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INCLUSION AND DISABILITIES IN AND THROUGH SPORT

National Inclusive Sports Insights and Best Practices Report of North Macedonia

OCNM - Olympic Committee of North Macedonia

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Work Package 2 – Resources and modelling

D2.1 Reports on national resources

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Methodology

How did the partner gather the information?

The MKD NOC has adopted a systematic approach to gather the necessary information as we have anticipated lack of information and good practices of inclusion of young people with disabilities in sports activities in the context of North Macedonia. Therefore, we firstly we run a set of consultation with the project team at the NOC and agreed on the following steps:

1. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data, we reached out and engaged in consultations with sports organizations such as the Paralympic Committee and the Special Olympics as they can provide valuable insights and expertise related to the subject matter.
2. Extensive desk research was conducted to gather a wide range of relevant information. This involved studying academic literature and possible case studies, and any available resources that shed light on the best practices in the field.
3. Based on the insights gained from consultations and desk research, we proceeded to identify and collect good practices.
4. In order to refine and enhance the collection, draft descriptions were shared with the owners of the identified good practices. The implementing parties of the good practices were asked to complement the practices possibly with additional information that could enrich the collection.

How were the organizations contacted? (If it is the case: online meeting, template shared etc.)

The organizations were contacted through various methods to facilitate effective communication and collaboration. Some were contacted via phone

calls, in other instances email communication was used and templates were shared and in some cases face-to-face consultations were conducted, allowing for direct and in-depth discussions.

What actions were implemented for the collection and the follow-up?

A combination of various channels of communication as indicated above, ensuring diverse range engagement with the organizations effectively.

What impediments or difficulties did the partners encounter?

We have faced certain impediments and difficulties during the process. One major challenge arose from time constraints, as some organizations proved difficult to reach within the available timeframe. This limited our ability to engage with those organizations and obtain their feedback on the information provided in the template. Additionally, contacting them for additional information posed an extra challenge, as many of these organizations were understaffed and lacked sufficient personnel to respond promptly.

General information about inclusion in sports in North Macedonia

North Macedonia confronts the task of establishing an inclusive environment where every individual can enjoy equal rights and freedoms in sports. Beyond the declarative commitment to formal inclusive equality, each state carries the responsibility to foster conditions that translate into genuine, real-life equality. In North Macedonia, the journey toward acknowledging the rights of individuals with disabilities, particularly in the realm of sports, has been gradual yet resolute. These citizens, along with their families, persistently expend extraordinary efforts to emphasize that their unique needs and circumstances necessitate special consideration, financial support, and professional assistance from the government. Without such support, their daily lives remain profoundly challenging.

The undeniable truth persists that these individuals continue to exist on the fringes of society, and it is abundantly clear that numerous additional measures, activities, and the collective efforts of stakeholders are imperative to establish the essential conditions for their integration into everyday life. Sports engagement for individuals with disabilities constitutes an integral facet of the sporting landscape, irrespective of whether the disabilities are physical or intellectual in nature. Given the intricacy of the matter, it necessitates a nuanced approach. Indeed, individuals with disabilities participating in sports encompass a diverse group, with varying types of impairments affecting different body segments or senses. Young individuals with disabilities require structured physical activity with carefully calibrated efforts and properly managed physical exertion. Moreover, these young individuals with disabilities often face prolonged periods of sedentary lifestyles, which, if protracted, can result in a further deterioration or complete loss of their remaining physical capabilities.

It is crucial to underscore that professionals in the field of sports sciences, sports medicine, psychology, or sociology of sports play a significant role and bear a substantial responsibility in advancing sports and physical activity for individuals with disabilities, particularly in enhancing the psychosomatic well-being of this demographic. A significant issue arises concerning the substantial number of children with developmental disabilities who do not have access to education. In North Macedonia, the absence of a national registry hampers our ability to ascertain precise figures regarding these individuals. Within regular inclusive schools, the standard procedure entails students following the conventional curriculum, with their strengths and weaknesses duly noted. Subsequently, an Individual Education Plan is formulated, outlining attainable objectives tailored to the specific needs of the student with special educational requirements. This individualized plan is crafted by an inclusive team, a vital component in every school that accommodates students with special educational needs. In this part we are facing challenges and if we evaluate sports entities and their actions according to indicators in the areas of transparency, efficiency, integrity and accessibility, we will see that we have an alarming situation and numerous challenges that need to be overcome. Among other, the biggest challenges being the inaccessibility of sports facilities and the lack of coaching staff who want to work with people with disabilities were highlighted as part of the challenges these people face.

In North Macedonia, there is a lack of inclusive sports education as well as limited availability of data and statistics regarding individuals with disabilities participating in sports activities. Individuals with disabilities, along with their families, urgently require both support and resources. Furthermore, there is a pressing need for increased engagement in political, sports, and cultural spheres. The dearth of developmental counseling centers and early intervention facilities for assessing the functional capabilities of children with disabilities is a significant gap. Equally crucial is the imperative to sensitize healthcare professionals to effectively collaborate with individuals with

disabilities in the realm of sports. Simultaneously, institutions bear the responsibility of providing psycho-social support to the families of these individuals. Social inclusion emerges as a linchpin for enhancing the overall quality of life for entire families of individuals with disabilities and fostering their acceptance by those without disabilities. This is essential to ensure that individuals with disabilities truly enjoy equal citizenship in our society.

1. Youngsters (10 to 20 age old) with disabilities participating in sports.

Please state resources, data, figures (percentages of youngsters with disabilities participating in sports) with a brief overview of the data, and sources/references for that. Try to limit it to quantifiable data of participation of youngsters with disability in sport, if not possible refer to wider sources of information.

- a. Academia (evidence-based in peer review journals)
- b. Grey literature (Theses, blogs, national reports)

According to a study published in the Journal of Disability and Rehabilitation in 2016, the participation of children with disabilities in sports activities in North Macedonia is very low. The study was conducted among 202 children with disabilities aged 7-18 years old, and it found that only 17.8% of them participated in sports activities. The study also found that lack of accessibility, limited financial resources, and lack of trained coaches were the main barriers to sports participation among children with disabilities in North Macedonia.¹

¹ **Reference:** Zafirova-Ivanovska, B., Zdravkovska, M., Mladenovska, G., & Zafirova, B. (2016). Participation of children with disabilities in sports activities in the Republic of Macedonia. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 38(19), 1912-1919.

²The Faculty of Physical Education and Sports at the University “St. Cyril and Methodius” has undertaken a project aimed at facilitating the participation of students with disabilities in university sports games. Additionally, research has been conducted involving parents of children with disabilities and students who are participants in the UKIM project. This research has shed light on the primary challenges faced by parents in this specific group, as well as the limitations experienced by children and students when it comes to their engagement in sports and physical activities, particularly in relation to their mental health and overall well-being. The following key issues have been highlighted by the participants:

1. Inaccessibility of sports facilities due to architectural barriers.
2. Lack of specialized educational programs for physical education classes catering to children and young people with disabilities.
3. Insufficiently trained sports trainers who are equipped to work with athletes with disabilities.
4. Limited financial resources for funding sports activities.

2. Legal Frameworks on inclusion of people with disabilities (in sports activities).

Please present the legal framework with a brief, explicit overview of your country for inclusion of people with disabilities (primary laws, dates they were issued)

There are no Laws for integrating people with disabilities in sport in North Macedonia.

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<file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/PhD%20process/%D0%9A%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B3%D0%B0%20%D0%A1%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%82,%20%D0%B8%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5%D1%82%20%D0%B8%20%D0%93%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B1%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0.pdf>

In North Macedonia, the legal framework for the inclusion of people with disabilities is primarily governed by the Law on Sport (2005) and the Law on Protection from Discrimination (2010).

The Law on Sport in North Macedonia is the primary legal framework for sports activities in the country. The law provides a general framework for sports activities, including the promotion of physical culture and sports, the organization of sports events, and the protection of athletes' rights and interests.

Related to participation of people with disabilities in sport, the Law stipulates the following: (Article 22) In the field of sports, the authorities of the municipalities, the municipalities in the city Skopje and the city of Skopje, in terms of this law, need to develop mass sports and recreational activities for the citizens, as well as sports activities within the sports-recreational sport clubs, sports within the school and students sports system, Sport for All, and particularly sport for people with special needs.

The Law on Protection from Discrimination prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all areas of life, including sports activities. The law defines discrimination as any act of exclusion, restriction, or preference based on disability that results in the unequal treatment of individuals or groups. The law also establishes the principle of reasonable accommodation, which requires sports organizations and institutions to make necessary adjustments to their policies, practices, and facilities to ensure equal participation of people with disabilities in sports activities.

In addition to these laws, North Macedonia has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2011, which aims to promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities. The CRPD recognizes the right of people with disabilities to participate in recreational, leisure, and sports activities on an equal basis with others.

3. National strategy/ies on inclusion of people with disabilities in sports activities.

Please present the national strategy/ies of your country for integrating people with disabilities in sports (if this is linked to a legislature, please mention it).

Currently, there is no sports strategy that specifically addresses the participation of individuals with disabilities in sports.

National strategy for equalization of the rights of persons with disabilities (revised) 2010-2018

Within the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs policy has drawn up and adopted a National Strategy for equalizing the rights of people with disabilities for a period of 2010-2018, which in point 12 refers to recreation and sport for persons with disabilities, which says that games, recreation and sports among children and young people with developmental problems and special ones educational needs, as well as for persons with disabilities, contribute to the improvement of their general condition the organism, self-affirmation, socialization and active inclusion in social and economic life.

It is also stated that in the Republic of North Macedonia, there is an obvious lack of sports and recreational facilities fully adapted to access and implementation of sports and recreational activities of children, young people and adults with disability, in terms of spatial arrangement (external and internal), as and the equipment with specific sports equipment.

The lack of special curricula for physical exercise for children, pupils and students with disabilities in the education process, as well as in extracurricular activity.

Within the Strategy there are proposed measures to be conducted such as:

To provide children with disabilities an equal opportunity to participation in games, entertainment, leisure and sports activities including those activities also as part of the curriculum;

To enable persons with disabilities equal opportunity to participate in recreational, sports games and entertainment;

To enable the participation of persons with disabilities in regular sports activities in all degrees of sports;

To ensure the possibility of organization, development and participation in sports and

recreational activities intended for persons with disabilities and in that meaning to provide spatial, personnel and material conditions for organized action of organizations for planning and implementation of mass sport, sports recreation of persons with disabilities local, regional and state level;

To ensure equal conditions and opportunities for quality training process, preparations and participation in domestic and international championships the top athletes with disabilities under equal opportunities and conditions as for top athletes without disabilities.

The New Strategy of rights of people with disability 2022-2030 has been drafted but yet not adopted by relevant institutions. Within this Strategy there is a part related to involvement of people with disabilities in sport and the proposed measures are outlined below:

Promotion and visibility of persons with disabilities for their contributions and achievements in social life.

Inclusion of persons with disabilities in cultural, sports and recreational activities at the national and local level.

Expanding the number of sports for the active inclusion of people with disabilities.

Promotion and development of new adaptive sports disciplines for people with disabilities.

Promotion and development of sports disciplines for Paralympics and Special Olympics.

4. Skilled and Knowledgeable Staff.

Please mention if there is a provision by your country to train/educate coaches, teachers, physical educators about the unique challenges that students with disabilities face in sports. If there is one, please mention the provider, its duration, its main focus, the absolute numbers and percentages of people having undergone a training etc.

According to the information available on the official website of the Ministry of Education and Science of North Macedonia, there are programs and courses available for teachers and coaches to receive training on inclusive education. However, there is no specific information about training related to sports and disabilities.

5. Sport events (permanent/regular events: European and national scale) where people with disabilities are encouraged to participate (i.e., marathons).

Please refer the organizer, the frequency of the event, the number of people with disabilities that participate.

³**Young Athletes**ⁱ organized by Special Olympics ("Young Athletes" is an innovative sports-entertainment program intended for children with and without intellectual disabilities aged 2 to 9 years, whose focus is the development of motor skills through sports, and social and cognitive skills, through play and fun. "Special Olympics Macedonia" has been successfully

³ <https://www.specialolympics.org/programs/europe-eurasia/north-macedonia>

implemented for two years with several groups of children, and now aims to include it in inclusive schools in the country)

⁴**The Skopje Marathon** is an annual running event that includes several different races, including a marathon, half-marathon, 10K, and 5K. In recent years, the organizers have made efforts to make the event more inclusive for people with disabilities. For example, they have introduced a wheelchair category in the 10K race. The number of participants with disabilities varies from year to year.

⁵Project "**Integrated swimming for children with disabilities**" from primary schools from the municipality of Aerodrom. The project is designed for students in the first to third grade, and it offers two one-hour sessions with a dedicated instructor assigned to each child individually. The project was fully funded by municipality of Aerodrom and is repeated each year.

What important data are missing from each country compared to others?

At the national level, we lack research on the level of participation of individuals with disabilities in sports. The absence of this data prevents us from gaining insights into the primary challenges and obstacles encountered by these individuals when attempting to access sports activities. As a result, we are unable to create effective policies to address these issues in a meaningful and impactful manner.

What would you recommend to your country?

In order to create appropriate strategies and policies for the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in sports, it is necessary to conduct research

⁴ <http://skopskimaraton.com.mk/>

⁵ <https://a1on.mk/macedonia/besplatno-plivanje-za-site-prvachinja-i-deca-so-poprechenost-od-opshtina-aerodrom/>

and gather evidence-based data. Additionally, it is important to develop national policies that outline specific plans for encouraging greater participation of individuals with disabilities in sports. This could include designing sports facilities that are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Drafting of a national framework for inclusive sports and physical activity that should be developed by of a special working group that will plan and promote interdisciplinary planning and cooperation in the field of sport and physical activity. The working group should led by the Agency for Youth and Sports, where they will be involved associations of citizens engaged in sports and physical activity of persons with disabilities, faculties which produce professional staff in the field of sports, education, special education and rehabilitation and healthcare, as well as sports facilities (private and public)

Best Practice in North Macedonia #1:

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

Physical disabilities, without limitations, skiing, winter sports

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.

Physical, sensory

2. Organization & Reference

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

ZGKP Without Limitations is an organization comprising 13 individuals with disabilities who have received training to ski independently or with assistance. In addition, there are 8 trainers who have been trained by foreign experts at the inaugural sit-ski school held in skiing resort of Mavrovo. The school aimed not only to provide skiing training but also to foster greater inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in sports activities that were previously inaccessible in the country. Moreover, it aimed to motivate them to step out of their homes and develop higher levels of self-confidence. Based in Kočani, the organization is dedicated to advocating for the rights of people with disabilities and currently does not have any employees.

You can find their Facebook fan page at <https://www.facebook.com/ZGPK.mk>.

3. Formal/Informal

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

Informal

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.

Flying radio-controlled drones is a skilful sport that requires not muscle strength but focus, reflexes, a good eye and practice.

This type of exercise improves cognitive skills and mental strength and is very beneficial for children/people with intellectual or physical disabilities.

The idea is for the instructors of the Aero club to teach people with disabilities to fly drones, to show that they can and to encourage them to take up this sport.

The event is not limited only to people with disabilities, because our goal and motive is the complete inclusion of all those interested in these sports activities.

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 practice does not have any specific age limitations, as the assessment is conducted based on the participants' physical fitness levels. This means that individuals of different age groups can engage in the activity.

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.

Ski Federation of Macedonia and teachers from the University of physical education

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.

The Faculty of Physical Education should be recognized as a valuable training ground for future trainers working with individuals with disabilities. The support for the organized events has been exceptional; however, there is a shortage of personnel and individuals interested in working with people with disabilities. The cost of equipment is considerably high, and project funding tends to prioritize soft skills development rather than the acquisition of necessary equipment.

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.

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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.

During our endeavors, they have fostered partnerships with specialized educators and professors who have actively contributed, as demonstrated by the content shared on the official Facebook fan page. Nonetheless, the majority of the undertakings have not been made known to the public due to the lack of dedicated communication staff.

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.

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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, and 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.

It was positive and obtained through questionnaires after the events.

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.

It is important to consider that individuals engaging in this type of activity should be prepared for a lack of free time if they have a full-time job, as well as the absence of vacations throughout the year. They will encounter daily architectural barriers when organizing events and administrative obstacles when attempting to bring about changes in sports and shift societal perceptions towards people with disabilities. These efforts will likely face strong resistance, such as refusals for medical approvals, permits, and similar challenges. Furthermore, parents and the environment may impose limitations, while the environment itself may ridicule and hinder progress. Unnecessary assistance may be offered in situations where it is not needed, while essential support may be denied where it is most necessary.

Nevertheless, the greatest reward in engaging in such activities lies in the personal satisfaction derived from witnessing the development of athletes who successfully integrate into society and lead active and fulfilling lives despite these barriers.

Source: [https://www.facebook.com/ZGPK.mk/?ref=page internal](https://www.facebook.com/ZGPK.mk/?ref=page_internal)

Photos: <https://youtu.be/3QrQyVXxe7U>

Best Practice in North Macedonia #2

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

Swimming, Atypical Development, Physical abnormalities

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.

Our primary focus is to offer services to individuals with a wide range of disabilities, including those with intellectual and physical impairments. However, it is important to note that we specifically cater to individuals who are capable of participating in training sessions and adhering to instructions in a responsible manner that does not pose risks to themselves or others.

2. Organization & Reference

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

NGO Sport Association ITK Macedonia – Skopje
 Address: Nikola Parapunov 27/4 – 4, Skopje
 itk.macedonia@itk-leipzig.de / itk.macedonia@gmail.com
<http://itk-leipzig.de/>
<https://www.facebook.com/itk.macedonia>
<https://www.instagram.com/itk.macedonia/>

The organization is focused to make positive changes in the society using sport and culture as a tool to integrate as much people as possible.

3. Formal/Informal

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

Informal

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.

We are focused on adaptive swimming activities and also we organize events and competitions because there isn't an institution or federation that is taking care for competitive system in this area.

Also we promote volunteerism in our inclusive system and the option for young people to become coaches and assistants in the process.

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 participants are age from 5/6 till 35. In the trainings we have athletes with Down Syndrome, various types of cerebral palsy, autism and other disabilities that cause physical and/or abnormalities.

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.

In our practical sessions we have 3 coaches that work in small or big pool. But there are also other people, parents and caretakers who assist us in the process. We have 1 coach with motor disabilities that is also a swimmer, winning the 2022 National Championship in the category for disabled athletes.

Last year we were present on two competitions outside of Macedonia, one in Sofia - Bulgaria and the other in Ptolemaida – Greece. And in December 2022 we organized the only inclusive International swimming competition in Macedonia called Atlas Winter Cup that is our tradition.

In the organization we have lawyer, doctor and coaches and experts in different fields.

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.

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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.

Ensuring the safety of individuals participating in the activities is paramount, with athletes requiring constant supervision from their coach or designated personnel.

It is crucial for everyone involved to exercise patience when working with individuals with disabilities.

Regrettably, the availability of sports equipment specifically designed for adaptive sports in stores is limited, necessitating adaptation to the existing circumstances.

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.

Typically, we utilize standard swimming equipment; however, we lack a device or lift specifically designed to safely transfer individuals in wheelchairs into the water. Establishing an inclusive environment has been a long-term focus for us, and through our organization, we aim to enhance the professionalism of coaches working with individuals with atypical development.

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.

Collaboration with parents and pool staff who comprehend the requirements of individuals with disabilities is the fundamental aspect of our initiatives. We have established numerous cooperation agreements with

organizations sharing similar interests, which actively participate in our activities.

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, and 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.

The abundance of smiles, positive feedback, improved health conditions, and participants who feel socially fulfilled serve as indicators that our efforts are making a positive impact. In the case of more advanced swimmers, we track improvements in their swimming times to gauge progress. Additionally, we frequently have young individuals visiting our practices to witness the inclusive atmosphere and the rewarding experience of working with disabled individuals.

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.

- Offer encouragement and support to the athletes
- Foster understanding of the unique experiences and capabilities of disabled athletes
- Communicate with their loved ones to gain insights into their individual needs more easily
- Allow sufficient time for them to acclimate to the new environment
- Prioritize the social aspect, recognizing that individuals with disabilities often have limited opportunities for socializing and forming friendships
- Create a safe and secure environment to help them feel at ease

Source:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10AD72pf6SXPAHxJ7yIrPYHOgBnc54INN?usp=share link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10AD72pf6SXPAHxJ7yIrPYHOgBnc54INN?usp=share_link)

Photos>https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1MkaiO71E-StCb7RimCHMTTnV459kA4Ke?usp=share_link

Best Practice in North Macedonia #3

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

Mobility aids, volleyball, inclusion, matches in volleyball

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.

In our case, the individual relies on mobility aids, specifically prostheses designed for both legs. The braces extend from below the knees down to the feet. Without these prostheses, the legs are non-functional, and movement would not be possible.

2. Organization & Reference

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

Volleyball Club (UK) "Flamingo"
 Kisela voda, OU Nevena Georgieva-Dunja, Aerodrom, OU Lazo Angelovski
 and Aleksandar Makedonski
 4 employees, volleyball coaches

<https://www.instagram.com/flamingo.vc/>

3. Formal/Informal

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

Sports club, informal activity

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.

Participation in the Volleyball Federation of the Republic of North Macedonia (OF RSM), women's team, young categories (pioneers, cadets)
 Regular matches in the youth leagues organized by OF North Macedonia
 Participation in various sports volleyball events, organized outside the OF leagues of North Macedonia.

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.

Age limit from 10 to 15 years.

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.

Individuals possessing coaching certifications for younger age categories and actively engaged as volleyball players serve as advisors in the training processes.

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.

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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.

As the training is in its early stages, specific aids are currently unnecessary. The focus of the training is on developing fitness, acquiring knowledge of the rules, and practicing techniques. Since the training venue is located within a 500m distance from home, there is no need for accommodation. The individual can easily access the training facility and utilizes the locker room for changing before proceeding to the gym for exercises. After the training concludes, they can independently return home, covering the distance on foot without requiring transportation or assistance.

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 collaboration exists between the involved parties, albeit not at an official level.

Parents are actively engaged in the education and practice process, each contributing from their respective domains of expertise and providing valuable feedback for the work being done.

OK Flamingo takes part in the "Skopje League" project with girls aged 10 and 12, which is organized by a team of sports professionals. The league matches are held in various locations, including the sports center "Forza" as the home venue, as well as in different primary and secondary schools such as the secondary school "Orce Nikolov".

The primary target for Flamingo is to provide an opportunity for girls who do not participate in the Youth categories of the Volleyball Federation of the Republic of North Macedonia (OF RSM). Additionally, OK Flamingo actively participates in the second Macedonian state league for women, which is organized by the Volleyball Federation of North Macedonia (OF of North Macedonia).

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.

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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.

By occasionally observing and engaging in conversations with the parents, one can perceive the evident satisfaction of both the children and their parents. The achieved results in the mentioned competitions are undoubtedly an outcome of our increasing commitment, diligence, and perseverance in our endeavors.

To showcase our progress, we arrange practical presentations within the training facility, share media records, and organize various events. Moreover, we coordinate winter and summer camps, both within the country and abroad, as part of our efforts to further enhance our work and provide enriching experiences for the participants.

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.

They demonstrate a commendable commitment to giving their utmost in their endeavors, willingly embracing the opportunity to work with children with disabilities and actively incorporating them into the educational and practical aspects, always with the approval of parents and professionals. Valuable lessons can be learned from these remarkable children.



Best Practice in North Macedonia #4

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

Young athletes, Judo, Sports competitions

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.

People with intellectual disabilities (Down Syndrome)

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 Judo Club SEISHIN-Prilep, a sports club, operates without any professionally employed individuals. All licensed trainers work in other professions and dedicate their time to judo sport on a voluntary basis. Although the club does not have a website due to financial constraints, they can be reached through email at [email address]. The club maintains a presence on social media platforms, including Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/judoclubseishin/>) and Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/judo_club_seishin/?hl=en).

3. Formal/Informal

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

Sports club, informal activity

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 physical activity program includes regular judo training sessions three times a week, lasting 1.5 hours each. These sessions take place on the judo tatami, where participants wear judo uniforms (kimono). The training regimen encompasses various activities such as stretching exercises, gymnastics, coordination and concentration exercises, strength exercises, motor exercises, and the learning of judo techniques.

In addition to judo training, the club also engages in fitness training on open sports fields. This involves activities like running, sports games, and other exercises aimed at improving overall fitness levels. Furthermore, the club organizes marches and walks as part of their physical activities.

The club actively participates in sports competitions, including state championships and international tournaments, providing opportunities for members to showcase their skills and compete at different levels.

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.

At present, the active age limit in our country ranges from 18 to 30 years. However, there is potential for adaptation to accommodate younger adults, but this would require the development of special projects designed specifically for their engagement and participation.

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.

The Federation of School Sports of Macedonia organizes diverse sports games that bring together participants in Kavadarci.

Our club took the initiative to organize a special event called the World Judo Day, during which we collaborated with the associations for people with disabilities, namely "Poraka" and "Zunica" from Prilep, to commemorate this day under the theme of "INCLUSION." Several members from our club visited the two associations and engaged in judo exercises together. In return, the associations reciprocated by visiting one of our training sessions.

We are fortunate to have coaches who hold certificates for working with younger age categories and active volleyball players who contribute as advisors in our training processes. Their expertise and guidance play a crucial role in our club's development.

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.

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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.

The classes involving individuals with intellectual disabilities were a resounding success, bringing immense satisfaction and happiness to all participants. Special attention was given to designing exercises that ensured the safety and well-being of everyone, minimizing the risk of injuries. Due to the limited availability of kimonos, participants practiced in their regular clothes, presenting a minor challenge. The teachers from associations working closely with individuals in this category made invaluable contributions to the classes. Their deep understanding of the participants' habits, communication styles, and other unique characteristics greatly enhanced the overall experience.

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.

During our activities, we made an effort to distribute informative brochures introducing the sport of judo. Additionally, we provided gifts such as judo calendars and similar items. However, there are also judo books available that require greater financial resources to acquire and distribute to each individual. An example worth mentioning is one of our dedicated members

with Down Syndrome, to whom we gifted such a book. It brought immense joy to see their enthusiasm as they slept with the book and read it multiple times, showcasing their genuine interest and appreciation.

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.

We do not have a specific communication strategy

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, and 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.

The classes involving individuals with intellectual disabilities were a source of immense satisfaction for everyone involved, as it brought joy to all participants. Special attention was given to designing exercises that could be comfortably performed by everyone, ensuring that no injuries occurred. Due to a shortage of kimonos for all participants, they practiced in regular clothing, which posed a minor challenge. The teachers from the associations working with individuals in this category made significant contributions to the classes, leveraging their knowledge of their habits, communication styles, and other unique characteristics.

By occasionally observing and engaging in conversations with the parents, one can sense the genuine satisfaction expressed by both the children and

their parents. The achieved results in the mentioned competitions are undoubtedly a testament to the increasing dedication and perseverance in our endeavors. To showcase our progress, we organize practical presentations within the training facility, utilizing media records to share our work. Additionally, we take part in various events and arrange winter and summer camps, both within the country and abroad, to further enhance our activities and provide enriching experiences for the participants.

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.

Engaging in activities with children who have intellectual disabilities is not only beneficial for individuals in this category but also for society and the environment at large. It is crucial for institutions to prioritize and provide support to organizations dedicated to working with this population. By doing so, we can collectively contribute to the well-being and inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities, fostering a more inclusive and compassionate society.

Best Practice in North Macedonia #5

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

Social inclusion, cultural differences, recreational activities

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.

Social inclusion of adolescents with intellectual disabilities through sports and recreational activities

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 sports and recreational activities were organized by the Republican Center for the Support of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities - PORAKA took place at the Red Cross Staff Education Center in the city of Skopje in Struga (2006). This event included 44 adolescents with intellectual disabilities, users of day centers created and managed by RCPLIP - PORAKA in Skopje, Radovish, Ohrid and Struga. In the implementation of these activities, 8 team leaders (personnel from daycare centers) and 3 responsible persons from RCPLIP - PORAKA were involved. When organizing this type of activities, raising public awareness regarding the potentials and opportunities of people with intellectual disabilities was also one of the goals. Therefore, media coverage of this event was provided in order to

notice and show the importance of organizing this type of activity for people with intellectual disabilities.

3. Formal/Informal

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

Non-formal

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.

Sports activities were divided into the following disciplines:

Athletics

25 meter dash (men, women and combined);

50 meter dash (men, women and combined);

Long jump.

Football Competitions in futsal (men, women and combined)

Basketball

Basketball competitions (teams of three people each – men, women and combined).

Volleyball Competitions in teams of three people each (men, women and combined).

Rope game Competitions in teams consisting of three people each (men, women and combined).

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.

People with intellectual disability without any age limit

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.

44 adolescents with intellectual disabilities from the region of Struga and Radovish have participated in this project. The sport activities were delivered by the staff at Poraka center and Red Cross.

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.

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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.

When working with people with disabilities in sports, it is important to prioritize safety and ensure that all participants are able to engage in

physical activity in a way that is both enjoyable and comfortable for them. Here are some safe recommendations for working with people with disabilities in sports:

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.

Within this project the sport activities were adapted to be attractive and fun to the participants and they offered sport activities in different team sports. They didn't use specialized equipment or assistive devices.

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.

It is important for coaches to provide athletes with the opportunity to challenge themselves and accomplish their personal goals in a competitive environment. This allows the athletes to understand where they currently are in relation to their long term goals. It is important to remember that this should be done in a careful manner, only introducing the athlete to competition when they are ready both physically and mentally to deal with a competitive environment. Under the right circumstances competition also provides intrinsic enjoyment for athletes. Feedback is important. It must

be phrased in a way that allows the athlete to develop further but without appearing offensive to their current skill level.

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.

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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.

Grow global mind-set and consider cultural differences when working with different people with disabilities from different backgrounds. Celebrate the diversity of their students with disabilities, highlighting their unique

strengths and abilities, and promoting an inclusive sports culture that values diversity.

Best practice in North Macedonia #6

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

Karate, Inclusion

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.

Physical and mental disabilities as well as Down syndrome

2. Organization & Reference

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

Karate Club Olympic Sport 2007 Skopje with two engaged coaches.
 Graduated professor of physical and health education.
 Main goal is to raise capacities of involved organizations to promote social inclusion by implementing sport activities and services directly including young people with intellectual disabilities and to use sport as a driving force of social inclusion.

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063478570995>

3. Formal/Informal

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

Non-formal

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.

We are relatively new with this type of training with children with disabilities; the training method takes place through games such as chase, find the object, jump over hoops, jump on one leg, balance, trust game.

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.

In our club, we cater to athletes between the ages of 18 and 28, including those with physical and mental disabilities, such as Down syndrome. Our approach is to treat all athletes equally, providing them with inclusive training in a mixed environment. It is important to note that our 18-year-old athlete with Down syndrome receives the same opportunities as other children. However, during the explanation part of the exercises, there may be a need for additional support and clarification to ensure their full understanding and retention.

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.

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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.

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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.

Coaches should strive to create an environment that emphasizes task orientation, enabling athletes to concentrate on mastering skills, learning, and personal improvement rather than comparing themselves to others or focusing solely on competition. By fostering this mindset, athletes develop a sense of competence centered around self-development, which enhances their autonomy and sense of control over their accomplishments.

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.

To enhance training sessions, visual aids such as colorful bibs and cones can be employed. Additionally, incorporating exercises involving rope-skipping, trampolines, and Swiss balls can be beneficial. In cases where a team has a lower overall ability level, allowing an extra player on their team can help compensate for this disparity. Above all, it is crucial for the coach to focus on the ability level rather than the disability level of the athletes and make necessary adjustments to the sessions accordingly.

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.

Promoting inclusive education in schools and the community through various means such as organizing trainings, forums, lectures, and more; Collaborating with the Education Development Bureau to develop tailored curricula based on specific types of disabilities; Providing training opportunities for teachers and professional services to effectively work with students with disabilities; Equipping professional services with necessary resources and expertise; Establishing legal regulations to govern the inclusion of students with disabilities; Ensuring the availability of resource materials for teachers and professional services, including manuals and literature; Clearly defining enrollment procedures for students with disabilities, including specific criteria for evaluating their scores during enrollment in regular education; Organizing activities to foster better cooperation with parents of students with disabilities; Facilitating active communication and information sharing between primary and secondary schools.

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.

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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.

Prior to the first training session, engage in direct communication with the athlete to gather information about their ability level and prior experience in the specific sport. It can be beneficial to involve the parents or caregiver during this conversation or have a separate discussion with them. Begin the training by assigning a task that you are confident the athlete can successfully accomplish, and gradually progress in small, incremental steps to assess their capabilities. During the initial sessions, closely observe not only the athlete’s practical skills but also their social interactions and communication preferences.

Photos>



Best practice in North Macedonia #7

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

Youngathletes, Downsyndrome, Inclusion, Special Olympics

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.

Intellectual disability

2. Organization & Reference

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

Special Olympics Macedonia operates dedicated sport programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The organization employs two full-time staff members and five part-time staff members.

social media:<https://www.facebook.com/SpecialOlympicsNorthMacedonia>
https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.instagram.com%2F%2Fspecialolympicsmacedonia%3Ffbclid%3DIwAROPcC9dfs1FoKe2DFwjyTKCrzxKMZikmwCF8Y2wCImtxONYjjgsbGFEY70&h=AT0FrtZ640J7s7WoLsBMMj3jgtZT7j86tCxTjvHFOOurnxq2dRm-nbW6PXm8kf7EnvH-S4L18R5aAmpnYYQ2t7uTI4j92Ah-rEfR-8nwK0hc_rSEew2LM4N0aIuOSYiGX8ugBBhLENWF9Q

3. Formal/Informal

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

informal activity

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.

Based on the responses received from survey questionnaires submitted to 16 schools, it was found that 11 of them include students with disabilities, while 5 do not. The research team conducted three focus groups, involving a total of 28 participants from three distinct groups: students with disabilities, parents of students with disabilities, and teachers as well as representatives from the professional services of the schools. The selection of participants for the focus groups was carried out by the research team. The information source for this statement is the "MK_CWDinSecondaryEducation_Report_MK.pdf."

In addition, we organize a variety of activities such as events (including Basketball and Football week), sport practices in different sports twice a week, games, tournaments, and more.

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 age range targeted for children with intellectual disabilities spans from 2 to 9 years old. It is crucial to customize the activities to align with the abilities of the middle range of the group. This ensures that children within this range can actively participate without requiring significant modifications to the activities. For younger children, the activities can be simplified, whereas for older children, they can be made more challenging. To accommodate children with specific disabilities, making adjustments to the environment can be highly beneficial. Modifying the lighting, either by brightening or dimming it, can assist children with conditions such as autism or visual impairments. Adapting furniture, such as lowering chairs or ensuring secure desks, and incorporating slant boards throughout the classroom for writing support can be advantageous for children with physical disabilities or orthopedic impairments. These adaptations are aimed at creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all children.

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.

Primary and secondary schools, sport federations, NGOs, individual coaches, teachers and volunteers and athletes from our country.

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.

The implementation of inclusive practices for both youngsters with and without intellectual disabilities reinforces the notion that sports serve as a powerful tool for integration and inclusion within society. Engaging in sports not only promotes social skills but also enhances overall well-being and health. It is important to prioritize safety measures and create an adaptive environment during every event to ensure the participation of all individuals.

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.

The primary objective is to maximize the duration of physical activity during each class session and impart skills and activities that can be practiced beyond physical education class. To motivate children to actively participate in physical activity, it is crucial to respectfully inquire about their preferences and interests, communicate clearly, actively listen, address individuals directly, respect personal boundaries, and exhibit flexibility when working with family members of individuals with disabilities.

Within our current societal context, it is common for parents to believe that their children with disabilities should attend specialized schools. Consequently, many parents opt to keep their children at home. Regrettably, social stigmas contribute to a sense of shame and hesitance in taking children with disabilities outside. Consequently, these children often

encounter a lack of acceptance and understanding regarding their unique challenges and abilities.

To address these challenges, we employ various strategies and resources. These include adaptive didactic materials, sports equipment, music speakers for auditory stimulation, safety measures, and an adaptive environment for effective engagement. We also establish rules that can be adhered to by all participants, promote unified sports, and rely on experienced volunteers to support our efforts.

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.

Yes, we are collaborating with parents, educators and students all the time. They work together on our regular programs and projects.

<https://www.facebook.com/SpecialOlympicsNorthMacedonia/photos/pb.100054434683162.-2207520000./5041921979220161/?type=3>

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.

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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.

On a monthly basis, we hold a meeting, primarily attended by parents, where they have the opportunity to share their opinions and provide recommendations for future projects and workshops. It is of utmost importance to ensure clear communication and obtain explicit consent before making any physical contact with athletes.

This practice is particularly crucial when working with athletes who have autism, as they may have a strong aversion to touch and exhibit varying levels of sensitivity. Some individuals with autism may be hypersensitive or hyposensitive to touch, and certain textures, such as latex or rough surfaces, may cause discomfort or be disliked by them. By openly explaining your intentions and seeking permission before engaging in any physical contact, you can create an environment that is respectful and comfortable for athletes with autism.

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.

Teachers should endeavor to establish an environment of inclusivity that caters to the needs of all students, regardless of their abilities. This can be accomplished by fostering positive attitudes towards individuals with disabilities, recognizing their strengths, and placing emphasis on their abilities rather than their limitations. When it comes to students with disabilities, teachers should offer personalized adaptations to facilitate their engagement in sports. This may involve adjusting equipment or game rules, as well as incorporating assistive devices like wheelchairs or prosthetics.

Social inclusion and unified sports serve as powerful tools for enhancing the social skills and overall well-being of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

