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# INCLUSION AND DISABILITIES IN AND THROUGH SPORT

## Best Practice #5 - Denmark

ISCA – International Sport and Culture Association

No. 101089892 – IDI4Sport – ERASMUS-SPORT-2022-SCP



## Best Practice in Denmark #5

**Key words.** Please insert 3 to 5 key words that best describe the best practice

handball, communication, integration

### 1. Type of Disability

Please describe the type of disability that this practice is focused on. If there is an official definition of the disability in European or National documents please provide it.

This practice is oriented towards handball but not focused on a specific disability, although the initiative started with children that have Down Syndrome. The age target group is 6-15 years.

### 2. Organization & Reference

If applicable: Official data of organization, school, club etc. (name, address, email). Please give references such as internet source, homepage etc.

The initiative *Lykkeliga* (The Happy League) is developed by Rikke Nielsen, a former national team handball player. It is a private, nation-wide initiative with both public and private funding supporters. Their general web site is <https://lykkeliga.dk/>, and contact details are; Phone: 0045 60 63 09 04; Mail: [rikke@lykkeliga.dk](mailto:rikke@lykkeliga.dk).

### 3. Formal/Informal

Please state if the setting refers to formal or informal education (sport clubs etc.).

The initiative is specifically targeted informal education, namely sport teams that are inclusive of children with disabilities.

#### 4. Practice summary

Describe what and how was done (regulations of the sport/game/competition/physical activity), please state the specific context of the practice and the sport(s)/game/competition involved.

LykkeLiga is a positive community for children with developmental disabilities and their families. The core is the establishment and running of local handball teams for children between 5 and 16 years of age. The teams form the framework for a completely new way of creating networks for children and families on and off the pitch.

Over a 3-year period, LykkeLiga has developed a national network of handball teams for developmentally disabled children. The project originally aimed to activate more than 300 developmentally disabled children in a minimum of 15 teams but this goal is now surpassed.

The teams are started, managed and trained by a minimum of 75 volunteers. At the same time, the children's families are activated in an active network around handball – with the original aim to activate up to 1,000 family members.

##### Families and fan clubs

The families are gathered and organized in an online universe that creates opportunities for networking and exchange of experiences across geography and disabilities. Through the family network, a number of "sibling activities" are organized and held for the siblings of the disabled children.

The project also has a communication concept, where LykkeLiga forms a conceptual framework around positive communication about developmental disabilities in the general population. This part aims to activate up to 50,000 Danes in "fan clubs" of the individual teams.

##### School concept and dissemination

Through a school concept, annual school visits are held with an estimated reach of 3,500 school pupils. In addition, the project created national and local press coverage, which conveys positive communication about developmental disabilities to the whole of Denmark. LykkeLiga must benefit society by creating a bridge between the developmentally disabled and the general population. In addition, the children's infectious enthusiasm inspires a brighter outlook on life among all Danes.

### LykkeCup

LykkeLiga culminates annually in a handball party, when the teams compete in the ambitious tournament LykkeCup. The goal is for LykkeCup to be the highlight of the year for the children – at LykkeCup, the children are anything but social challenges. Here they are the top scorers, sports stars and the pride of the family. In the longer term, LykkeCup may accommodate several sports.

LykkeLiga is a lasting and sustainable concept that lives on after the 3-year development period. This is ensured through close cooperation with existing organizations such as The national handball Federation<sup>1</sup>.

## 5. Variations implemented

Please state any kind of useful variations (e.g., concerning settings, age of participants, types of disabilities and adaptations to other sports) of the practice.

The LykkeLiga concept is based on handball, but the training approach is based on togetherness, the joy of movement, pride and true inclusion. Each trainer adapts the training to the children in question and brings the special LykkeLiga ethos and spirit to the trainings.

LykkeLiga has made an online portal for the volunteer trainers<sup>2</sup>. In the portal, trainers have access to activities (including videos), explainers, model contracts for trainers, etc.

The training videos illustrate the approach, where handball is clearly secondary, and the playfulness and fun come first.

<sup>1</sup> <https://lykkeliga.dk/om-lykkeliga/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://lykkeliga.dk/traenerportal/>



## Rumpesnurretop

IDA DAMTOFT NIELSEN / 28. MAJ 2021 / @VELSER

LykkeLiga inspirerer #1

Nu skal vi ned på rumpen og snurre! Sæt armen i, og giv den fuld gas. Det gælder om at snurre rundt flest gange. Pas på, du ikke bliver rundtosset!



### 6. People involved

Please state organizations and people involved, provide types of disabilities participated in this specific good/best practice. If applicable, be concrete about the different roles of the people involved.

LykkeLiga is a whole-of-community concept, and the foreseen people involved are the trainer(s) and the children, the LykkeLiga staff, the local clubs that adopt teams, the groups of parents and families, and local supporters in terms of helpers, community sponsors, and individual donors. Specific disabilities are not addressed.

### **7. National guidelines adopted**

Please refer to the national guidelines that are met through the practice. Give basic legislation frameworks that can help teachers understand their legal-driven responsibilities towards their students.

This practise does not refer to any of the (limited) Danish regulations, but it is in line with the Danish anti-discrimination act.

### **8. Implications for teachers/practitioners etc.**

Please write any useful implications (what teachers/coaches/physical educators should take into account: safety considerations, equipment needed, support needed) that the practice might have. This may include focal points of the types of disabilities included and how these points were addressed, in terms of the participation in sports.

A central component in LykkeLiga is the big voluntary contribution that trainers, parents, local supporters, helpers and local clubs are providing. The approach is based on a "giving" mentality and appreciation of the value of the smiles of the children. There are no specific disability adaptations described.

### **9. Innovative resources, materials, methods etc. used**

Please refer to the resources, materials, methods etc. have been employed. Strategies for creating an inclusive environment, prioritizing accommodations for students with disabilities, forming/refining accessible facilities, equipment, and assistive technology. Please include techniques for adapting sports activities to meet the needs of students with disabilities, such as modified rules, specialized equipment and assistive devices.

The initiative is a practise-based approach – started by a professional handball player who could not identify a handball team for her daughter who has Downs' Syndrome.

The materials are limited to the training videos that are provided to trainers<sup>3</sup> as described above.

Currently, researchers from the university of Aalborg have completed a large study that will be published shortly. The study is about the movement habits of children and young people with disabilities, which is a strong complement to the other Danish studies and focusing specifically on children. The study has a specific focus on LykkeLiga as a case and is not published yet. As part of that project, the team will develop specific guidance materials for trainers in LykkeLiga, as this is currently not existing. Contact person for this is Lotte Skrubbeltrang, one of the researchers behind the study: [lss@hst.aau.dk](mailto:lss@hst.aau.dk)

**10. Communication and collaboration strategies**

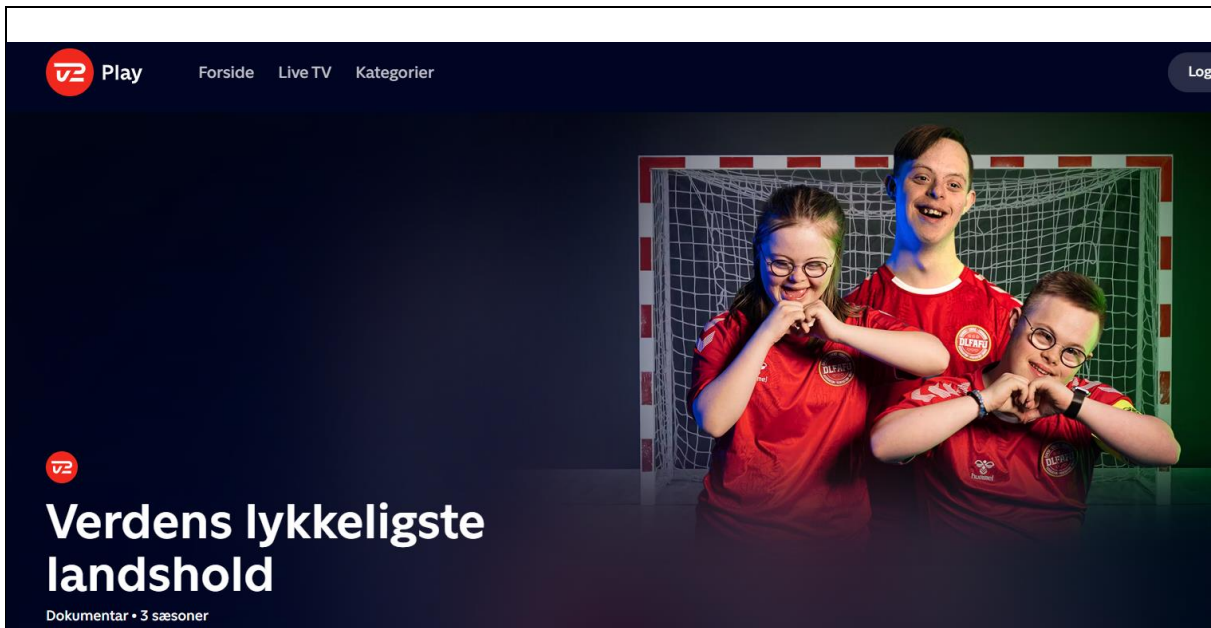
If applicable, describe strategies for collaborating with other educators, parents, and students to ensure that everyone is working together to create an inclusive environment.

The communication approach of LykkeLiga is to create and enhance a positive narrative around children that has a disability, by using great and active stories and organic media reach.

A major breakthrough happened when National Broadcaster TV2 decided to make a series of documentaries about LykkeLiga in January 2020, which has boosted visibility and reach of the concept<sup>4</sup>. The (private) broadcaster has not shared details on the reach of the documentary to date.

<sup>3</sup> <https://lykkeliga.dk/traenerportal/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://play.tv2.dk/serie/verdens-lykkeligste-landshold-tv2>

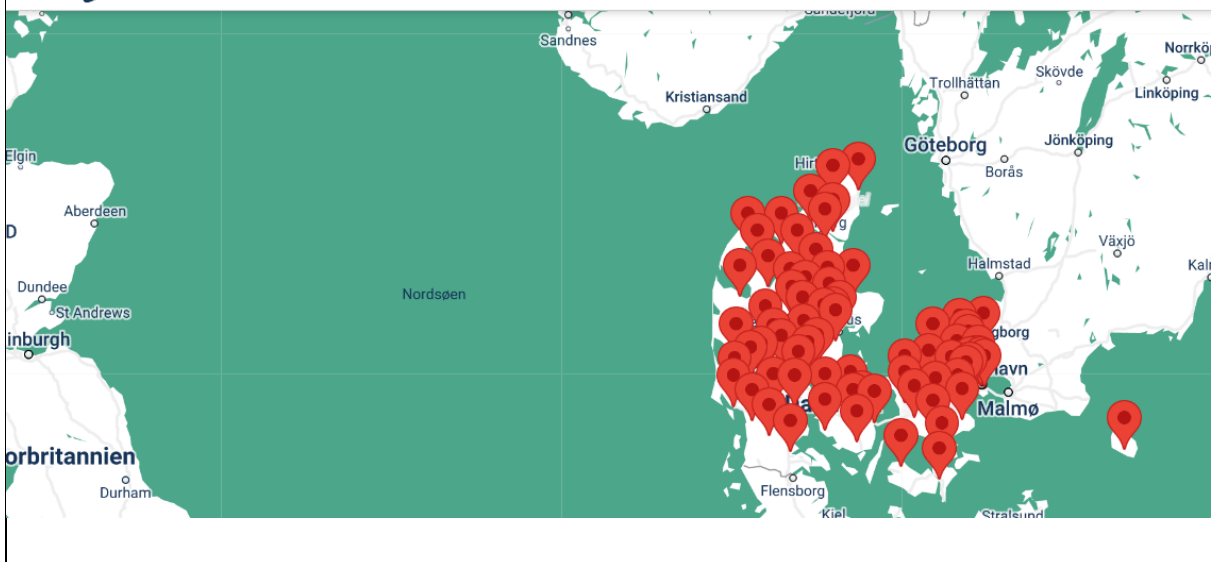


*Illustration from the TV documentary*

Currently, LykkeLiga is expanding significantly with local teams all over the country:



FORSIDE OM LYKKELIGA TRÆ





Part of the success in visibility is also that LykkeLiga has received several prizes for their work, including the nationally televised "Danish Sport Price" in 2019<sup>5</sup>.

DIF.dk > Nyheder > 2019 > 01 > 5. jan 2019 - LykkeLiga vinder Danskernes Idrætspris

## LykkeLiga vinder Danskernes Idrætspris



### 11. Evaluation and/or reflection methods

If applicable, state how teachers planned to know, to what extent basic goals were met. That is, give any kind of evaluation practices, self-reflection methods, forms of data collection, post-event documentations and follow-ups. Also, report any

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.dif.dk/nyheder/2019/01/20190105\\_lykkeligavinderdanskernesidrætspris](https://www.dif.dk/nyheder/2019/01/20190105_lykkeligavinderdanskernesidrætspris)

positive feedback and reinforcement given to students with and without disabilities to encourage and motivate them to continue participating in sports.

Research is currently undertaken to assess and demonstrate the value of LykkeLiga. Until now, the monitoring has been on outputs (children, teams, trainings, etc) rather than outcomes.

Trainers are instructed to evaluate training sessions with the children – on their terms and focused on their learnings and experiences.

## **12. Training pathway for teachers for integrating this good practice**

Please provide 5 to 15 practical tips to teachers of sports for implementing the proposed good practice. Ensure that tips: 1. refer both to formal and informal settings 2. contribute to the awareness of educators for the needs of students with disabilities 3. take into account the environmental/architectural and attitudinal barriers (such as inaccessible sport spaces, equipment needed, support provided), 4. provide individualized adaptations 5. Provide social and emotional support by encouraging social interaction and peer support 6. Provide positive reinforcement to motivate them to continue participating in sports and to develop their skills and abilities.

LykkeLiga has not provided specific guidance or accumulated learnings, but training materials are forthcoming through research collaboration, as mentioned above. We consider the following elements central to the success of LykkeLiga

- Focus on joy and togetherness
- Making families and communities proud of all children
- A strong voluntary component
- A successful media strategy and organic media attention
- Ability to raise funds from public sector and private foundations in particular.