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INCLUSION AND DISABILITIES IN AND THROUGH SPORT

Report on activities implemented

Experimentation phase: training of teachers and sport coaches and implementation of activities in schools and clubs

English version

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Work Package 3 – Experimentation

D3.2 Report on activities implemented

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About IDI4Sport project

IDI4Sport is a European project funded by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Commission. Coordinated by France Education international (FEI, France), it gathers 5 European countries and North Macedonia, an Erasmus+ Third associated country: the Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth (IPDJ, Portugal), the University of Macedonia (UoM, Greece), the Olympic Committee of North Macedonia (OCNM, North Macedonia), the International Sports and Culture Association (ISCA, Denmark), the Institute "España se Mueve" (IEsM, Spain), the Institut national supérieur de formation et de recherche pour l'éducation inclusive (INSEI, France).

ID4Sport strives to develop sport participation of children with disabilities against the backdrop of the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games (OPG). It is designed to promote social inclusion; increase the participation of youngsters with disabilities aged 10-20 in sport activities within and outside schools and reduce the difficulties they face. It also seeks to create inclusive environments that promote equity and equality. The project specifically targets teachers, sports educators, students, and young people within and outside schools.

The project objectives are to:

- Help the formal and non-formal sectors to work together and promote collaboration between schools, youth workers, health professionals and sports organizations.
- Increase the participation of adults and young people in sport and improve their health and well-being.
- Improve the accessibility and attractiveness of health facilities for youngsters.
- To make young people aware that sport can foster teamwork, intercultural learning and a sense of responsibility.
- To develop a common sense of belonging to the European Union among young people.

The project was structured into five Work Packages (WPs). WP1 focused on Management and WP5 on Communication. The remaining three were at the core of the project: WP2 focused on developing the training pathway, WP3 on testing and experimenting with it, and WP4 on evaluating the results and impact.

Overview of the experimentation phase

This report outlines the experimentation phase (WP3), during which all project partners tested the newly developed training pathway aimed at integrating young people with disabilities into mainstream sports activities.

The experimentation phase was structured into four distinct and interconnected stages.

- The first stage focused on developing a comprehensive protocol and methodology to ensure a standardized approach across all participating partners and institutions. This phase established the foundational guidelines for how the experimentation would be conducted, outlining the criteria for participant selection, as well as the procedures for evaluation.
- The second stage involved the mapping and identification of educational institutions and sports clubs that would collaborate in the experimentation phase. Each partner organization worked to identify suitable schools and clubs that aligned with the project's goals and had the capacity to integrate young people with disabilities into mainstream sports activities. This phase was crucial for building partnerships and ensuring that the institutions selected were committed to fostering inclusivity.
- The third stage was the "Train the Trainers" workshops, where educational staff, including teachers and sports trainers, received training to equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to implement the designed training pathway. These workshops were essential in preparing staff to work effectively with the provided tools and to foster an inclusive environment for young people with disabilities.
- The final stage was the implementation phase, during which the training pathway was put into practice. Teachers and trainers applied what they had learned in the workshops, testing the pathway in real-world educational and sports settings. This phase was critical for evaluating the effectiveness of the training tools and identifying any challenges or areas for improvement.

The experimentation phase, conducted between April and July, followed a dual-approach model: one applied in elementary and secondary schools and the other in grassroots sports clubs. Each project partner selected two schools and two sports clubs, creating a diverse testing environment to thoroughly evaluate the effectiveness of the training pathway.

Work Package 3	Period	Participants
T1. Development of methodology and protocol	September 2023 - January 2024	All partners
T2. Participants mapping and recruitment	November 2023 - March 2024	All partners
T3. Conducting Train the Trainers	January - March 2024	All partners
T4. Implementation phase in schools and sport clubs	April - July 2024	All partners
T5. Report on activities	June - September 2024	All partners

Background Report on the Experimentation Phase

The report is structured into four distinct sections

- The first section details how partners aligned their protocols and methodologies for selecting educational institutions and staff during the experimentation phase. It outlines the criteria and processes used to ensure the effective involvement of institutions and personnel.
- The second section focuses on the preparation phase for testing the training pathway and good practices. This includes an overview of the workshops organized to train educational staff, including sessions designed as "Train the Trainers." These workshops were essential in equipping educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement the training pathway.
- The third section addresses the practical implementation of the experimentation phase. It examines how the PET (Professional Education Teachers) and coaches applied the provided tools in real-world settings. This part of the report reflects on the challenges encountered and the lessons learned throughout the implementation process, offering insights into the effectiveness of the tools and the adaptation strategies used by the participants.

- The fourth part of the report focuses on providing strategic recommendations for the broader application and future use of the project's designed tools by sports organizations, both within Europe and beyond.

The purpose of this report is to share the collective knowledge, insights, and experiences gained during this phase. By highlighting the challenges faced, strategies employed, and lessons learned, we aim to provide valuable guidance that can be adapted and applied in other countries and contexts. Ultimately, this report seeks to contribute to the development of inclusive practices that ensure all young people, regardless of ability, can participate fully in sports.

I. Methodology and protocol

This section focuses on the development and alignment of the methodology and protocols used during the experimentation phase. It reflects the process of designing a framework for selecting educational institutions and staff, ensuring that the criteria and procedures are clearly defined and systematically applied. The developed protocol provided a guide to ensure that the training pathway aligns with project objectives while adapting to national contexts. It outlined the steps for recruiting participants, training teachers and sports trainers, and implementing the project in schools and sports clubs. It emphasized flexibility, allowing for adaptation to different facilities and local specificities, while ensuring consistency across partner countries. Key selection criteria for participating institutions included inclusive curricula, adequate infrastructure, staff commitment to training, and ongoing support for creating a fully inclusive environment for young people with disabilities.

The protocol for the experimentation phase served as a comprehensive guide to ensure that the training pathway aligns with project objectives and adapts to national contexts. It outlines the optimal conditions for recruitment, training, and implementation in schools and sports clubs, providing a flexible framework that accommodates various facilities and local specifics.

To enhance the effectiveness of the experimentation, the protocol included specific selection criteria such as:

- Inclusive curriculum (ensuring the curriculum supports students with disabilities and integrates the program effectively).
- Student population size (favoring institutions with a larger group of students with disabilities indicating a more established support system).
- Inclusive extracurricular activities (valuing schools or clubs with active participation of students with disabilities in sports).
- Training and resources (ensuring staff interest and support for inclusive education training).
- Parental and support (obtaining parental consent and support).
- Commitment to continuous Improvement (institutions should show a willingness to adapt and improve integration efforts).

- Infrastructure and accessibility (evaluating the physical accessibility for various disabilities).
- Legal compliance (ensuring adherence to disability rights and inclusion laws).

While the protocol was designed to offer guidance to partners, we made it flexible to accommodate the diverse contexts encountered across different European settings. Recognizing that adaptation may be necessary, this flexibility ensures that the protocol remains relevant and effective in various national and local environments.

Summary of Partner's Experience in Following the Protocol for the Experimentation Phase

- In Denmark, the experimentation phase followed a flexible protocol that required minimal adaptations to align with national educational and sports contexts. Schools, sports clubs, and educators were selected based on the established criteria, though involving regular sports clubs proved challenging due to their specialized structures for disability sports. To maximize impact, Denmark engaged the prominent non-formal educational institution Ollerup, which provided training and ran activities through its "Art of Sharing" initiative, extending its reach to various sports clubs across the country.
- In France, the protocol was adapted for the local context by incorporating local educational programs and selecting a variety of institutions, such as after-school centers and a circus school, to enhance relevance and application. Recruitment followed the developed protocol and methodology, focusing on diverse types of schools and inclusion practices. Priority was given to practical training, including hands-on sessions, concrete examples, and personalized support. A total of three schools and three clubs were involved, with two clubs continuing their experimentation into September.
- In Greece, the protocol was presented to educators and trainers as initially developed, addressing practical issues such as material shortages and parental consent. This allowed activities to be integrated into existing educational and sports programs. Schools and sports clubs were selected through convenience and snowball sampling, utilizing personal contacts and educational directorates. Selection criteria included responsiveness, availability, and interest, with participants being informed about the project’s goals, actions, and timelines.
- In Portugal, the protocol was adapted to align with the national educational program, legislation, and local contexts. The Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth, in collaboration with the Cerebral Palsy Association of Almada Seixal, established close relationships with local schools and sports clubs to facilitate the experimentation phase. They contacted 3 schools and 1 sports club, held coordination meetings to explain the project's goals and tasks, and presented the training pathway and best

practices. This approach ensured the selection of enthusiastic educators and coaches, who were actively involved in the project.

- In Spain, the protocol was adapted primarily to address the real availability and interest of the involved clubs and schools. Due to difficulties in securing responses directly from institutions, ESM enlisted Federación Española Deportes Discapacidad Intelectual (FEDDI), an associated partner, to assist with recruitment. FEDDI helped by creating a document outlining the project's objectives and specifying the types of institutions needed for the experimentation phase.
- In North Macedonia, the protocol was meticulously adhered to, ensuring that the selection process for educational staff and institutions met all outlined criteria. This thorough approach facilitated robust participation from both formal educational settings and non-formal sectors, contributing to a well-rounded implementation of the project.

II. Preparation phase

This section highlights the efforts made to enhance the capabilities of educational staff engaged in the experimentation phase. It covers the training and support provided to ensure that educators are well-prepared to implement and evaluate the new methodologies and practices. This capacity building process includes tailored workshops, hands-on training sessions, and ongoing support to equip staff with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to effectively execute the experimental protocols and contribute to the project's success.

Table: Proposed guidelines for the "Train the Trainers" sessions

Category	Details
Understanding Frameworks	Theoretical Framework and insight into the theoretical, factual, and legal aspects of sports for people with disabilities, informed by international conventions and policies, especially within Europe and partner countries. Legal Framework to learn about the legal requirements and public policies affecting disability sports.
Practical Knowledge	Role of Sport to understand the significance of sports in improving the lives of individuals with disabilities. Sporting Activities to promote experimentation with diverse sporting activities adapted for people with disabilities.
Implementation skills	Inclusive Practices to learn both theoretical and practical aspects of implementing inclusive physical and sport activities. Resource Management to know about human and technical resources needed for inclusive sports.
Training Format	Duration: To conduct at least two training sessions, each lasting a minimum of two hours to cover both theoretical and practical content effectively. Delivery Mode: Training may be face-to-face or off-site, depending on partner organization preferences. Materials: Prepare comprehensive training materials, including manuals, presentations, and practical exercises, with clear distinctions between compulsory and optional activities.

Summary of Partners' Feedback on implementing "Train the Trainers" Sessions

- In Denmark, the Train the Trainers program was structured into three key phases: initial online meetings with each partner to introduce IDI4Sport and best practices, an international online meeting and national training sessions held at the start of the experimentation phase with ParaSport Denmark and HandiLeg. Participation included 3 teachers and 26 coaches in Ollerup, 2 teachers inFaaborgegnens Efterskole, and 1 teacher and 24 participants in Gerlev. The workshops combined theoretical and practical elements, covering best practices and hands-on activities, which participants found highly inspiring and valuable. The feedback highlighted the effectiveness of the training in improving knowledge and providing practical, actionable insights for inclusive sports practices.
- The training sessions for trainers in France were well-received, though participation was limited due to time constraints. Only two teachers coordinating ULIS attended all the sessions, while others followed remotely. The training was split into two parts: two theoretical sessions over two hours each, covering the IDI4Sport project, inclusion in sports, and methodologies for implementation, followed by two face-to-face sessions of three hours focusing on practical experimentation with inclusive sports like table tennis, CrossBoccia, Goalball and Tèque (adapted baseball). Teachers provided positive feedback, with their sports choices evolving to better meet the needs of their students.
- In Greece, a two-hour online meeting with 20 participants covered the project's philosophy, aims, and training pathway, linking them to national strategies on inclusion in sports for people with disabilities. Practical challenges and solutions were discussed, and additional individual sessions were held. Participants included educators from primary, special education schools, high schools, and clubs. The training workshop was divided into three phases to address logistical challenges. First, an online session introduced the training pathway to teachers and coaches. Then, specific modules were selected, and good practices were presented at each school and club. Lastly, teachers and coaches practiced these good methods before implementing them. A total of 6 teachers and 3 coaches participated. The second phase focused on theoretical training and presenting best practices, while the third phase involved practical training and experimentation to align with project goals.
- In Spain, around 20 institutions initially expressed interest in the project, but after an online meeting and follow-ups, only 5 confirmed participations. These included both educational institutions and sports clubs. The workshop aimed to explain the project materials and the implementation timeline, but scheduling conflicts and the geographic spread of participants made it difficult to hold a face-to-face meeting.
- In North Macedonia, two separate "Train the Trainers" workshops were conducted, one for Physical Education Teachers (PET) and the other for sports coaches. Each workshop consisted of two parts, with the practical, hands-on segment receiving more

focus as participants were eager to engage with and explore the best practice examples.

Table: Number of Participants in Train the Trainers by Country

Country	Teachers	Coaches/ Educators	Individualized session	Total Participants	Number planned
Greece	13	2	9	15	2 to 3 teachers in every school, sports club (144 to 216 teachers in total)
Portugal	6	3		9	
North Macedonia	3	3		6	
Denmark	6	26		32	
Spain	7			7	
France	9	7		16	
Total				85	

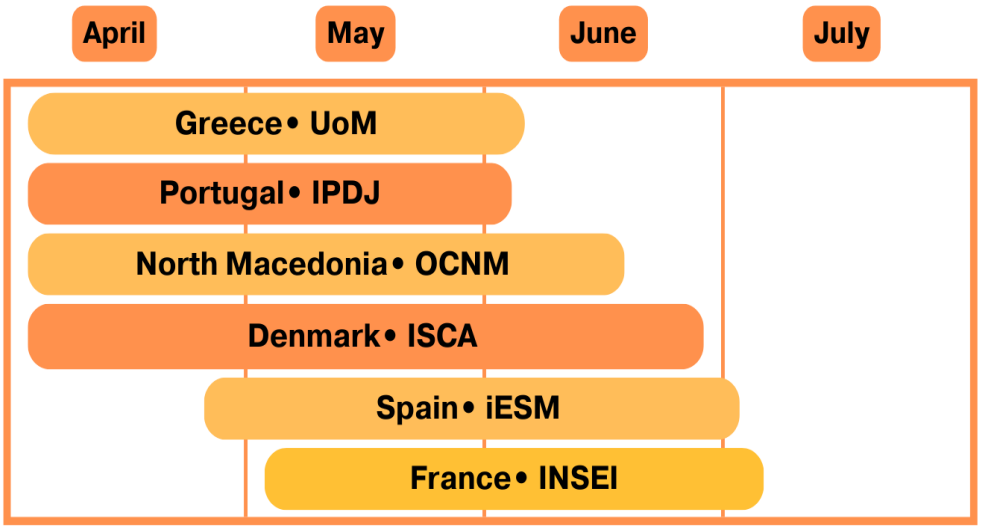
Experimentation phase

This section covers the implementation of diverse activities across various countries to test the effectiveness of the training pathway. It describes the range of activities conducted, the number of participants involved, and the different settings in which these activities took place. It also highlights the challenges faced, such as the need for specialized equipment and time constraints, as well as the lessons learned from these experiences. The purpose of this phase was to evaluate how well the training practices were integrated into real-world contexts and to gather insights for improving future implementations.

Timeline: experimentation phase of IDI4Sport

Experimentation phase from its implementation to its end by country

April – July 2024



In the experimentation phase, various activities from the training pathway were implemented to evaluate its effectiveness. It can serve as a valuable resource for teachers and coaches seeking guidance and inspiration for implementing the training in their classes.

- In Denmark: students have positively engaged in IDI4Sport activities, and a large group of future sports coaches is being trained on disability awareness in sports, preparing them to teach grassroots sports activities to youth. Activities in Denmark included: sitting volleyball, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair dodgeball, Boccia, Goal Ball, and games designed to enhance sensory awareness and inclusion.
- In France: Seven practices were implemented, such as table tennis, inclusive volleyball, circus arts, and CrossBoccia, focusing on inclusive gameplay.
- In Greece: Twelve best practices were identified, including adapted ping pong, blind football, boccia, and goalball, highlighting various inclusive sports activities.
- In Portugal: Fourteen activities were tested across various schools, including boccia, wheelchair slalom, handbike, and blindness awareness activities.
- In Spain: Multiple activities were implemented, such as boccia, netball, goalball, and pickleball.
- In North Macedonia: Activities included sitting volleyball, blindness awareness games, swimming, and goalball.

Main indicators of the experimentation

Country	Number of schools and sport clubs	Number of teachers and coaches	Number of pupils
Greece - UoM	8	32	Around 300 - 400
Portugal - IPDJ	4	9	220
North Macedonia - OCNM	4	8	Around 100 - 120
Denmark - ISCA	5	42	275
Spain - iESM	5	4	Around 400
France - INSEI	6	16	Around 156

Challenges encountered

The experimentation and testing of the pathway represented the most complex stage of the project, taking place in various contexts. Given this complexity, it was anticipated that challenges would arise throughout the process. During the implementation phase, several significant challenges were identified, and corresponding mitigation strategies were employed.

- In Denmark, one significant challenge was the lack of specialized equipment, such as wheelchairs, which limited the activities to only a few classes per school. The schools had to rely on borrowing equipment from external sources like ParaSport, which constrained the program's reach and effectiveness. Additionally, the ambitious scope of the Training Pathway required extensive adaptation to meet the diverse needs of participants.

Mitigation strategy:

- To address the equipment shortage, schools collaborated with ParaSport and similar organizations to secure temporary access to the necessary equipment. Although this borrowing limited the number of classes involved, it enabled the program to proceed in the short term while longer-term solutions were explored.
- In France, delays in forming the training team and limited time for teacher training (May-June-early July) left both trainers and teachers feeling they had insufficient time to fully experiment with the practices. The busy end-of-year period compounded this challenge.

Mitigation Strategy**:**
The team adopted a flexible approach, adapting the training schedule and focusing on key practices, allowing teachers to engage meaningfully despite the time constraints.

- In Greece, participants primarily faced time constraints, equipment shortages, and, to a lesser extent, issues with institutional infrastructure. Some children also struggled to understand and follow the rules of new activities.

Mitigation Strategy:
To overcome these challenges, the program emphasized flexibility, allowing for adjustments in timing and simplifying activity instructions to help children better grasp the rules.

- In Portugal, the main challenges were the integration of the process into the annual activity plan and the short timeframe for execution, particularly in schools.

Mitigation Strategy:
The team addressed these issues by being flexible with scheduling and adapting the implementation to fit within the available time frame.

- In Spain, a significant challenge has been the loss of contact with Club Arganda and Club Triton, which has impacted collaboration and progress.

Mitigation Strategy:
The team planned to intensify efforts to re-establish communication with these clubs starting in September, aiming to restore collaboration and address any gaps caused by the communication issues.

- In North Macedonia, the team on the ground encountered a challenge with lack of equipment for activities that seem to be very attractive to the children in the classes.

Mitigation Strategy: The team reached out to the NOC that through its partnership with different stakeholders such as the Paralympic committee has managed to secure the equipment for the requested time.

Lessons learned

Several valuable lessons emerged from the experimentation phase.

- Involving ordinary sports clubs in inclusive sports can be challenging, given that many disability sports operate within specialized frameworks. This experience has

highlighted the importance of flexibility in project planning. By adapting our plans and making necessary adjustments, we have managed to bridge the gaps and foster collaboration between traditional and inclusive sports organizations.

Moreover, engaging with specialized clubs to facilitate smoother integration and remaining open to iterative improvements will better align projects with the needs of all participants.

- Raising awareness and engaging a diverse audience can be greatly enhanced by leveraging national or international sports events. This approach was effectively demonstrated during the Paris 2024 Games, where the project consortium organized a round table to showcase results and engage a wide range of participants. By capitalizing on the visibility of major events, we can reach broader audiences and amplify our impact.
- Teachers play a pivotal role in disseminating and implementing inclusive practices, and they must be equipped with both theoretical knowledge and practical training. The Greek practice "Everyone has the right to play," which includes watching an educational film, is a standout example of raising awareness of universal accessibility and diversity. An additional incentive could be offering a short-term contract to teachers, allowing them to receive an honorarium for their engagement and contributions. This recognition would further motivate and value their commitment to the initiative.
- It is important to allocate sufficient time and resources for schools and institutions to effectively adapt and implement inclusive practices. The experience underscored that providing ample planning time allows schools to integrate activities smoothly and at their own pace. Securing additional funding or partnerships to address equipment shortages can significantly alleviate resource constraints.
- To foster greater involvement, it’s beneficial to reach out to schools well in advance and offer clear incentives for participation. Providing flexible scheduling that aligns with their busy times and establishing long-term relationships can also make a significant difference. By demonstrating how initiatives align with school priorities and benefit students and communities, we can overcome resistance and encourage more enthusiastic participation.
- Certifying all educational staff who participated in the workshop and tested the pathway is an excellent way to recognize their contributions and provide them with national visibility. Such incentives are highly motivating and help keep staff engaged and committed. Offering similar recognition and rewards can significantly enhance staff dedication and enthusiasm for future initiatives.

III. Future recommendations

As we look ahead to future initiatives aimed at promoting inclusion and equal opportunities in sports, it is essential to reflect on the lessons learned from previous projects and consider how these experiences can shape improved strategies moving forward. This document summarizes key recommendations for local, national, and European-level implementation, as well as internal management practices. By adopting a long-term approach, emphasizing capacity building, securing resources, and fostering cross-border collaboration, future projects can better address the challenges faced and ensure sustainable, impactful outcomes for participants of all abilities.

- Long-Term and Strategic Planning

Future initiatives should adopt a long-term approach to ensure continuity and lasting impact. This includes allocating sufficient time for training (2-3 months), planning, and almost half a school year for implementation. Institutions need time to set priorities and plan ahead, which will enhance the success of inclusive initiatives.

- Capacity Building and Training

Emphasizing capacity building is key. Training programs should be developed in consultation with stakeholders on the ground to ensure relevance. Institutions should be given time and support to adjust to the new methodologies and tools, enabling smoother integration and implementation.

- Inclusive and Creative Activities

Projects should focus on creating inclusive activities that promote well-being and a sense of belonging for all. Using diverse experiences from different nationalities, as seen in Ollerup, can inspire deeper understanding and innovative practices across borders.

- Resource Allocation and Funding

Securing funding for necessary equipment and materials is crucial, as they contribute to the longevity of project outcomes. Proper resources support continued practice and inclusion.

- Monitoring and Data Collection

Incorporating modern technology, such as an app for daily documentation, could streamline data collection and provide real-time feedback, making project management more efficient.

- Pedagogy and Universal Design of Learning

Integrating the pedagogy of universal design of learning early in project planning is essential for maximizing inclusivity. This can help ensure the project caters to diverse needs and abilities from the outset.

- Cross-Country Exchanges and Collaboration

Future projects could benefit from teacher and student exchanges, fostering inclusion across borders. This would enhance collaboration and help develop shared knowledge and practices among participants from different countries.

- Improved Engagement with Schools and Clubs

Schools and clubs should be surveyed in advance to gauge their interest and capacity for participation. Establishing clearer guidelines and possibly mandatory participation could ensure better adherence to deadlines and project goals, especially with schools that are often independent and not supervised.

The experience gained from the IDI4Sport project shows that with careful planning, adequate resources, and inclusive strategies, it is possible to inspire greater involvement, foster a more inclusive environment, and create meaningful, lasting changes in both educational and sports settings.

Additionally, ongoing monitoring processes are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives, gathering feedback from all stakeholders involved. A comprehensive report will be issued to provide insights and recommendations based on the data collected, ensuring that future efforts can build on the successes and address any challenges identified.