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INCLUSION AND DISABILITIES IN AND THROUGH SPORT

Best Practice #3 - Portugal

IPDJ – Instituto Português do Desporto e
Juventude

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



BIRD- Integrated Sport Resource Base

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

Inclusion; Sport for all; Training for teachers and technicians; Community awareness; Disability

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.

APCAS – ALMADA SEIXAL CEREBRAL PALSY ASSOCIATION belongs to everyone and for everyone. Our mission is to provide conditions that allow effective equality of opportunity for people with Cerebral Palsy and other disabilities, as well as their families.

The project “BIRD- Integrated Sport Resource Base” is intended for all people, regardless of age, gender, or functionality. Focusing on the promotion of inclusive physical activity in the most diverse contexts, it involves people with any type of disability, as well as people without disabilities, in a work towards inclusion where everyone is aware of the development of joint activities.

The regular sports activities developed through are specific for the target population in which APCAS intervenes (Cerebral Palsy - group of diseases that includes difficulty in movement and muscle rigidity (spasticity). It results from brain malformations that occur before birth during the period in which that the brain is developing or brain damage that occurs before, during or shortly after birth), but are open to the community.

2. Organization & Reference

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

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APCAS was formally constituted on 12 January 2011 and is recognised as a non-governmental organization. It's an institution particular social solidarity [IPSS] whose objectives are centered on the prevention, qualification, participation, social inclusion, and support of people with cerebral palsy and their families, related neurological conditions and others.

APCAS guides its intervention in the different domains of the sphere of action, by proactive advocacy for the inclusion of all people with disabilities, in particular with cerebral palsy and related neurological conditions with locomotor impairment.

APCAS presents a fertile activity in social and sporting activities and seeks to position as local, regional, and national reference in relation to the capacity to respond to people with disabilities, their families, and partners in the community. The realization of projects that cover different layers of society, from a perspective of achieving values of citizenship in its fullness, appear as a step forward in inclusion, in a society truly for all. With a work

aimed at everyone, because when we talk about inclusion, we talk about working with everyone and not just with some, focuses on the development of projects that promote equal opportunities, with activities with a strong impact on the community, from training, awareness, interventions in the context, transfer of materials, among other activities.

APCAS is also known as a great community partner, establishing connections both locally and in a remote manner, according to general demand.

Key activities:

- Supporting the social inclusion of persons with disabilities and their families;
- Promotion and dissemination of adapted physical activity in community structures;
- Implementation of sports programs targeted for persons with disabilities, that promote the regular practice of physical activity;
- Dissemination of pedagogical models that promote the participation and social inclusion of students with or without disabilities in the school community;
- Technical support to teachers and other professionals regarding the implementation of inclusion strategies;
- Mobilization of resources towards the development of several projects targeted at promoting the practice of physical activity throughout the lifespan;
- Planning activities to share intergenerational skills;
- Development of programs and projects to increase the autonomy of persons with disabilities;

- Development of pedagogical tools, namely in the sports and citizenship domains, intended for teachers, sport technicians, families and persons with disabilities;
- Implementation of psychomotor development projects, focused on child's play and early intervention;
- Implementation of volunteering programs for youths and elderly people;
- Promotion and dissemination of the Adapted Sports Resource Centre as well the technology device;
- Development of activities at local, regional, national, European (ERASMUS Projects) and Internationally (Cape Verde, Africa).

So, APCAS have a longitudinal work that seeks intervene in different population groups, from the people with disabilities to the students, seniors, teachers, trainers, families, etc. APCAS currently develops projects at regional, national, and international levels. Support more than 150 families and, since 2013, developed activities involving: 93.431 students, 10.674 young people with disabilities, 9.871 professionals, 4.186 seniors and 15.136 family members/ volunteers. It has a network of more than 1000 associates.

The BIRD project, in a national contest with 97 candidates, ranked first, having been awarded, in 2023, the first Sports + Accessible Award developed by the National Institute for Rehabilitation, I.P. (INR, I.P.) and the Portuguese Institute of Sports and Youth, I.P. (IPDJ, I.P.), distinguishes projects that promote the development of sport and physical activity for people with disabilities, with a view to their social inclusion. In addition, in 2023, with this project, APCAS received an award from the Panathlon Clube de Lisboa. This project was also co-funded by the Decathlon Foundation in 2019.

3. Formal/Informal

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

The general objectives of the BIRD project are:

- promoting quality of life by increasing active and healthy lifestyles throughout life;
- increase the practice of regular physical and sports activity for all, regardless of age, gender or functionality, with special emphasis on combating the shortage of sports development offers for PwD;
- promote and develop social inclusion in and through sport in different contexts (educational, social and sports);
- to increase the intergenerational development and family relationships through physical activity.

In this way, formal and informal actions are developed in the community, involving schools, sports clubs, associations of people with disabilities and senior population, municipalities, and other public and private entities. The activities aim to raise awareness of the inclusion of people with disabilities in different contexts, using sports activities as a vehicle for inclusion, through experimentation and demonstration actions, but also training teachers, technicians, and volunteers.

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.

The BIRD - Integrated Resources Base for Sport, is a project co-financed by the Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth, I.P., within the scope of the PNDpT - National Sports for All Program and aims to promote inclusion in and through sport, aiming to increase the regular practice of sport and the active and cooperative participation of PwD in their different contexts. It considers as a target audience pre-school, basic and secondary education students with and/or without disabilities, the disabled and senior population, as well as teachers/technicians since they are vehicles for disseminating good inclusive practices.

They propose to develop the following activities:

- Dissemination of the project in different contexts;
- Promotion of the practice of physical activity for everyone in the community, through demonstration and experimentation actions;
- Promotion of awareness-raising actions on inclusive sport at school, using experimentation activities in pre-school, basic and secondary education schools, adjusted to the ages and functionality of students with and without disabilities (e.g. Boccia, Goalball, etc.);
- Promotion of disability awareness activities in schools where all students are challenged to put themselves in the other's shoes (inverse inclusion);
- In collaboration with the students of the Electrotechnical Engineering Course at FCTUNL, the aim is to adapt electronic toys in order to promote equity in the opportunity to play;
- Support in the organization and logistical support in sports matches of Boccia and inclusive activities within the scope of School Sports;
- Promotion of awareness-raising actions using non-formal inclusive activities for the senior population and people with disabilities, as well as an increase in intergenerational meetings;

- Promotion of accredited (for teachers and coaches) and non-accredited (open to the community) training actions;
- Promotion of training actions for students of Professional Sports Courses;
- Development of an electronic platform to support the development of actions within the scope of inclusive sport;
- Disclosure of an information pamphlet on the sports offer for people with disabilities in the Setúbal Peninsula;
- Providing the community with a regular sport, expressive and therapeutic offer developed by APCAS: Boccia, Senior Boccia, Polybat, Therapeutic Swimming, Inclusive Dance, Wheelchair Slalom and Frame running;
- Promotion of competitive/recreational sports meetings that increase the involvement of caregivers and volunteers;
- Promotion of youth and senior volunteer actions involving associations / institutions / schools;
- Participation in activities promoted by IPDJ, I.P., namely in the European Week of Sport;
- Use of adapted transport as a vehicle for promoting and disseminating adapted sport;
- Collaboration in studies, publications and production of manuals in the field of inclusive sport;

- Promotion of collaborative work and the establishment of partnerships.



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.

All project activities are adjustable considering the age, gender, and functionality of each participant, following the Tree Model for adaptation:

- Adaptation of the material (size, weight, texture, etc.);

- Adaptation of the dynamics of activities (complexity of activities, number of participants, inverse inclusion, group work/pairs/tutoring, etc.);
- Adaptation of involvement conditions (change in the dimensions of the areas of activities, remove obstacles, remove distracting stimuli, ensure accessibility, guarantee safety conditions);
- Adaptation Strategies (simple, clear and consistent verbal instruction, continuous communication, demonstrating rather than giving only verbal instruction, passive manipulation during demonstration, physical help in task performance, use of communication tables and appropriate feedback).

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.

Throughout the project, 92.822 have already been involved – 61.546 Students, 8.120 with specific needs/PwD, 6.652 Teachers/technicians, 4.824 Seniors, 12.365 Family members and Volunteers, with around 90% of those involved/entities involved considered himself very satisfied with the actions. In the current year, 2023, it is expected to reach 1.300 students; 425 teachers/technicians; 675 family members and volunteers; 100 seniors, around 350 with disabilities.

Throughout its execution, BIRD has already had more than 160 strategic partnerships for the implementation of the project, both public and private, both local and national and international. In this way, throughout the BIRD project, it has involved government, municipal, school, sports and health,

higher education, response to people with disabilities, the elderly and childhood, and business fabric. This diversity allows the actions and objectives of the projects to be enriched with the most diverse perspectives and experiences of action and with the possibility of being transferable to different realities, increasing the suitability and quality of the project.

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.

It is estimated that 15% of the world's population has a disability, being considered the largest minority in the world (WHO, 2011; EU InSport, 2021), with 1 in 6 people in the European Union having a disability – around 80 million people with disabilities in Europe. According to the European Disability Strategy around 80 million persons with disabilities in Europe and measures are needed to promote a more inclusive society and to combat the barriers imposed on people with disabilities.

Portugal ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, whose principles are centered on (Article 3 – General principles) (United Nations, 2006): Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons; Non-discrimination; Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity; Equality of opportunity; Accessibility; Equality between men and women; Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

Sport is an integral part of the context of all individuals and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in its art. 30.⁹ and its different dimensions and specificities are addressed in the White Paper on Sport, but segregation and the lack of equal opportunities in the participation of people with disabilities in sport continue to be a reality recognized by the EU and the Member States.

The progress report indicates that, as the European population ages, the number of people with disabilities tends to increase. So, full access and participation in recreational and sport activities is one of the EU's areas of action under the European Disability Strategy. In Portugal, about 65% of the population aged 15 and over do not practice any physical exercise, and a third of all deaths are caused by behavioural risk factors, insufficient physical activity (National Institute of Statistics, 2020).

In the national and European strategy for the inclusion of people with disabilities, sport is an integral part. The European strategy on the rights of people with disabilities 2021-2030 defines as a strategic axis the improvement in access to art and culture, leisure, sport and tourism, emphasizing the importance of raising awareness of the inclusion of people with disabilities. Also in its strategic axis 7, the national strategy for the inclusion of people with disabilities 2021-2025 defines as a general objective the promotion of sports practice at all ages.

These aspects are also part of the Sustainable Development Goals with regard to people with disabilities, noting that it should "Ensure responsible, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels", where the 2030 Agenda states that sport contributes significantly to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, recognizing it as a facilitator for the promotion of sustainable development, peace, tolerance and

empowerment of the vulnerable population, including people with disabilities and women.

At a national level, the Basic Law for Sport, and the inclusive education system (Decree-Law 54/2008) are also drivers of projects like this one, in the sense of allowing the implementation of methodologies and strategies that put into practice what is recommended in the different diplomas. Studies indicate that in the school, sports and leisure context there are several barriers to the participation of people with disabilities, however these are essential domains in promoting functionality, quality of life and inclusion of people with disabilities.

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.

BIRD project activities are carried out for the community and in the community, being carried out according to the characteristics of the participants (age, gender, functionality). Activities to raise awareness, demonstrate and experiment with physical activities carried out in the community, schools, clubs and associations are selected and adapted taking into account the target group, ensuring maximum participation by all stakeholders: the time available for the activity is considered: the number of participants, the characteristics of the physical space for the activities and the available human resources, thus guaranteeing the quality and safety of the activity. Training actions for teachers, technicians and

volunteers are adapted to the characteristics and objectives of the target group, prioritizing theoretical-practical sessions.

For all the activities carried out, APCAS provides the specific equipment/material so that the action takes place in accordance with safety standards (eg wheelchairs, boccia balls, tricycles, goalball material, soccer material for the blind, etc).

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.

Considering that it is the local responses to the PwD that make the country respond to the requirements of previous diplomas and, above all, the needs, and interests of PwD, BIRD it constitutes a local response that evolved into a national one and boosted international partnerships, aiming to take the issues of sport for all from theory to practice.

The BIRD provides the practice of physical and sports activity in the population with disabilities at all ages, acting not only in promoting formal sports practice, but also in municipal, educational and recreational contexts through the development of the practice of inclusive physical and sports activities and the basic development of adapted sport, thus ensuring the practice of sport throughout life and on a regular basis, respecting the

aforementioned diplomas and contributing to the promotion of inclusion in various national plans for the promotion of health, physical activity, inclusive education , etc.

The practical aspects that contribute to the innovation of this project are:

- Promotion of reverse inclusion (providing adapted and/or specific activities for people with disabilities to the population without disabilities);
- Promoting the regular offer of physical and sporting activities for people with disabilities, in particular Cerebral Palsy (Boccia, Wheelchair Slalom, Frame running, Therapeutic Swimming, Inclusive Dance, Adapted Athletics);
- Promotion of collaborative work by establishing a network of partnerships that allows the dissemination of good inclusive practices;
- Promoting the sharing of knowledge using training actions for teachers and technicians;
- Active involvement of all stakeholders in the inclusion process (teachers, technicians, families, volunteers, etc.);

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.

In the BIRD project, the main strategy for promoting inclusion is the sharing of good practices between teachers and technicians, and for this purpose collaborative work between people is promoted, using actions to

raise awareness of the problems, round tables, and sessions of testimonials from people with disability.

Regarding families, the project counts on their collaboration in many of the activities that are promoted, being actively involved in promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities: participating in round tables, training technicians and even as facilitators of activities in the community.

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

APCAS seeks good governance throughout its programs and projects, valuing the sustainability and transparency. The evaluation is carried out based on qualitative and quantitative indicators, with a view to continuously monitoring the service, optimizing its resources, and mobilizing means and strategies to achieve and exceed the defined objectives.

Goals are defined annually based on the impact of the previous year – namely, considering the aspects to be improved and the suggestions for actions that the target public would like to see implemented, pointed out in the satisfaction questionnaires; and study of the state of the art at national and European level – looking for continuity, intensification, and innovation of actions.

As for the indicators, technical, time and budgetary performance indicators are defined, namely: regarding the technical performance indicators, they involve the number of participants involved by category, gender and age (students with and without disabilities, people with disabilities, etc.), number of partner entities and preparation of project materials (e.g. informative pamphlet of the regular sports offer), satisfaction of around 85% of the participants/entities involved, dissemination of the actions developed – as shown in the results presented above; in terms of deadline indicators, it is considered that 90% of the schedule of actions/activities planned for each calendar year must be carried out without execution deviations; financially, there should not be deviations of 10% from the initial budget.

To carry out the evaluation, based on the aforementioned indicators, sources of verification are used: as technical performance indicators, attendance sheets/activity records/prints (in the case of actions online), meeting minutes, protocols for transferring material/partnerships, satisfaction questionnaires, photographic records, prepared materials, publications on the website/e-mail/social networks; regarding term indicators, previous verification sources include the time component (date) through which compliance with the schedule is assessed; the budgetary indicator is measured monthly in accordance with the financial documents.

Given the duration of the project, APCAS in 2020 also sought to analyse the medium-term impact of some of the training actions, where it was found that 85% of participants considered that the actions had “a lot of impact” on a personal level and 75% considered the same on a professional level. As positive aspects, the acquisition of new knowledge and methodologies, the support materials provided, the positive environment of the actions and the opportunity to experiment with the modalities stood

out. As negative aspects, it should be noted that 34% of the participants pointed out the duration of the sessions, mentioning who wish they had more time.

Risk assessment and mitigation are carried out carefully throughout the project. By way of example, some of the risks associated with the implementation of BIRD that have been mitigated to date include: budget readjustments in relation to what was requested in the application and what was allocated, the management of materials and equipment to be given to the community, the management of the execution of activities in the face of requests, the readaptation to the use of technologies in times of a pandemic, among others.

At the same time, a continuous communication plan is developed to maximize the scope of the project's implementation with the target audience, community, stakeholders and different public/private entities.

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.

To create an inclusive environment, we will ensure that teachers:

- Hold meetings to share experiences and good practices among themselves, but also with technicians from other areas, with families and people with disabilities;
- Adapt the activities to the characteristics of the participants (age, gender and functionality);
- Resort to the tree model to adapt the activities (adaptation of subjects, contexts, activity organization and communication strategies);
- Promote reverse inclusion;
- Create friendly environments that promote inclusion by resorting to activities that lead to everyone's participation.