

People with disabilities

Activity Box 1.11

Module 1: Target Group



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Key Facts

- A billion people in the world, of whom over 70 million in the EU, live with disabilities today (74)
- Having a disability or illness is the third most frequently mentioned reason – by 14 % of respondents – for not practising Sport more regularly (74)
- 98% of children with disabilities living in developing countries do not receive an education. This number is even higher for girls with disabilities

Specific groups this Activity Box applies to:

Participants with four general types of disabilities:

- Motor disabilities (long-term physical)
- Mental impairment
- Sensorial disabilities
- Psychological disorders

These disabilities can be:

- By its duration: Permanent, temporary, or episodic
- By its origin: They can affect people from birth or be acquired later in life through injury or illness

Why is it so important

Contribution

Sport for persons with disabilities is a powerful, low-cost means to foster greater inclusion and well-being for persons with disabilities:

- Empowerment: It teaches how to communicate effectively as well as the significance of teamwork, goal setting, self-discipline, respect for others, and the importance of rules.
- Inclusion and well-being: Changes in community perceptions of persons with disabilities by focusing attention on their abilities.
- Social cohesion: Opportunities to engage and develop relationships with others. Sport also contributes to share experiences with others who understand their challenges.
- Physical rehabilitation: In the orthopaedic and neurological fields, people can improve their motor coordination. This includes diseases such as multiple sclerosis and the spinal cord.
- Awareness-raising: Unique opportunities of raising awareness.

International endorsement

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EU Physical Activity guidelines

Guideline 11: Sport organisations should cooperate with universities and higher vocational schools to develop training programmes for coaches, and other Sport professionals aimed to advise physical activity for those with motor or mental disabilities.

WHO Global action plan on physical activity

Action 3.5: Support partnerships with the Sport sector to remove barriers and strengthen the provision of universal access to opportunities for physical activity, active recreation and Sport for people with disabilities and their careers.

Barriers to Sport that should be overcome

- Lack of adapted facilities: Sport and other spaces such as parking lots, changing rooms, etc.
- Lack of adapted rules
- Staff members without formal preparation to assist participants with disabilities

Tips and key success factors

When speaking, interviewing or socializing with a person or an athlete with a disability:

- Always identify the person first and then the disability. Act naturally and don't monitor every word and action. Don't be embarrassed if you use expressions like "see you later" (to a person with a visual impairment).
- Avoid using emotional wording like "tragic", "afflicted", "victim", or "confined to a wheelchair". Emphasize the ability and not the limitation. People do not want to be recipients of charity or pity.
- Avoid portraying people with a disability as "extraordinary" or "superhuman". Overstating the achievements of athletes with a disability inadvertently suggests the original expectations were not high.
- Ask a person with a disability if he/she would like assistance before rushing in.
- Speak directly to that person rather than a companion or interpreter. Do not assume that a person with a physical disability also has a hearing disability or that their mental capacity is diminished.

Children and adolescents (aged 5–17 years) living with disability

- Should do at least an average of 60 minutes per day of moderate- to vigorous intensity, mostly aerobic, physical activity, across the week.
- Use an adequate type of Sport: e.g., Children in a wheelchair can play basketball or tennis; those without the use of limbs or with mental disabilities can enjoy the therapeutic benefits of horseback riding.
- Parents should encourage participation in Sport in general. Don't approach Sport as something they can't do but rather guide them toward taking part in Sport where they can have fun doing so. (71)

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Adults (aged 18 years and older) living with disability

- Should do at least 150-300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or at least 75–150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (or combined) throughout the week for substantial health benefits.
- Muscle-strengthening activities at a moderate or greater intensity involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week, as these provide additional health benefits.

Other Tips

- A previous exam is optimal to assess the health condition. The criterion of an external expert is also crucial
- Persons with disabilities should also be involved in other roles in the sporting world, including as organisers, referees, athletes, community leaders and even spectators. (73)
- Disseminating information on Sport programmes where young people usually gather.
- Considering space (wheelchair accessible, smooth surface) and logistical requirements (crutches and wheelchairs and other assistive devices may be scarce following a disaster).
- Visiting families to inform them about the planned activities.
- Involving local organisations, rehabilitation centres or other institutions working with (or experience with) children and youth with disabilities (to identify and mobilize possible participants, inform project design).
- Mobilize young people without disabilities to play with people with disabilities.

Available Resources

- YDF Manual for Disability Inclusion, South Africa (GIZ, 2011). [Click Here](#)
- List of Sport with variants for people with disabilities. [Click Here](#)
- Corentin Tolisso, French national player: Let's start by changing our outlook! [Click Here](#)
- Project “Inclusion through Sport for children with developmental disabilities”. [Click Here](#)
- Handisport Belgium. [Click Here](#)
- UFIT – Universal Fitness Innovation & Transformation. [Click Here](#)
- Online course “InSport: Promoting Inclusion in and through Sport”. [Click Here](#)
- Participation, Recreation and Inclusion through Martial Arts Education: A Practical Guide for Coaches. [Click Here](#)

Sample Case

IAAF Kids' Athletics

(International Association of Athletics Federations)

- IAAF Kids' Athletics is a grassroots/ Sport for All development programme.
- It is developed with a Universal Design Approach, and therefore no matter the level of athlete or if they have an impairment, the Kids' Athletics concept can be adapted to suit the needs of the participant.
- The essential part of the programme is to keep it fun for the children.

More information:

IAAF Kids' Athletics Toolkit. [Click Here](#)

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