

# EUROPEAN INTERVENTION MODEL OF INCLUSIVE SPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME



HOW TO IMPLEMENT INCLUSIVE SPORT  
PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES FOR ALL



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# 1 . Introduction to EU JOIN US

**EU JOIN US** is a project **aimed at promoting inclusive sport as the reference model** for the practice of sports by people with Down syndrome and intellectual disabilities, strengthening the networking, training and awareness of the agents involved and analyzing the impact that inclusive sports actions have on the sports clubs and people with Down syndrome themselves. Our project is in line with the horizontal priority of **ERASMUS+** “Inclusion and diversity in all fields of education, training, youth and sport”.

In the field of sport, EU JOIN US addresses the priority “Combating violence and tackling racism, discrimination and intolerance in sport and tackling violent radicalisation”. Particularly **it contributes to fight against discrimination in sport through the promotion of equality and taking into account the gender perspective**. To achieve its objectives, the Project has a consortium made up of expert associations in the field of Down syndrome and intellectual disabilities, sports clubs and federations with experience in the promotion of inclusive sports, and Universities with a large expertise in social research on the impact of inclusive sports in the life of people with disabilities

Thanks to a joint work coordinated by DOWN ESPAÑA, **these partners have created an European Intervention Model of inclusive sport to guide social and sport organizations to implement inclusive sport programmes**, promoting the equal participation of people with Down syndrome and intellectual disabilities as a result.

## 2 . Background of inclusive sports in Europe

**The participation of people with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities must be encouraged to the fullest extent possible**, as stated in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006). To ensure that individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in general sports activities at all levels, develop specialized sports and recreational activities, and enjoy equal conditions with individuals without disabilities, it is essential to provide appropriate education, training, and resources, as well as an appropriate access to facilities. This will enable persons with disabilities to develop and use their talents on an equal footing. In this regard, DOWN ESPAÑA has been one of the main driving forces in the development and promotion of entertainment events for the benefit of society, regardless of their own interests.

The new Spanish Sports Law No. 39/2022 of December 30 gives everyone the right to do sports. It takes concrete measures against all kinds of discrimination by directing people to physical activity and sports. It also introduces new, never-before-enacted issues based on gender, sexual orientation, race, and disability. Promoting inclusive sports practiced by people with disabilities, the practice presents an equal opportunity for this group in accessing sports, includes ensuring equality in sports for women and men with disabilities. It was necessary to facilitate the integration of all athletes under the same federation and to separate them according to their own conditions.

Although sport practice is an essential component to have a good quality of life, unfortunately, not everyone has equal access to these kind of activities. All people without discrimination should have the same opportunities. However, this cannot be achieved due to factors such as lack of education, economic resources and the limited availability of aids.

There are various barriers to activities for the inclusion of people with disabilities in sports. These are qualified technicians, volunteers and their wages, lack of appropriate age groups in the programs, lack of information on where to go and what to do, lack of space on current opportunities and accessibility, lack of social awareness for collectives in sports, difficulties in accompanying transportation vehicles, lack of human and technical support resources. The need for supporting personnel training on the subject arises from difficulties in adapting to the modalities in regulations and practices, ignorance and lack of knowledge, personal factors such as personality, tastes, interests, preferences, branches of sports, dissemination of visibility experiences, application opportunities for the spread of inclusive sports, advertising and promotion assistance and financial support for all representatives, training of all representatives, basic training from universities or courses in involving managers, technical staff, families and athletes, research and dissemination of inclusive education in schools, supporting human resources with courses and courses, personalized adaptations to create inclusive activities.

Considering these barriers and facilitators, the focus should be on the promotion of sports for individuals with Down Syndrome. Individuals with Down Syndrome should be given the opportunity to choose and make decisions. They should be given the opportunity to choose what kind of sport they are interested in. Individuals with special needs want to develop independently of the evolutionary stage they are in in life and adapt it according to their tastes, interests and needs. To be actively and effectively involved in any sport, they need to have the tools that facilitate the process, consider possibilities and recommendations.

Individuals with Down Syndrome believe in the commitment of institutions as well as all representatives to promote inclusive sports, regardless of age, sport branch, gender and geographical region.

As a result, this issue is highly developed in European countries where information on the social impacts of inclusive sports is available and there is awareness on the importance of sports and physical activity. Particularly in Germany, France, Spain, Italy and England, practices and projects developed for inclusive sports are very good examples of inclusive sports. A holistic approach should be used, based on a network of institutional and community partnerships, which is crucial to the success and maintenance of such projects. Similarly, a European framework aiming to strike the right balance between the desire to integrate individuals with Down Syndrome into society is also very important.

# 3 . Evolution and regulatory framework

## The right of people with intellectual disabilities to play sports

**Article 30 of the UN Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities**, paragraph 5, states, inter alia, that the signatory countries shall adopt the appropriate measures to; paragraph 5, states, inter alia, that the signatory countries shall adopt the appropriate measures to:

1. **Encourage and promote the participation**, to the fullest extent possible, of persons with disabilities **in mainstream sporting activities** at all levels;
2. Ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to organize, develop and participate in sports and recreational activities specific to persons with disabilities and, to this end, **encourage the provision of adequate instruction, training and resources on an equal basis with others;**
3. Ensure that persons with disabilities **have access** to sports, recreational and tourist facilities;

The tenets listed above have been the primary engine for DOWN ESPAÑA to develop and promote in recent years. Subsequently, a specific area of work on Inclusive Sport as one of the fundamental axis for achieving the social inclusion of people with Down syndrome has been implemented.



# The new Spanish Sports Law: Law 39/2022, of December 30, on Sport

On 22 December 2022, the Spanish Congress of Deputies plenary session approved Law 39/2022, of 30 December 2022, on Sport, thus replacing the previous Law 10/1990 of 15 October 1990. In the words of the Preamble of this new law:

*The Spanish sports model has been subject to a constant evolution as a result of the continuous and dizzying changes affecting this social phenomenon, which every day extends the practice of sports to a greater number of citizens, and reaches a projection in society that was hardly foreseen a few decades ago.*

The new Law 39/2022, of December 30, on Sport recognizes the **right of all people to physical activity** and sport and among its novelties introduces a series of concrete measures in favour of **equality** and **against any type of discrimination** in sport based on gender, sexual orientation, race or disability.

Likewise, it introduces **new aspects**, such as:

- Promotion of inclusive sport practiced by people with disabilities.
- Ensure equal opportunities for this group in access to sports.
- Achieving equality in sport for men and women with disabilities.
- As pertains to Sports Federations, to require the integration of all athletes in common organizational structures.

Next, we review these developments within the corresponding Sections and Articles of the Law.

## Section XII

*A **mandate** is communicated to the different public authorities so that sports facilities comply, at least, with universal accessibility standards so that people with disabilities can enjoy, sports facilities, on an equal basis. These standards shall take into account the specificities of the sports equipment used by persons with disabilities.*

### **Article 6. People with disabilities and inclusive sport**

1) In accordance with the provisions of Article 49 of the Spanish Constitution, the General State Administration, in collaboration with the rest of the Public Administrations, will promote the necessary policies to guarantee full autonomy, social inclusion and equal opportunities for people with disabilities in the field of sport, paying particular attention to the specific needs of women and girls with disabilities, removing obstacles to their full integration.

6) The sports entities included in this law will promote and encourage the development of the sports practice of people with disabilities, including, where appropriate, the **celebration of inclusive sports activities**.

### **Article 11. State public interest in high-level sport**

6) In addition to those high-level competitions, those competitions in which **inclusive sport** is promoted [...] and any sporting event that responds to the values of twenty-first century sport that have to do with equality, participation and the improvement of physical, mental or emotional condition will also be considered of public interest.

### **Article 18. General criteria of inter-administrative sports management**

f) Frame common objectives for the promotion of sport for people with disabilities and inclusive sport activities, in coordination with other ministerial departments with competence in the matter.

## **Article 14. Powers of the Higher Sports Council**

ab) In collaboration with the rest of the Public Administrations, with the Spanish sports federations and with the associative movement of people with disabilities, enhance public policies for the promotion of the practice of sports in people with disabilities, maintaining a transversal vision of the needs of these people in all areas of sport.

## **Article 34. Training curriculum**

In the training programs of sports technicians and other qualifications related to health in sport, specific determinations will be included to ensure that teachers have the necessary knowledge [...] with reference to the specific needs of women and men, minors, the elderly **and people with disabilities.**

## **Article 38. Sports technical staff**

6) The Spanish sports federations must provide a specific program of continuous training of technical personnel to ensure their permanent updating and professional progress, adopting, where necessary, specific training for those who are going to develop their activity **with athletes with disabilities.**

## **Article 46. Minimum content of the statutes of the Spanish sports federations.**

5) The statutes must provide for the existence of equality and sports commissions for people with disabilities.

The sports commission for persons with disabilities shall be responsible, among other functions that might be assigned to it [...] for promoting the practice of sport among persons with disabilities, **preferably with an inclusive approach.**

# In comparative perspective: The Italian Regulatory Framework

Following the detailed study of the Italian regulations, it has been collected the right to sports, rights and disability, Paralympic sports and the promotion of sports for all in the following legislative texts:

## **Constitution of the Italian Republic (22 December 1947)**

### **Article 3. Equality**

1. All citizens possess equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion and political orientation, personal and social conditions.
2. It is the duty of the Republic to remove economic and social obstacles which, by limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, prevent the full development of the natural person and the actual participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organization of the country.

### **Article 33. Freedom of Arts, Science and Teaching**

6. The Republic recognises the educational and social value of sporting activity in all its forms and its role in supporting physical and psychological well-being.

**Law 104/92, (5 February 1992), framework law for assistance, social integration and the rights of handicapped persons.**

### **Article 23. Removal of obstacles for sports, tourism and recreational activities**

1. The activity and practice of sports disciplines are favoured without any limitations.

**Law 162/98, (21 May 1998), Amendments to Law No 104 5 Feb 1992**

**Article 1.** Law No 104 of 5 February 1992 shall be amended as follows:

(a) in Article 10, the following shall be inserted after paragraph 1:

1-bis. The bodies referred to in paragraph 1 may organise services and benefits for the protection and social integration of the persons referred to in this article for whom the support of the family unit is lacking.

**Decree Law 43, (17/02/2017), Reorganisation of public administrations, concerning the Italian Paralympic Committee.**

**Article 1.** The Comitato italiano paralimpico (Italian Paralympic Committee), with legal personality under public law and seat in Rome, hereinafter referred to as the CIP, is established without new or additional burdens for the public finance. It is endowed with organisational, regulatory, administrative, accounting and budgetary autonomy, and is placed under the supervision of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, pursuant to Article 1, paragraph 19, letter a) of decree-law no. 181 of 18 May 2006, hereinafter referred to as the Supervisory Authority.

**Law 189/03, (15 July 2003), Rules for promoting the practice of sport by disabled persons.**

**Article 1. Extraordinary contribution to the Italian Disabled Sports Federation**

1. For the promotion and development of the basic and competitive sports practice of disabled people, an extraordinary contribution is authorised to the Italian Disabled Sports Federation (FISD)

**In Italy**, as in other countries, practising sport is a right guaranteed to all people, including those with disabilities.

Since this is not always the case in practice, there are several national and international laws that protect this right.

Italy's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities approved by the United Nations General Assembly took place in 2009. This marks an important milestone for the whole country.

As far as national laws are concerned, we can find as a fundamental law 104 of 92. This law concerns the protection of persons with disabilities and deals extensively, in several articles, with the right to sport for persons with disabilities and the removal of architectural barriers that prevent access to and use of facilities.

Another important regulation is Law 162 of 1998, which supplements Law 104 of 1992, concerning support measures in favour of severely disabled persons. It provides for collaboration between the regions and local authorities for the implementation of aid programmes for persons with permanent disabilities and severe limitation of personal autonomy, in the performance of essential life functions.

Another regulation is Legislative Decree 43 of 27 February 2017. This decree constitutes the Italian Paralympic Committee (CIP) and recognises its role as the main reference body for sports activities that are practised by disabled persons; it promotes and encourages the dissemination of sport under conditions of equality and equal opportunities; it regulates and manages sports activities; and it seeks to curb the phenomenon of discrimination in sport.

Finally, in 2022, Article 33 of the Italian Constitution was amended to recognise sport as having an educational and social role. This is why it must become an integral part of young people's education and must be guaranteed for all children and adolescents.

## Constitution of Republic of Türkiye

**Preamble.** That every Turkish citizen has an innate right and power, to lead an honourable life and to improve his/her material and spiritual wellbeing under the aegis of national culture, civilization, and the rule of law, through the exercise of the fundamental rights and freedoms set forth in this Constitution, in conformity with the requirements of equality and social justice;

### X. Equality before the law

**Article 10** ... (Paragraph added on September 12, 2010; Act No. 5982) Measures to be taken for children, the elderly, disabled people, widows, and orphans of martyrs as well as for the invalid and veterans shall not be considered as violation of the principle of equality.

### **Law on Disabled People No. 5378, published in Official Gazette dated 07/07/2005.**

**Article 4 (b):** Discrimination based on disability is prohibited, and combating discrimination is the fundamental basis of policies towards persons with disabilities.

**Article 4 (c):** It is essential to ensure equality of opportunity for persons with disabilities to benefit from all rights and services.

### **Presidential Decree on the Presidential Organization No. 1, 10/07/2018.**

#### **Article 189/1(ç): Duties of the Ministry of Youth and Sports' General Directorate of Sports Services**

To enable and promote sports for individuals with disabilities, ensuring that sports facilities are suitable for the use of disabled individuals, developing sports training programs and supportive technologies, providing the necessary equipment, conducting information and awareness campaigns for individuals with disabilities, training sports professionals, and collaborating with relevant organizations in enabling individuals with disabilities to engage in sports.

## **Article 2: Sports clubs**

Private legal entities that register with the Ministry for the purpose of participating in the activities of the Ministry and sports federations.

## **Article 2: Sports federations**

Refers to federations established by law or presidential decree to carry out activities related to a specific sports discipline. These federations have elected bodies and enjoy administrative and financial autonomy.

## **Comments**

It is of great importance to raise awareness for the effective participation of disabled individuals in society by taking into account the needs of disabled individuals in education, communication and employment plans and policies. Physical and social obstacles must be eliminated, as having an independent lifestyle for disabled individuals will positively affect their participation in social life. Necessary social arrangements are made so that they can take part in society and in all areas of social life with equal rights and freedoms with other individuals. In addition to participation in social life, it is seen that sports increase the vital motivation of disabled individuals. Therefore, this motivation positively affects the motivation of disabled individuals to participate in sports.

When implementing **Turkish sports policy**, the social policy goals and practices of the state and the government are not independent from each other. The use of power through the tools shaped within the state structure within the scope of the constitution, law, statute, decree, annual and long-term plans and programs, emerges with forms of control that include sports as well as many social areas. As a result; It appears that there is just one regulation about enabling people with disability in sports in Türkiye. Since social policy is of great importance in terms of protecting disadvantaged social segments and improving their opportunities, it is hoped that laws that will include inclusive sports for individuals with disabilities will be created.



## **Constitution of the Portuguese Republic (2 April 1976, 7th rev 2005)**

### **Article 79. Physical culture and sport**

1. Everyone has the right to physical culture and sport.
2. It is the responsibility of the State, in collaboration with schools and associations and sports groups, promote, stimulate, guide and support the practice and dissemination of physical culture and sport, as well as preventing violence in sport

## **Law 5/2007, of 16 January, Basic Law of Physical Activity and Sports**

### **Article 2. Principles of universality and equality**

1. Everyone has the right to physical and sporting activity, regardless of their ancestry, sex, race, ethnicity, language, territory of origin, religion, convictions political or ideological, education, economic situation, social status or sexual orientation.
2. Physical activity and sport should contribute to promote a balanced situation to promote a balanced situation and not discriminatory between men and women.

### **Article 12. Portuguese Paralympic Committee**

1. The Portuguese Olympic Committee is a non-profit association, with legal personality, which is governed by its statutes and regulations, in compliance with the law and the International Olympic Charter.
2. The Portuguese Olympic Committee has exclusive competence to constitute, organize and direct the Portuguese delegation participating in the Olympic Games and other sporting competitions held under the auspices of the International Olympic Committee, collaborating in its preparation and encouraging the practice of the activities represented there.
3. The Portuguese Olympic Committee keeps the register of Olympic sports participants updated.
4. The Portuguese Olympic Committee has the right to the exclusive use of Olympic symbols in national territory, in accordance with the law.

### **Article 13. The Portuguese Paralympic Committee**

The Portuguese Paralympic Committee applies, with the necessary adaptations, the provisions of the previous article, regarding sports practitioners with disabilities and their respective international sporting competitions.

### **Article 29. Disabled people**

Physical activity and sports practice on the part of people with disabilities is promoted and encouraged by the state, autonomous regions and local authorities with appropriate technical assistance, adapted to the respective specificities, with a view to full integration and social participation, in equal opportunities with other citizens.

## **Comments**

Inclusive sport challenges long-held prejudices about disability. Furthermore, inclusive arts and culture enable people with disabilities to take their rightful place as creators and consumers of culture that shapes our society. Sport has several points in common with Human Rights: it defends respect for others, equality and equity; promotes justice and compliance with standards; encourages team spirit and joint work for a common good and so forth.

Sport is present in our daily lives, it is considered a leisure activity that actively contributes to well-being and health. In Portugal we have the so called “PNDpt” (Sports for all) that prioritises support for sport development programs, which promote the practice of sports by students at all levels of education, through projects that include education and /or teaching establishments, within the scope of the measure “and after school??” (Plan 23|23 Escola+).

The Portuguese Republic Constitution (1976) enshrines the right to physical culture and sports for all, an aspect reinforced by article 1 of law 30/2004 Basic Law of Sport, which assumes sports as an indispensable factor in the formation of the person and in the development of society, whilst taking special care of the practice of sport by citizens with disabilities.

Likewise, Law 38/2004 in the Basic Law for Preventions, Rehabilitation and Integration of People with Disabilities makes reference to the value of practising sports for citizens with disabilities, particularly with regard to sport and recreation as measures for rehabilitation. Furthermore, it establishes that “it is up to the State to adopt specific measures necessary to ensure access for people with disabilities to practise sport and enjoy time”.

However we know that from the law to the practice there is a big difference. From our research we couldn't find that many totally inclusive sports practices (See Report of the State of the Art). Unfortunately, we still need a directive model that helps and directs to real inclusive programs.

## **What do we accomplish at the European Intervention Model to apply the regulatory framework related to inclusive sport?**

- ✓ **Facilitate the integration of all athletes under the same federation.**
- ✓ **Advocate the consideration of inclusive sport and programs of general interest, included but not limited to high-level sport.**
- ✓ **Encourage federations to implement integration models for people with disabilities, so that all those practising the same sport are incorporated.**
- ✓ **Promoting the social integration of people with disabilities in sport events for people without disabilities**

# 4 . Sport practice for people with intellectual disabilities

## Direct benefits

Recreational sports practice is **essential to complete the process of inclusion** of people with Down syndrome and intellectual disability.

This generates multiple benefits at various levels (Pérez-Tejero & Ocete, 2018) and has a direct transfer to other areas that affect social inclusion processes.



### At the psychological level

- Ability to assume physical risk
- Assessment of one's own body
- Maturity
- Development of personality and individual affectivity
- Safety
- Awareness and personal satisfaction
- Enhancement of self-esteem and self-concept



## At the psychosocial level

- Teamwork skills
- Emotional regulation and management
- Increased body communication
- Acquisition of hygiene habits
- Self-management capacity
- Improved educational performance



## At the physical level

- Psychomotor development
- Prevention of obesity and weight gain
- Healthy growth
- Contribution to the improvement of muscle tone



## At the cognitive level

- Improvement of the image and perception of body
- Mastery of the body schema
- Temporal-spatial control
- Kinesthetic domain

## Impact on other areas of life

### **Sports improve the relationship of the athlete with her/his environment**

- Trainer
- Teacher
- Family members
- Friends
- Common acquaintances
- New people to meet

### **Sports allow to acquire skills for independent living**

- Use of public means of transportation
- Respectful use of shared dressing rooms and common spaces
- Responsible with sports equipment
- Be aware of the coach's instructions
- Remember key dates and schedule of practices and competitions
- Conflict management and resolution skills

### **Sports help to encourage decision-making capacity**

- To decide if the person wants to continue with the same sport or try a new one
- To decide if the person wishes to train at a higher level of sport performance.
- To decide if the person wishes to train within a specific group.
- To decide if the person wishes to train with people without disabilities.
- To share trainings with people of different gender.

Although sports practice is a fundamental component of the quality of life in modern societies, not all the population has equal access to physical activity and sport (Pérez–Tejero and Ocete, 2018)

All persons without distinction should have equal opportunities to practice sport, irrespective of their personal situation. However, the lack of training, economic resources and low external aid, make sports clubs and other institutions for the promotion of grassroots sport experience the inclusion of athletes with disabilities as an added difficulty to an already complicated daily management.

While it is true that depending on the type of intellectual disability there are certain barriers more pronounced than others are, in general one of the main barriers in the participation of people with Down syndrome in sport is the **absence of sports offer**.

To this, we must add the scarcity of data available on the practice of sports by people with Down syndrome, beyond the federative licenses of the adapted federations and studies that show the situation of access to sport by people with intellectual disabilities.

In the framework of the study on the processes of integration of sport for people with disabilities in the Federation: "Aid to Spanish Sports Federations for the Realization of Inclusive Sports Projects in the Year 2021" (Ocete and Cherta, 2021) the **conditioning factors of the sports inclusion** pertaining to people with disabilities are emphasized.

**Among them**, the following stand out:

# BARRIERS

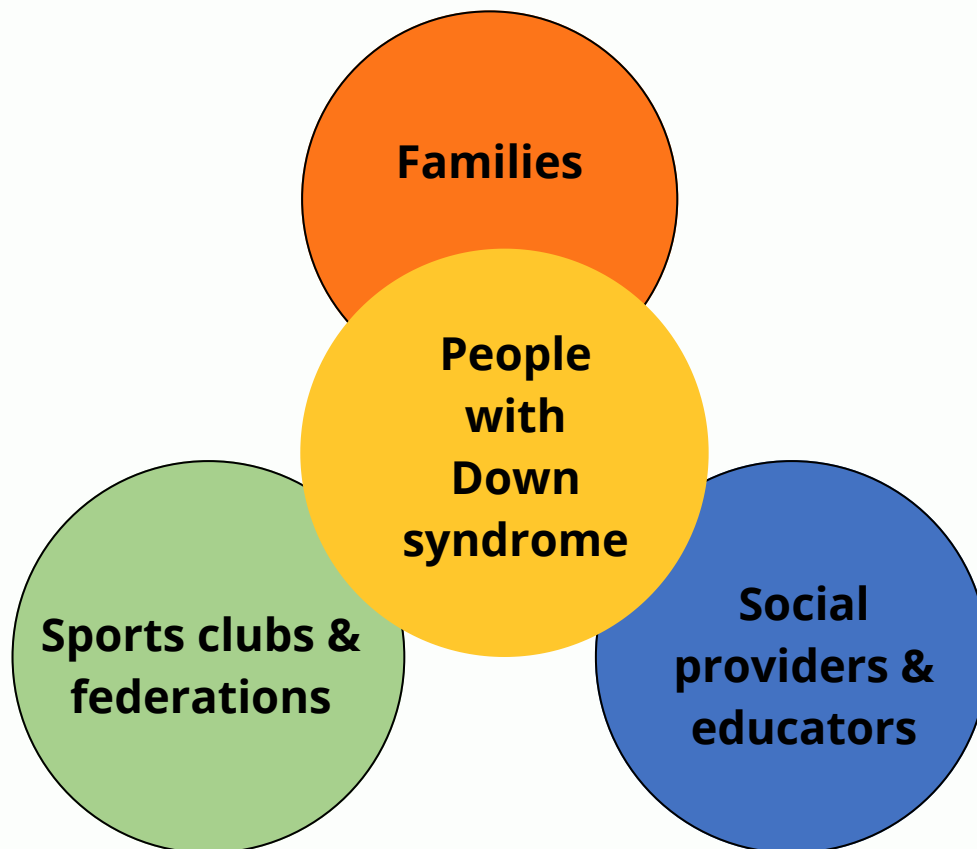
<b>Lack of training in all sports profiles including families and athletes without disabilities</b>	<i>"The location of qualified and volunteer technicians and their remuneration."</i>
<b>Lack of programs and sports offer</b>	<i>"Absence of diverse age groups"</i>
<b>Lack of information</b>	<i>"Ignorance of where to turn, what to do, who to ask..."</i>
<b>Facilities available and accessible</b>	<i>"Lack of accessible and inclusive spaces"</i>
<b>Social awareness about disability</b>	<i>"Lack of empathy and persistence of prejudice towards groups with special needs"</i>
<b>Means of transport</b>	<i>"Lack of personal support and assistance"</i>
<b>Need for support staff</b>	<i>"Lack of human and technical support resources."</i>
<b>Issues related to the regulation and its adaptations</b>	<i>"The difficulties of adapting sports modalities to certain disabilities".</i>
<b>Ignorance</b>	<i>"Society sees a club of people with intellectual disabilities as less important and less valid".</i>
<b>Lack of data</b>	<i>"Lack of knowledge and comprehensive information about habits and sports participation of people with Down syndrome."</i>
<b>Personal factors</b>	<i>"Personality, tastes, interests, sports preferences."</i>



# ENABLERS

<b>Training of all the agents involved (managers, technicians, families and athletes) in the inclusion process</b>	<i>"Training from the university or from the basic courses in inclusive sport."</i>
<b>Practice opportunities</b>	<i>"More inclusive sport initiatives"</i>
<b>Visibility</b>	<i>"Sharing of experiences"</i>
<b>Research and dissemination</b>	<i>"Dissemination of scientific results and good practices about inclusive sport in Schools, Federation, Clubs and City Council."</i>
<b>Human resources to support trainings / classes</b>	<i>"Support monitors during classes."</i>
<b>Use of community resources and facilities</b>	<i>"To put at the service of all people the spaces that are available."</i>
<b>Reduced session sizes</b>	<i>"Organized sessions for small groups."</i>
<b>Accommodations depending on the needs of the person</b>	<i>"That the necessary accommodations are made and adapted to each person with disabilities."</i>
<b>Generate spaces for inclusive sports practice</b>	<i>"Create groups formed by people with disabilities and without disabilities."</i>
<b>Advice and support</b>	<i>"Advice on the adaptation of sports modalities. The federative impulse. The development of programs on the subject with economic and resource endowments."</i>

# Agents involved in the promotion of sport for people with Down syndrome



Taking into account these barriers and facilitators, the **agents involved** in the promotion of sport for people with Down syndrome **should focus their efforts on:**

**1. Choice and decision:** Give opportunities to choose what type of sports they want to develop, regardless of the evolutionary stage of their life in which they are; adapting to their tastes, interests and needs.

**2. Possibilities of participation:** Have tools that facilitate the process of sports inclusion to participate actively and effectively in any session, whether training and / or competition.

# 5 . Inclusive sport: Definition and key aspects

## Definition

Sports practice that favours the inclusion of people with disabilities in society, playing a relevant role those activities that foresee this **joint practice between people with and without disabilities**, and always **seeking equal opportunities and conditions** between people with and without disabilities in the field of sport.

Source: Spanish Law on Sport, 2022

## Key aspects

More in detail, inclusive sport:

- It does **not** arise **to replace adapted sport**.
- **It is not a content in itself**, since **it is an approach** linked either to conventional sports or to adapted sports.
- **It does not require a teaching methodology different** from the one we already know or use as teachers and / or sports technicians on a regular basis.
- **It is a way to bring sport closer to people with disabilities who otherwise could not do so.**

- **It is a tool of inclusion.** You have to learn how to use it, taking into account what it is for and what its functions are. 3 fundamental principles: scope of action; sports modality; type of disability.
- **Sometimes, it is a phase of initiation of the player with disabilities.**
- **It serves to sensitize and raise awareness about the situation of people with disabilities in sport or in general.** Actions of visibility, dissemination, training and research are necessary.
- **It needs a "link":** coordination and understanding between agents involved and strategies.
- **It has to be progressive, evolve gradually.** Inclusive sport is not a static option, it does not have a unique form, but it "mutates" over time.
- **It presents different levels of inclusion** (Burns and Jhonston, 2019):
  - **Open activity:** all players with and without disabilities can participate in the same activity, without the need for accommodations.
  - **Modified activity:** demands or requires modifications (space, rules, equipment, technique/tactics) in order to allow all players to participate together.
  - **Parallel activity:** involves grouping players according to their ability level. Each group works on the same activity since it has the same objective to achieve, but in independent groups and at a level appropriate to the individuals of each group.
  - **Specific activity:** it must be used in a timely manner in the development of a session since its objective is to work specifically on a skill independently or in a group with others of the same level of ability.

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  - **Specific activity:** it must be used in a timely manner in the development of a session since its objective is to work specifically on a skill independently or in a group with others of the same level of ability.

# 6. The European Model of Inclusive Sport

## General considerations

The European Model considers inclusive sport as a **fundamental tool for health, well-being and quality of life** for people with Down syndrome.

A tool that also favours a transfer of skills and abilities to other areas of life that affect inclusion processes such as social interaction and the development of interpersonal relationships.

In the Inclusive Sport Model is considered that the individual differences of people are an enriching element of social relations and, therefore of the community and society in general.

The model is based on the promotion of the inclusion of people with Down syndrome from the beginning of the process, that is, on the free choice of the type of sports practice and the modality as the maximum manifestation of the autonomy and independence of the person.

**Inclusion is a goal and we have to achieve it all together.**

Therefore, the model is based on the institutions that are part of the processes of inclusion of people with disabilities in sport commit to more beyond specific actions and projects including in their ideas any aspect related to inclusion.

## Mission and vision of the model

Our **mission** is to generate our own inclusive sport model, **putting people with Down syndrome at the centre of the process**, whose purpose is to achieve a sport model in which **all people with and without disabilities participate in equal opportunities**. Also, facilitate and promote the presence and participation of people with disabilities in sports activities not only as athletes, but as other agents (volunteers, judges, support staff) and as the public.

To make inclusive sport one more possibility of sports practice to be chosen by people with Down syndrome, regardless of age, sport modality, gender and geographical area where they live. To achieve this, we believe in the commitment of the institutions, as well as all the agents involved.

Our **vision** is that our **inclusive sport model becomes standard** in all existing national sports modalities, considering all elements and structures as agents of change in search of social transformation. This process of social inclusion involves entities, families, people with and without disabilities, and any professionals.

## Lines of action

The European Intervention Model of Inclusive Sport consists of three general lines of action. In each of them, we distinguish a specific objective and a series of strategic actions to achieve it.

**LINE 1: TRAINING**

**LINE 2: IMPULSE, CREATION AND NETWORKS**

**LINE 3: WOMEN WITH DOWN SYNDROME AND SPORT**

## Line 1: Training

It is necessary to train on the implementation of inclusive sport models and their transformative potential. This training should be aimed at all agents and bodies involved in the promotion of sport for people with Down syndrome: clubs, coaches, technicians, association professionals, teachers, referees, judges, specific sports volunteers, etc.

The **objective** of the Model within this line of action is to provide sports agents with the knowledge and tools necessary for the implementation of inclusive sport processes.

### Strategic actions to achieve the objective:

- Specific and specialized training of the different agents involved (clubs, federations, families, PSD etc.), as well as collaborating in the training of other entities.
- Launching campaigns and awareness actions that make visible the barriers faced by people with Down syndrome to be able to practice sport in inclusive environments.
- Implementing Educational Programs to raise awareness among students and teachers about inclusive sport and its practice.
- Promoting the advancement of knowledge through sports research and innovation.



## Line 2: Impulse, creation and networks

The knowledge generated through training must serve to promote and encourage new inclusive sport promotion actions from the different structures and institutions involved. Therefore, to consolidate inclusive sport as a reality, it is necessary to establish institutional networks that generate solid, permanent and stable structures over time and that are aimed at generating models, good practices and spaces for inclusive sports practice.

The **objective** of the model is to advise, collaborate and stimulate the environment transformation through the development of projects and actions of inclusive sports practice. Also, to promote coordination and networking at national and international level with the different agents involved in the promotion of sport for people with Down syndrome

### Strategic actions to achieve the objective:

- Promoting the inclusive sports practice of Down syndrome people from childhood as a way to achieve inclusion, social participation and a healthy lifestyle.
- Communicating the value of inclusive sport and its achievements, publicizing examples of good practices that can be transferred to other contexts.
- Making visible and disseminating to the rest of society the actions taking people with intellectual disabilities as an involved part.
- Promoting the Inclusive Sport Model across the European Union.
- Establishing networking as a mean of knowledge transfer through projects and programs that allow the development of new models and the exchange of transferable and scalable good practices to new contexts.

- Analyzing and evaluating the programs and actions implemented with the aim of drawing valid and effective conclusions in the search for quality improvement of the attention to people with disabilities in the sportive inclusion.
- Searching for the quality improvement of the attention to people with Down syndrome in sportive inclusion.
- Searching for agreements and collaboration agreements with the institutions responsible for the promotion of sport at the regional, national and international level

## Line 3: Women with Down syndrome and sports

**Women with Down syndrome suffer double discrimination:** one for being a woman and another for their disability. Therefore, they are often relegated to other activities that are not related to physical and recreational activity.

The **objective** of the model is to consolidate an equal space for women with Down syndrome in the sports field, as well as to achieve the commitment of institutions, clubs and families to achieve it.

- Making sport visible for women with Down syndrome and other Intellectuals disabilities (communication campaigns).
- Sensitizing sports and education professionals about their role in this process (training and resource generation).
- Raising awareness among families about how important it is for them to decide and support their daughters' sports practice.

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