hours.

## **Community and Corporate Involvement:**

- Advocate for more municipal sports centers and accessible climbing facilities as alternatives to traditional sports.
- From a business perspective, demonstrate the potential to reach a wider audience and seek opportunities for inclusion.
- Increase outings organized by NGOs to provide professional opportunities and promote inclusion in training, which currently lacks diversity in terms of foreigners and women.

## **Inclusivity in Climbing:**

- Establish bonds between leaders and participants, emphasizing commitment inherent in mountain sports.
- Facilitate access to climbing materials, provide a structured sequence of content, and encourage the unique qualities of each individual.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## on enhancing inclusivity within the climbing community

Based on insights from survey participants and interviewees, a comprehensive set of recommendations has been compiled to enhance inclusivity within the climbing community. These suggestions aim to create a more welcoming, supportive, and accessible environment for all climbers. To organize these recommendations effectively, they have been divided into relevant subcategories. This division helps address different aspects of inclusivity, making it easier to implement targeted actions. The recommendations are as follows:

**Addressing Discrimination and Cultural Barriers:** Focuses on eliminating discrimination and toxic behaviors, promoting a culture of respect, and providing spaces for reflection.

- **Combat Toxic Masculinity:** Actively address and combat toxic masculinity and macho behavior within the climbing community to create a welcoming and supportive environment.
- **Address Discrimination:** Implement policies and training programs to prevent discrimination, ensuring a respectful and inclusive atmosphere.
- **Open Spaces and Reflection Areas:** Create spaces for diverse participation and reflection, encouraging inclusivity and understanding within the climbing culture.

**Promoting Inclusivity and Diverse Representation:** Aims to increase visibility and participation of underrepresented groups by sharing stories, recognizing achievements, and launching diversity initiatives.

- **Promote Climbing's Inclusive Nature:** Share stories of diverse climbers to highlight that climbing transcends cultural and language barriers.
- **Programs for Underrepresented Groups:** Develop outreach initiatives, mentorship programs, and community events for underrepresented groups.
- **Diversity and Representation:** Increase the presence of women and other underrepresented groups, offering incentive programs and promoting inclusive marketing.
- **Celebrate Diverse Achievements:** Recognize and celebrate accomplishments of diverse climbers to inspire and challenge stereotypes.
- **Launch Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives:** Focus on initiatives that explicitly promote diversity and inclusion within the climbing community.
- **Encourage Mixed Groups:** Promote mixed groups of climbers from varied backgrounds and experience levels to climb together, fostering fun and companionship.

**Supporting Families and Youth:** Focuses on making climbing more accessible and appealing to families and young people by creating family-friendly facilities and youth-specific programs.

- **Family-Friendly Facilities:** Create breastfeeding rooms and baby areas to support climbers with young children.
- **Youth Training and Community Building:** Train same-age groups through fun processes, leveraging experienced climbers to teach beginners. Facilitate transport and offer free lessons to individuals under 25.
- **Children's Programs:** Develop climbing programs for children with ADHD and autism to help with concentration and social skills.



### **Financial and Accessibility**

**Considerations:** Addresses financial barriers and accessibility issues by offering reduced fees, scholarships, free courses, and creating affordable public facilities.

- **Financial Inclusivity:** Offer reduced fees, sliding scale memberships, or pay-what-you-can options to make climbing more accessible.
- **Lower Financial Barriers:** Provide funding opportunities for equipment and entrance fees, and minimize performance pressure.
- **Free Beginner Courses in Migrant Communities:** Offer free courses for beginners in neighborhoods with higher migrant populations.
- **Ensure Resource Accessibility:** Make climbing resources and facilities accessible to people of all backgrounds and abilities.
- **Scholarship Programs:** Establish scholarships for memberships, classes, and gear rentals to increase financial accessibility.
- **Lower Prices or Free Options:** Advocate for lower prices or completely free climbing opportunities.
- **Festivals and Free Trials:** Organize festivals and free trial periods to attract new climbers.
- **Affordable Public Facilities:** Create public climbing facilities equipped with necessary gear and safety measures.
- **Provision of Equipment:** Ensure that climbing equipment is readily available for participants.
- **Accessible and Affordable Facilities:** Develop more basic indoor climbing areas and make them affordable to attract a broader demographic.

### **Creating Welcoming Environments and**

**Communities:** Emphasizes creating a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere by actively supporting diverse communities and fostering a sense of collective care and social interaction.

- **Create Welcoming Environments:** Actively invite and support diverse communities to foster an inclusive atmosphere.
- **Inclusive Climbing Culture:** Encourage mixed groups of climbers from varied backgrounds to climb together, focusing on fun and companionship.
- **Focus on Enjoyment:** Prioritize enjoyment over competitiveness, and value routes requiring balance and agility.
- **Network of Collective Care:** Foster a sense of supportive community by establishing sustainable networks of collective care.
- **Inclusive Social Activities:** Promote activities that encourage social interaction and support within the climbing community.

### **Outreach and Community**

**Engagement:** Suggests collaborating with schools and community organizations to promote climbing and secure financial backing for local projects.

- **Implement Outreach Programs:** Collaborate with schools and funders to lower barriers and promote inclusivity.
- **Integrate Climbing in Schools:** Include climbing in physical education curricula and extracurricular activities.
- **Boost Community and Corporate Involvement:** Advocate for municipal sports centers and organize outings through NGOs.
- **Secure Financial Support for Projects:** Seek backing from institutions to launch local climbing projects.
- **Collaborative Community Initiatives:** Host complimentary climbing events, workshops, and demonstrations in collaboration with local schools and community organizations.

### **Enhancing Guidance and**

**Support:** Includes training staff and instructors in inclusivity, providing initial guidance, and teaching fear management techniques.

- **Staff Guidance and Support:** Provide initial guidance from staff, including training on assisting climbers with different abilities and needs.
- **Train Instructors in Inclusivity:** Comprehensive training for instructors on inclusivity principles to lead by example.
- **Fear Management:** Teach techniques like deep breathing to manage fear during climbs and encourage knowing personal limits.
- **Training Programs:** Offer comprehensive training programs to ensure safety and confidence among new climbers.

### **Raising Awareness and**

**Education:** Aims to educate the climbing community on diversity, equity, and safety through workshops, detailed information, and safety education.

- **Raise Awareness through Education:** Provide workshops and educational programs on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Comprehensive Information and Safety Education:** Offer detailed information on climbing culture, risks, and safety education to mitigate recklessness.
- **Detailed Information:** Provide concise information about climbing culture, risks, and safety practices to new climbers.
- **Start Inclusivity Discussions Early:** Initiate conversations about inclusivity and diversity early, addressing challenges faced by both younger and adult climbers.

### **Facilitating Social Interaction and Knowledge Sharing:**

Encourages creating social spaces, facilitating family access to climbing, and sharing knowledge across different climbing groups.

- **Facilitate Social Interaction:** Launch campaigns to create social spaces and improve family access to climbing.
- **Encourage Knowledge Sharing:** Foster the exchange of skills across different climbing groups and learn from inclusive practices in other sports.
- **Inclusive Social Activities:** Promote activities that encourage social interaction and support within the climbing community.

### **Leveraging Trainers and**

**Multilingual Skills:** Highlights the importance of trainers in motivating participants and the use of multilingual skills to assist non-native speakers.

- **Motivate Through Trainers:** Emphasize trainers' roles in motivating participants and sharing knowledge.
- **Leverage Multilingual Skills:** Encourage multilingual abilities among instructors to assist non-native speakers.

### **Specialized Climbing**

**Activities:** Includes organizing diverse climbing groups tailored to different needs and disseminating free climbing activities in various settings

- **Diverse Climbing Groups:** Encourage climbing in groups tailored to different needs, such as beginners needing ropes, or specialized groups for various age ranges and abilities.
- **Community Engagement in Various Settings:** Disseminate free climbing activities in a variety of settings to reach a broader audience.

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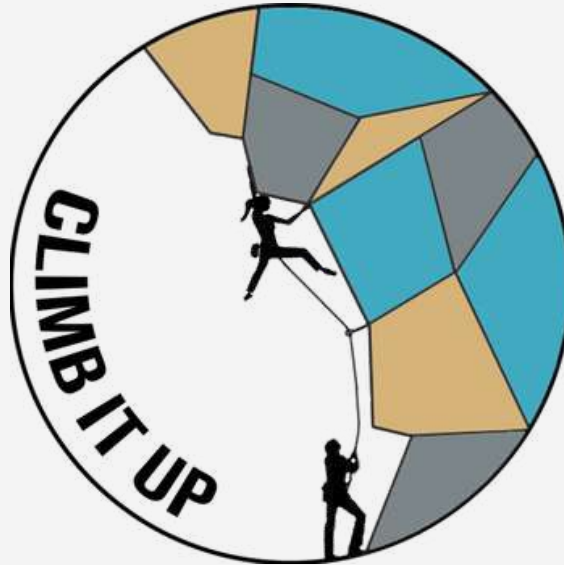
# ANNEXES

## ANNEX A

Survey Questionnaires

## ANNEX B

Interview Questionnaires



This Final Study Report, E-publication, serving as Deliverable 2.2, has been crafted within the framework of the Erasmus+ Sport Project titled "Climb It Up: Climbing for Social Inclusion & Diversity" (Project ID: 101132956).

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