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IDI 4 SPORT

INCLUSION AND DISABILITIES IN AND THROUGH SPORT

Evaluation report

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1. About IDI4Sport project

IDI4Sport is a European project funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission. Coordinated by France Education international (FEI, France), it gathers 5 EU countries and North Macedonia, an Erasmus+ third associated country. The project partners are 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) and the National Higher Institute for Training and Research in Inclusive Education (INSEI, France).

ID4Sport focuses on the development of sport participation for young people and children with disabilities against the backdrop of the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. 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, and young people and children within and outside schools.

The project objectives are to:

- Help the formal and non-formal sectors to work together and promote collaboration between schools and sports organisations.
- Increase the participation of young people (including children) in sport and improve their health and well-being.
- Improve the accessibility and attractiveness of health facilities for children and young people.
- To make young people and children 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 and children.

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.

2. Executive Summary

This document presents the final evaluation report of the IDI4Sport project's experimentation (September 2023-September 2024). This report synthesizes findings from a participatory, mixed-methods evaluation that assessed the project's implementation, effectiveness, and sustainability potential. We have drawn on data from over 100 trained educators and approximately 1,500 pupils[1]. We have examined how project resources—specifically the Training Pathway and Collection of Good

[1] In this evaluation report: "young people" refers to children and youth in general, "pupils" is used when talking about children and youth who participated in the project, "educators" refers to teachers, coaches and sport trainers and "coaches" and "sport trainers" are used as synonyms.

Practices—were used and adapted across national contexts. We have also explored changes in educators' (teachers and coaches or sport trainers) self-confidence for implementing inclusive activities, in pupils' and educators' attitudes towards disability, and in the practical integration of inclusive sports activities in schools and clubs created through the experimentation and implementation process.

The report includes both quantitative metrics and qualitative insights gathered through focus groups, surveys, and personal stories of change. Key findings confirm that the project successfully raised awareness, increased educator preparedness, and encouraged more inclusive environments. At the same time, the evaluation identifies challenges related to communication, theoretical knowledge, and contextual implementation, offering targeted recommendations for future improvement and scaling.

Overall, this report serves as both an accountability tool and a learning document, providing evidence of impact and contributing to the broader conversation on how inclusive sport can advance equity, empathy, and participation in education and community settings.

2.1 Key findings

- High participation and engagement: 111 trained teachers and coaches implemented inclusive sports activities in 32 schools and sport clubs, benefiting an estimated 1,446–1,571 pupils with and without disabilities.
- Positive training outcomes: The training pathway received a high overall satisfaction score (average 4.15/5), with teachers particularly valuing its practical, adaptable approach. Capacity-building results showed strong gains in confidence and competence in inclusive practice.
- Widespread use of deliverables: 81% of respondents used (at the time the questionnaires were responded) the Good Practices resources, with teachers showing especially high engagement. These materials were seen as practical and relevant to real-world needs.
- Pupil's enjoyment and inclusion: across countries they described the activities as fun, eye-opening, and inclusive, highlighting increased empathy and interest in participating alongside peers with disabilities.
- Raised awareness of barriers: Participants identified key inclusion barriers—including peer attitudes, inaccessible facilities, and lack of professional training—while also demonstrating increased reflection on how to overcome them.
- Sustainable practices emerging**:** Several countries reported steps toward sustaining inclusive activities, including institutional support, curriculum integration, and infrastructural investment (e.g., adapted courts and awareness events).
- Shifts in attitudes and behaviour: Teachers, coaches and pupils reported meaningful changes in perceptions of disability and inclusive participation, with greater empathy, cooperation, and openness observed.

2.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

- The project proved effective in building inclusive capacity and shifting attitudes in diverse educational settings.
- Sustainability will depend on continued institutional support, access to resources, and deeper integration of inclusive practices.
- Future training should expand on disability-specific content and provide timely, comprehensive materials.
- Inclusive sports activities should remain embedded in schools' educational strategies to foster long-term social change.
- Continuous communication between parents and educators is needed in order to deliver better-suited practices.

3. Introduction

3.1 Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the impact of the IDI4Sport experimentation phase on pupils and educators, as well as the effects of the training pathway on the latter. Additionally, the evaluation examines the overall implementation process to understand its effectiveness and areas for improvement.

In particular, the evaluation explores:

- How have teaching methods, attitudes, and practices among educators changed as a result of the training?
- In what ways did the project activities shape the experiences, behaviours, and inclusion of children and young people, with and without disabilities?
- To what extent did the tools and materials developed during the project contribute to achieving its broader goals?

The evaluation and impact study comprised the following components:

- A methodology design phase. This included the development of evaluation tools and indicators tailored to measure the impact on the project's key target groups.
- The collection of national-level data across the six partner countries: Portugal, Spain, France, North Macedonia, Greece, and Denmark.
- The analysis and presentation of findings. We drew on both quantitative and qualitative data to assess effectiveness and inform future improvements.

3.2 Methodology overview

We structured the evaluation of the IDI4Sport project using a Theory of Change (ToC) framework and the Most Significant Change (MSC) approach. Together, these approaches allowed us to display a participatory, mixed-methods evaluation that explored both measurable outputs and complex social transformations. The ToC helped clarifying the logic connections between the evaluation activities and the expected

outcomes, allowing us to track progress along clearly defined causal pathways (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020; Taplin et al., 2013). Meanwhile, the MSC method allowed us to capture personal narratives from teachers, coaches, and pupils to highlight the most meaningful changes resulting from the project (Davies & Dart, 2005; Wilder & Walpole, 2008).

We applied this combination of qualitative and quantitative tools—including focus groups and questionnaires—across six European countries. The evaluation tools were designed centrally, translated by local partners, and adapted to each national context. The mixed-methods design allowed the evaluation to document changes in awareness, attitudes, and practices, while also assessing the implementation process itself. Despite several limitations—including differences in implementation timelines, a non-representative sample, and the lack of baseline data—the methodology facilitated a comprehensive, inclusive, and contextually sensitive understanding of the project's reach and impact. Through this approach we reflect the project's core values of equity, participation, and learning through sport.

3.3 Summary of the experimentation phase being evaluated

The experimentation phase (WP3) tested the newly developed training pathway aimed at integrating young people and children 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 possessed the capability to involve children and young people with disabilities in regular sports activities. This phase was crucial for building partnerships and ensuring that the institutions selected were committed to fostering inclusivity. A total of 32 schools and sports clubs participated in the experimentation phase.

The third stage was the implementation of "Train the Trainers" workshops, where educational staff (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 and children with disabilities.

The final stage was the implementation of the training pathway. 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 2024, followed a dual-

approach model: one applied in elementary and secondary schools and the other in grassroots sports clubs. To create a diverse testing environment and guarantee a thorough evaluation of the training pathway effectiveness, the idea was to select at least two schools and two sport clubs per country. However, due to disparities in access and availability, their type and number vary from one country to another.

For a reminder, the objectives for the training pathway are to:

- Understand the theoretical and legal framework relating to sport for people with disabilities.
- Recognise the importance of practicing sports for people with disabilities.
- Promote the experimentation of the most diverse sporting activities specific and/or adapted for people with disabilities.
- Learn the theoretical and practical bases of implementing inclusive physical and sport activities.
- Promote the sharing of knowledge and practices, contributing to the improvement of diversification of inclusive activities.
- Reflect on the barriers and facilitators to practicing sports, as well as the importance of collaboration between sectors in promoting inclusion in and through sport.

To guide the assessment of the IDI4Sport project's experimentation phase, the evaluation was structured around the following key questions:

1. Effectiveness: To what extent did the Training Pathway and Experimentation programme improve educators' and coaches' knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding inclusive sports?
2. Participant experience: How did children and young people—particularly those with disabilities—experience the inclusive sports activities, and what changes were observed in their participation and social inclusion?
3. Implementation and relevance: Were the project's tools and activities relevant and adaptable across diverse national contexts, and what factors supported or hindered their implementation?
4. Sustainability: Are the inclusive practices introduced by the project likely to be maintained or expanded beyond the project's duration?
5. Learning and impact: What were the most significant changes identified by participants, and how can these insights inform future inclusive sports initiatives?

4. Methodology

4.1 Description of evaluation design

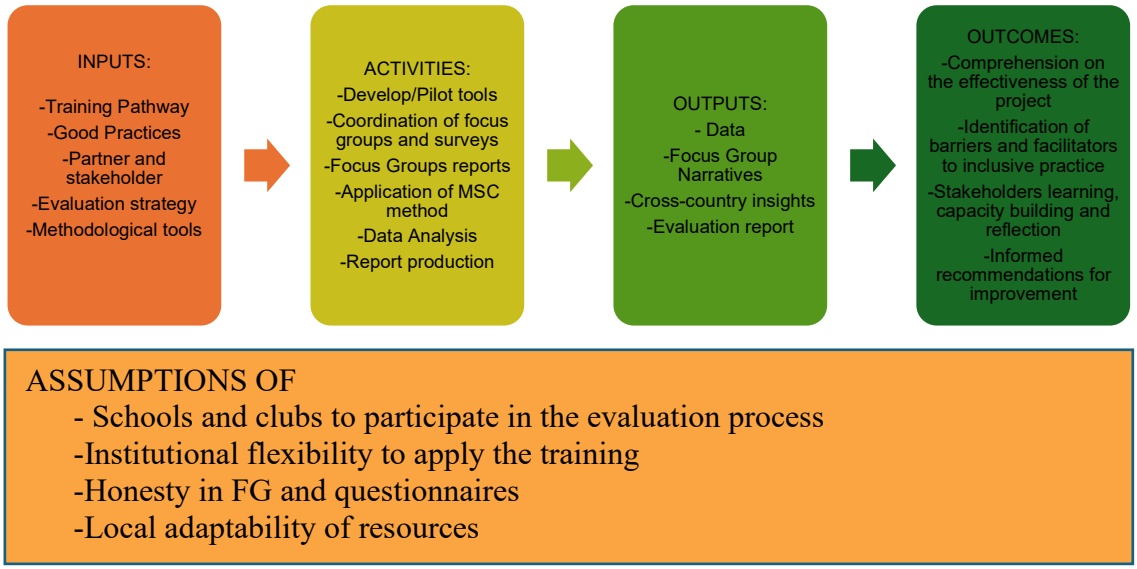
We based our evaluation on two key frameworks: the Theory of Change (ToC) and the Most Significant Change approach (MSC), which together informed the conceptual

design, experiential insights, and practical implementation of the evaluation process. These allowed us to better capture both measurable outcomes and deeper personal insights.

THEORY OF CHANGE

The Theory of Change framework aims to help clarify the causal pathways that connect activities to desired outcomes (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020). It provides a structured framework to understand *how* and *why* the evaluation processes are expected to yield meaningful conclusions about the project's effectiveness, relevance, and potential for sustainability (Taplin et al., 2013). The development of a robust ToC involves several key components, including the definition of the problem, the outcomes, indicators, rationales, interventions and activities, assumptions, and the narrative (Vogel, 2012; Taplin et al., 2013). Theory of Change follows an inverted way of thinking, one of its core principles is starting with the desired long-term outcomes and working backward to identify the necessary preconditions and interventions (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020).

Evaluation´s Theory of change diagram



A. Inputs

The inputs for the evaluation included the IDI4Sport Training Pathway and Collection of Good Practices—two core content resources developed to build the capacity of teachers and coaches—as well as human and institutional resources from partner organisations across six countries. Technical and methodological tools were also used as inputs, namely: focus group guidelines and templates and questionnaires. Together, these resources allowed us to design a participatory and mixed-methods evaluation strategy suited to capturing both quantitative results and complex social change processes.

B. Activities

The evaluation activities focused on several interconnected interventions. We developed and piloted the data collection tools, coordinated with national partners to implement focus groups and surveys, applied the MSC methodology to gather personal stories of change, compiled national focus group reports, analysed the data, and ultimately produced this final report. These activities were not only designed to document the project's reach and effects but also to facilitate reflective engagement among stakeholders by focusing on their experiences and perspectives. In this way, the evaluation process itself contributed to learning and empowerment—key goals of the IDI4Sport initiative.

C. Outputs

Outputs from these activities included measurable quantitative data on the teachers/coaches´ assessment of the project's deliverables, on the effectiveness of capacity-building efforts and overall implementation and on the scope and nature of participation—for instance, the number of trained educators and pupils involved in inclusive sports sessions. Moreover, the evaluation process enabled the emergence of more qualitative products such as narratives and stories on the effect and changes. We assembled all this information in this comprehensive report. Despite some variation in country-level implementation, the evaluation generated evidence across multiple contexts and stakeholder groups.

D. Indicators

Indicators were designed to track whether these outcomes were achieved. To do so, we used guiding questions such as: Who is changing? How many are changing? How much change is occurring? And within what timeframe? For instance, one key indicator was the percentage of teachers reporting greater confidence in applying inclusive methods. This was measured via post-implementation questionnaires and follow-up discussions. Another indicator captured the extent to which schools and clubs reported planning to continue inclusive sports activities after the project's formal conclusion.

E. Outputs

Finally, in terms of outcomes the evaluation generated several important outcomes. It provided a detailed assessment of the project's effectiveness and surfaced a nuanced understanding of both barriers and facilitators to inclusive practice. The evaluation also facilitated stakeholder reflection and peer learning. As well as informed practical, evidence-based recommendations for improving training content, implementation strategies, and future scaling efforts. In addition, at the project level, the evaluation tracked changes across three levels. Short-term outcomes included increased awareness of inclusive practices, more positive attitudes toward people with disabilities, and greater participation and enjoyment in inclusive sports among all pupils. Focus group data and survey results confirmed that pupils demonstrated more empathy. Educators also expressed higher confidence and motivation. Intermediate outcomes focused on the integration of inclusive practices into daily teaching and training routines, enhanced self-efficacy among professionals, and evidence of institutional

commitment to maintaining these activities. Many schools and clubs expressed an intention to continue or expand inclusive sports offerings, often noting improvements in peer relationships and school climate. While the long-term impact falls beyond the immediate scope of this evaluation, the project ultimately aims to contribute to a sustained increase in participation by youth with disabilities in sport, as well as broader gains in social inclusion and equity within educational and recreational environments.

F. Assumptions

The rationale behind the evaluation methodology rested on several key causal assumptions:

- One of our core beliefs was that increased awareness and competence among educators are critical precursors to the sustainable implementation of inclusive practices (Gentile, 2023). This link—reinforced by focus group data—connects short-term gains in knowledge with longer-term behavioural changes in classroom and sports settings. Additionally, we recognized that attitudinal shifts must precede the normalisation of inclusive behaviour (Abellan et al., 2018). For this reason, measuring changes in attitudes among teachers, coaches, and pupils was a central focus of our evaluation. The use of the MSC approach was grounded in the understanding that personal stories can reveal nuanced emotional and relational changes that might be missed by conventional metrics (Wilder & Walpole, 2008). This highlights the importance of capturing the experiential and contextual dimensions of inclusion, especially in socially and culturally diverse contexts.
- We presumed that participating schools and clubs had at least a baseline openness to inclusive practices.
- We also believed that they were willing to engage with both the intervention and the evaluation.
- Another assumption was that trained educators were given the time and institutional support needed to apply their training—an essential condition for observable change.
- A fifth supposition was that inclusive practices introduced during the project would be perceived as meaningful and sustainable, not just temporary. We further assumed that stakeholders would engage authentically with the tools and platforms provided, particularly through honest and thoughtful contributions to focus groups and questionnaire responses.
- Lastly, the evaluation rested on the precondition that the training materials and practices developed by the project were and are sufficiently adaptable to different national and institutional contexts, allowing for localized relevance and uptake.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

The Most Significant Change (MSC) approach is a qualitative evaluation methodology commonly used in international development to assess programme impact through the collection and analysis of personal narratives (Wilder & Walpole, 2008). This

participatory and iterative technique emphasizes capturing stories from beneficiaries, trainers, coaches and pupils in this case; to identify the most meaningful changes they experienced as a result of an intervention. By focusing on the voices of those directly involved, MSC enables the evaluation to uncover complex, nuanced outcomes that traditional quantitative methods might overlook, thereby offering deeper insight into individual and community-level transformation (Ohkubo et al., 2022). MSC is a gradual, participatory, and in-depth process that simultaneously promotes capacity-building as it unfolds. Its inclusive nature makes it particularly well-suited for monitoring programmes with participatory and empowerment-focused goals (Polet et al., 2015).

USEFULNESS OF TOC AND MSC FOR IDI4SPORT

The ToC and MSC methodologies are especially well-suited to the IDI4Sport project, which seeks to create meaningful, inclusive change in the lives of children and youth with disabilities through sport. Rather than focusing solely on measurable outputs, these methods help capture deeper social and personal transformations, such as increased confidence, improved peer relationships and shifts in attitudes toward disability. ToC provides a clear framework to understand how the project's activities lead to desired outcomes, while MSC brings forward the voices of participants—children, young people, and coaches—through their own stories of change, aligning with the inclusive nature of the IDI4Sport project, enabling a more comprehensive assessment of the project's impact. Together, these approaches support continuous learning, stakeholder engagement, and the adaptation of the programme across different contexts, ensuring that the project remains responsive and impactful.

In the case of IDI4Sport, these methodologies were implemented as follows:

To thoroughly assess the impact of the Training Pathway, we used a mixed-methods approach that integrates both quantitative and qualitative data. This combination enables a comprehensive and well-rounded evaluation of the pathway's effectiveness (Bamberger et al., 2010; Doyle et al., 2009). Quantitative data were collected through online questionnaires completed by participating coaches and trainers. Qualitative insights were gathered via focus groups with pupils, teachers, and coaches—sometimes in mixed groups, sometimes separately.

For the questionnaires, we created an English template **(see Annex 1)** and each partner translated it to its own language. A total of 67 responses were collected via Google Forms from participants across the six countries. Each partner then took the responsibility of translating the answers back to English for the final analysis.

For the focus group, a template report with topics and open questions within those topics was created **(see Annex 2).** In the same way, we produced a guideline on how to conduct a focus group **(see Annex 3)** as part of the capacity building principles of the project and the MSC approach. 8 reports from 16 focus groups where a total of 143 kids and 35 teachers and coaches participated were gathered. The focus groups were facilitated by a range of stakeholders—including project partners, teachers, coaches, and others involved in implementation. This participatory process reinforces the project's commitment to inclusivity, empowerment, and learning. It ensures that the evaluation is not seen as an external assessment but rather as a collaborative effort to

understand, improve, and amplify the positive outcomes and impacts generated by the IDI4Sport Training pathway.

Some of these focus groups were held exclusively with pupils to identify the most significant and meaningful impacts of the Experimentation program for them, including people with disabilities. In some cases, they were accompanied by the families, the coaches/teachers and in others they were by themselves. Separate focus groups were also conducted with only teachers or coaches to explore their specific experiences.

4.2 Sampling strategy and participant profiles

The evaluation adopted a purposive and opportunity-based sampling strategy, driven by the project's experimentation and implementation realities and logistical constraints. For the questionnaires, a random sample approach was initially intended. Questionnaires were disseminated to all relevant participants—teachers, coaches, and trainers—who had been involved in the implementation of the IDI4Sport activities.

For the focus groups (FGs), a more structured target sample was proposed: two focus groups per country (12 in total), with participation from two schools or clubs per country. Each child/youth FG aimed to include approximately 5 participants, totalling 60 participants (approximately 10 per country). For teachers and coaches, the target was a minimum of 24 participants across all countries, both the target number of children/youth and teachers/coaches was achieved.

However, due to contextual factors such as school calendars, exam periods, staff availability, and differences in national implementation timelines, the final sample did not reach the initial quantitative expectations in every country. Some countries exceeded the targets, while others contributed fewer participants.

Despite these variations, the focus group participants were diverse in terms of age, gender, professional roles, and levels of experience with inclusive sports, providing rich qualitative insights and a broad range of perspectives to inform the evaluation.

4.3 Limitations and biases of the evaluation

The evaluation process encountered certain limitations and potential sources of bias. These do not compromise the validity or applicability of the findings. Rather, acknowledging these constraints allows for a more nuanced interpretation of the results and highlights opportunities for refinement in future studies.

1. Sample size and representativeness

The sample—both for questionnaires and focus groups—was smaller than anticipated and not statistically representative of the entire population of project participants in every country. While efforts were made to include a range of schools, clubs, and stakeholders, limited responsiveness in some countries constrained broader coverage. Due to variations in the implementation timeline across countries, some schools and clubs had already completed their involvement or shifted focus to other priorities by the time data collection began. This limited responsiveness affected both questionnaire

completion rates and the ability to organize as many focus groups as expected in some locations.

2. Focus group facilitation and reporting capacity

A guideline on how to conduct a focus group was developed and shared with all partners (see Annex 3). However, some partners expressed concerns about their lack of prior experience and confidence in facilitating this type of qualitative method. This may have affected the quality and consistency of facilitation across countries, potentially influencing the depth and openness of discussions. The length, detail, and analytical depth of focus group reports varied significantly. This inconsistency was partly due to differences in data collected during the sessions and partly due to challenges in translating rich oral discussions into written reports. These variations highlight the need for clearer guidance and support in both facilitation and reporting in future evaluation cycles.

3. Cross-country implementation differences

The project was implemented across diverse national contexts with varying institutional structures, resources, and prior experience in inclusive sports. These contextual differences influenced both the quality of implementation and the evaluation outcomes, which may affect direct comparisons between countries or generalisations across them.

4. Qualitative data interpretation challenges

Focus groups, by nature, are sensitive to group dynamics. In some cases, dominant participants may have influenced the discussion, while others may have felt less comfortable sharing openly. Additionally, the subjective interpretation of participants' narratives during analysis presents another layer of potential bias.

Despite these limitations, the use of a mixed-methods approach, guided by a participatory and inclusive ethos, enabled the collection of rich, meaningful data that contributes significantly to understanding the project's outcomes and identifying areas for future improvement.

5. Single-point evaluation

The evaluation was conducted only after the implementation phase, with no baseline or pre-implementation data collected. As a result, measuring changes over time—particularly shifts in attitudes, knowledge, or behaviour—is limited to self-reported perceptions or qualitative narratives. This also restricts the ability to assess long-term impact, as data were collected only a few months after the experimentation phase.

5. Analysis of outcomes based on indicators

To evaluate the experimentation and implementation process of the project, a total of 11 indicators were applied, five quantitative and six qualitative. These indicators were selected to provide a balanced and evidence-based assessment of the project's reach, relevance, and impact on its target groups, including teachers, coaches, and pupils across participating countries.

The selection of indicators was guided by the project's Theory of Change (ToC) and aligned with the Most Significant Change (MSC) methodology. These frameworks helped ensure that the evaluation focused not only on measurable outputs, but also on meaningful, context-sensitive outcomes, particularly those related to capacity building, behavioural change, and inclusive practice.

Indicator development drew upon three primary sources:

- Internal assumptions regarding expected pathways of change.
- A review of scientific literature on inclusion, sports, and educational transformation.
- Collaborative discussions with project partners, ensuring that each indicator was relevant, feasible, and aligned with the on-the-ground realities of implementation.

The following analysis presents findings for each indicator individually, grouped by type (quantitative or qualitative), and includes both statistical results and thematic insights. Together, these findings offer a comprehensive understanding of the project's experimentation and implementation outcomes and help identify areas of strength as well as opportunities for improvement.

5.1. Quantitative indicators

We employed quantitative indicators to provide measurable insights into the reach, effectiveness, and uptake of the project's deliverables and experimentation phase. These indicators are grounded in numerical data collected through structured questionnaires and participation records. This enabled a clear assessment of trends across countries, target groups, and the experimentation phase. By focusing on aspects such as participation rates, resource use, training valuation, and capacity building, this data supports evidence-based conclusions about the project's scope and impact.

5.1.1. Number of participants in experimentation

This indicator is selected to evaluate the extent of participation in the project's experimentation activities. It helps measure the number of individuals from the target groups—teachers, coaches, and pupils from clubs and schools—who are directly affected during the experimentation phase. While a high number does not necessarily indicate a higher quality of implementation, it provides insight into the overall reach of this phase of the project.

Train the Trainers Phase

During the "Train the Trainers" phase, 85 individuals across the six partner countries received initial training. These participants included physical education teachers and local coaches. The training aimed to prepare them for delivering inclusive sports activities within their respective schools and clubs.

Table 1: Train the Trainers participants by country

Country	Participants	Expectation

Greece	15	2 to 3 teachers and sport coaches in every school, sports club (144 to 216 teachers in total)
North Macedonia	6	
Portugal	9	
Spain	7	
Denmark	32	
France	16	
Total	85	

*For a more detailed breakdown of participants by role and country, see the project's **Experimentation Report**.*

Implementation Phase

Following the training phase, the project moved into the implementation stage, where trained participants applied their knowledge by delivering inclusive sports sessions in schools and clubs. In this phase, new educators were included in the project, adding for a total of 111 teachers and coaches and 1,446 to 1,571 pupils across 32 schools.

Table 2: Implementation phase reach by country and role

Country	Schools and sport clubs	Teachers and coaches	Pupils
Greece	8	32	Around 300-400
North Macedonia	4	8	Around 100-120
Portugal	4	9	220
Spain	5	4	Around 400
Denmark	5	42	275
France	6	16	Around 156
Total	32	111	≈1446-1571

This wide-reaching implementation confirms that the project successfully mobilized educators and trainers to carry out inclusive sports sessions and reach diverse pupil populations. While the intensity and depth of engagement may vary across countries, the figures show a strong level of participation, aligning with the project's goal to foster inclusive sports practices in varied educational and club-based settings.

5.1.2. Valuation of training pathway

This indicator captures how teachers and coaches perceive the quality of the content in the training pathway developed for the project. Their (numerical) feedback provides critical insight into whether the training supports inclusive practices and addresses real-world challenges faced in working with individuals with disabilities in sports settings. A high number of positive evaluations suggests that the training´s content is accessible,

relevant, and practically useful, helping ensure that the pathway effectively contributes to capacity building among coaches and teachers.

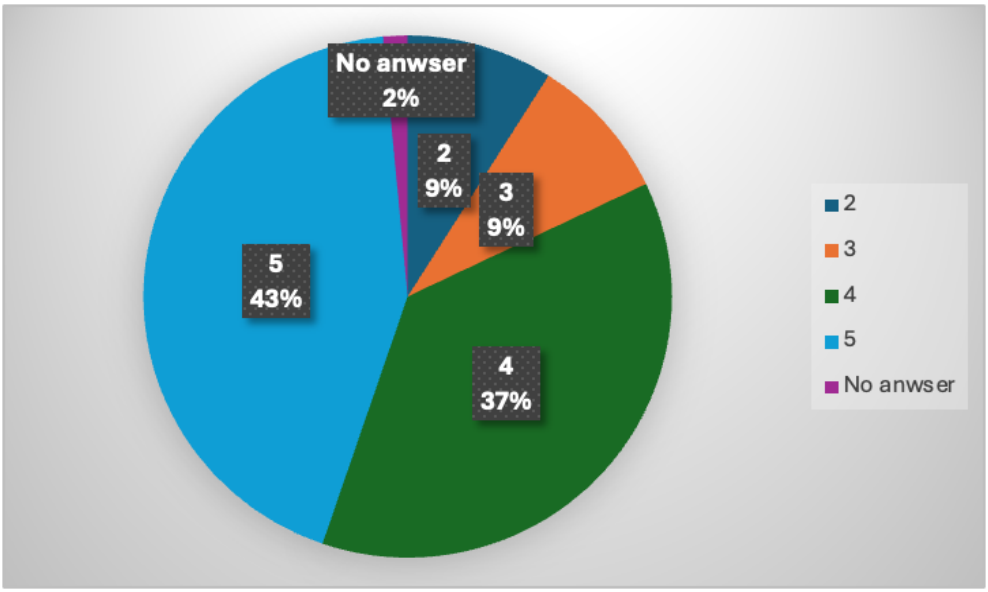
The Training Pathway was designed to equip participants with theoretical foundations, practical strategies, and adaptable resources to facilitate inclusive sports sessions for children and young people with and without disabilities. The indicator draws on participant feedback gathered through a post-training questionnaire, using the question: *How do you evaluate the quality of the learning content you received in the Training Pathway? Scale on 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest).* This helps determine whether the training materials are aligned with the day-to-day realities and pedagogical needs of the target groups. It is needed to note that the translations to each language may slightly vary the phrasing.

A high average score on this measure indicates that the materials were considered accessible, relevant, and practically useful**,** which is essential for ensuring that the training contributes meaningfully to capacity building.

Overall results

- Overall average score**:** 4.15
- Standard deviation**:** 0.94
  This reflects a generally high satisfaction level across all participants, with moderate variability in responses, indicating some country-specific or role-specific differences in experience.

Graph 1: Training pathway score by teachers and coaches (in %)



Scores by country

The data reveals that countries such as Greece**,** Spain**,** and Portugal rated the training pathway particularly highly, reflecting alignment with their local needs and expectations. In contrast, Denmark and North Macedonia reported more moderate satisfaction. These results may be partially attributed to the delayed distribution of

training materials in Denmark, as noted in focus group feedback, or to local differences in expectations regarding theoretical content and delivery formats.

Graph 2: Training pathway score by country

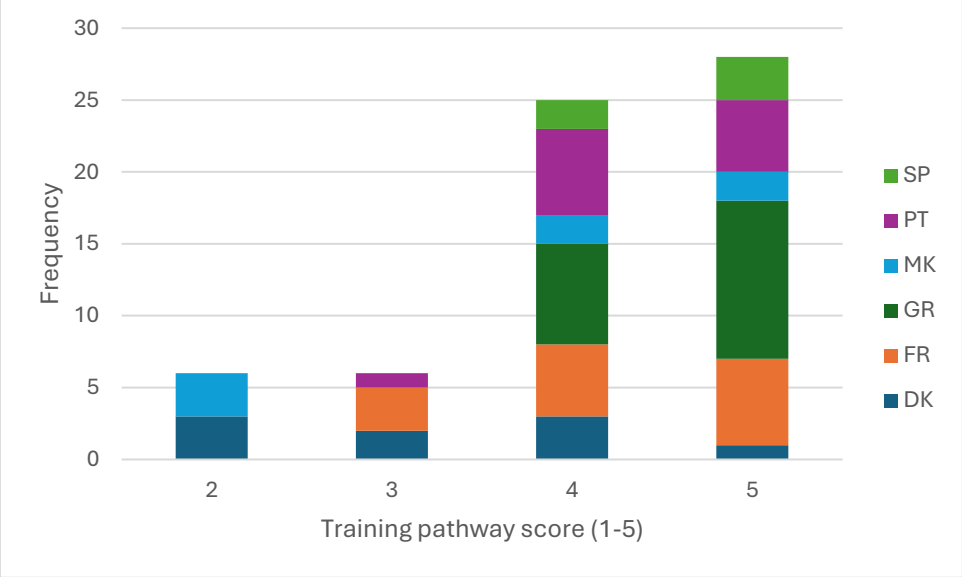


Table 3: Training Pathway Average score by country

Country	Average Score
Greece	4.61
Spain	4.60
Portugal	4.33
France	4.20
North Macedonia	3.42
Denmark	3.22

Average score by occupation

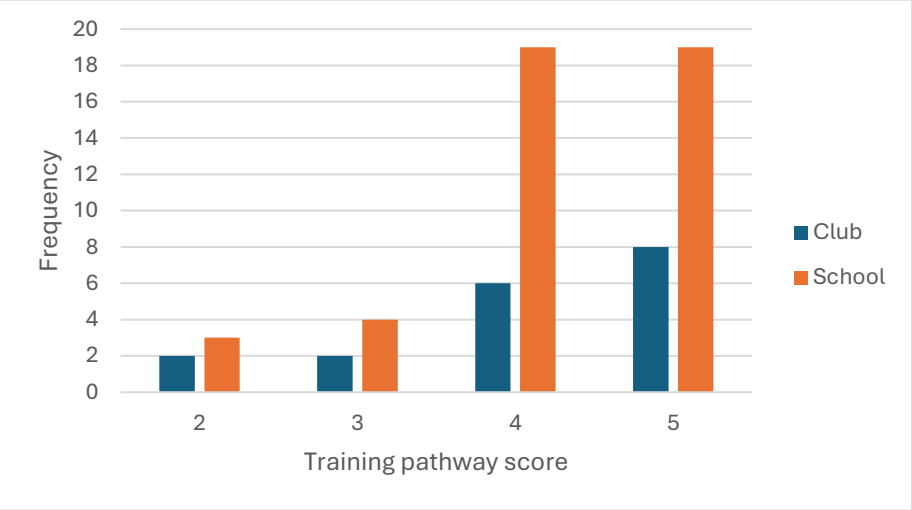
While both groups evaluated the training positively, teachers gave slightly higher scores, possibly reflecting their closer alignment with the structure and content of the educational setting emphasized in the Training Pathway. Coaches' slightly lower average may indicate a need for more practical, sport-specific adaptations or clearer guidance. This is particularly relevant as the current training program may not be sufficiently tailored to extracurricular or club-based environments, which require specific expertise in inclusive strategies.

Table 4: Training Pathway Average score by occupation

Occupation	Average Score

Teachers	4.20
Coaches	4.10

Graph 3: Training pathway score by occupation

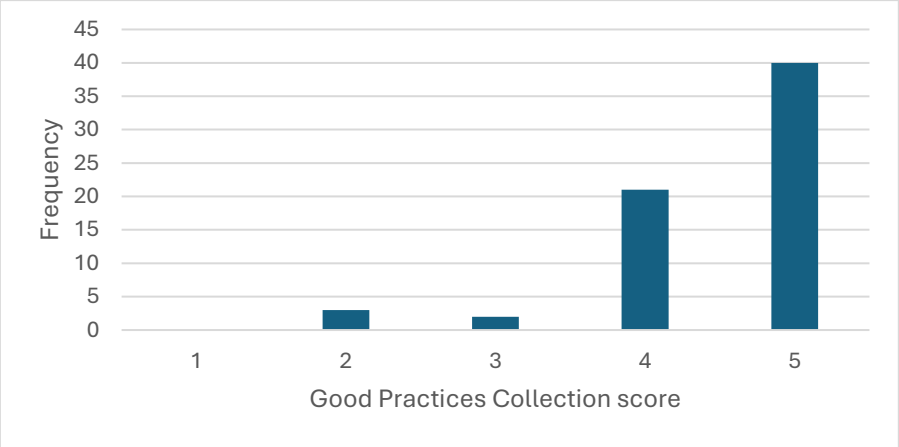


5.1.3. Valuation of good practices

This indicator measures the extent to which teachers and coaches find the documented good practices meaningful and adaptable to their own contexts. Positive feedback here indicates that the shared examples are not only informative but also realistic and inspiring in promoting inclusive sports environments. Evaluating this helps ensure that the project's resources are grounded in real needs and can influence day-to-day practices that advance the inclusion of people with disabilities. In this case, the indicator was based on responses to the following question: *Please assess the quality of the content related to the main titles below. Please assess (from 1 to 5) the below list of content, where 1 means content with less quality and 5 means the highest score: Good practices for the development of inclusive sport.*

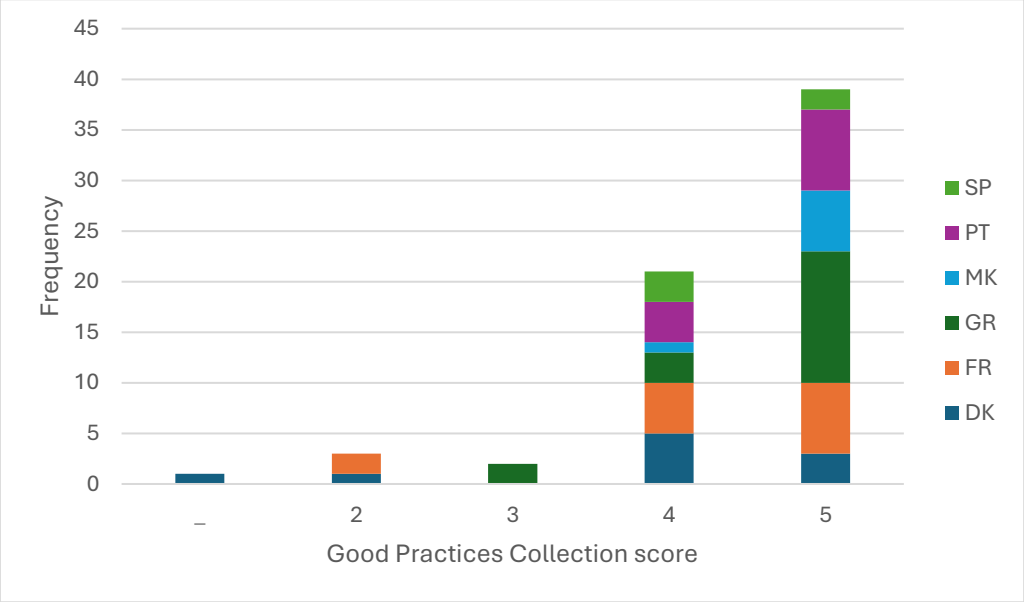
The average rating given by participants across the sample was 4.48 out of 5, with a standard deviation of 0.77, suggesting consistently positive feedback across respondents. This high score reflects a strong appreciation for the good practices as relevant, actionable, and realistic resources for both teachers and coaches working in diverse contexts.

Graph 4: Good Practices Collection score by teachers and coaches.



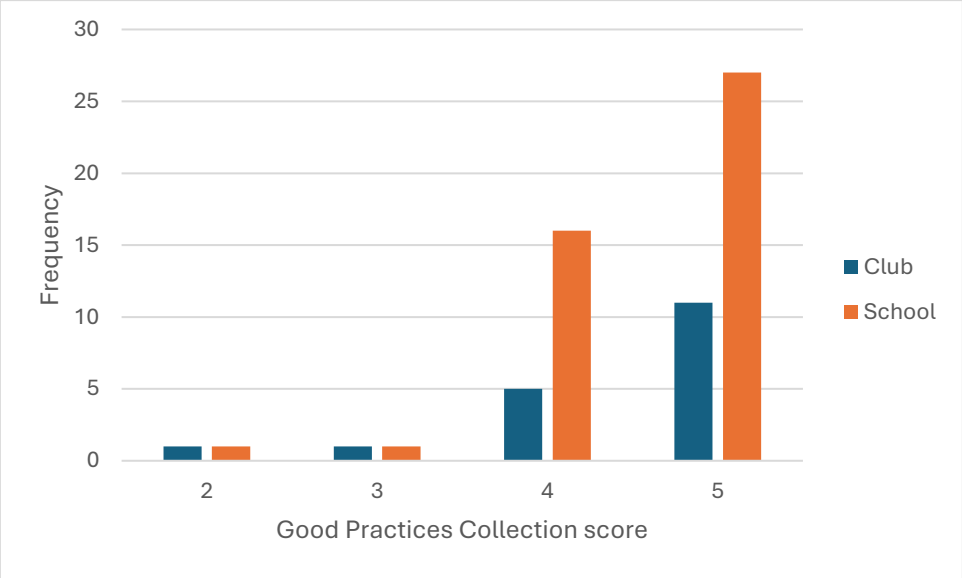
By country, the highest average was recorded in North Macedonia (4.86), followed by Portugal (4.67) and Greece (4.61). Spain (4.4), France (4.27), and Denmark (4.1) also reported favourable assessments, although with slightly more variation. These scores suggest that while all participating countries found value in the practices, the perceived utility may be influenced by national context or how closely the examples aligned with local realities.

Graph 5: Good Practices Collection score by country



When analyzed by occupation, the average score was 4.53 for school-based professionals and 4.44 for club-based professionals. This close alignment suggests that the documented practices were broadly accessible and adaptable across different educational and sporting environments.

Graph 6: Good Practices Collection score by occupation



To gain a deeper understanding of the quality of the collection of good practices, targeted questions were posed to respondents who indicated they had used the resource. These questions invited users to rate specific aspects of the content on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicated the lowest quality and 5 the highest. The areas assessed included: the type of sport and its description, the explanation of rules and inclusive strategies, the detail provided on accessibility features, and the guidance on space and equipment requirements. The average ratings for these categories, in order, were 4.54, 4.51, 4.45, and 4.34—reflecting a consistently high level of satisfaction with the resource's content.

5.1.4 Learning experience /Capacity building

This indicator assesses the extent to which coaches and teachers perceive growth in their knowledge, confidence, and readiness to implement inclusive sports practices following the training received through the project. It captures participants' reflections on their learning journey and seeks to evaluate the project's contribution to both personal and professional development in educational and sports settings. By focusing on self-assessed readiness, the indicator helps identify areas of strength as well as gaps where additional support may be needed. Notably, scientific research underscores that educators' confidence and self-efficacy are among the most reliable predictors of whether inclusive practices are adopted and sustained over time (Kiel et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2021; Gentile et al., 2023), making this a key indicator for the evaluation.

To assess this, participants were asked a series of questions as part of a quantitative self-evaluation, each offering three response options: "Yes," "Partly," and "No." The questions covered both theoretical understanding and practical implementation capacity. The results offer insights into how well the training addressed real-world challenges and how participants internalized its content.

Aggregate results across all participants

The results of the self-assessment questionnaire reflect a generally strong sense of confidence and readiness among participants to implement inclusive sports practices. On average, 81.1% of respondents answered "Yes" across the six questions, indicating a high level of perceived competence. Notably, nearly all participants (97%) reported understanding the importance of sports practice for individuals with disabilities, and over 90% felt capable of promoting adapted or inclusive sports activities. The area with the lowest full-confidence rating (43%) was related to understanding the theoretical and legal framework in their respective countries, suggesting a need for more targeted support or clarification. This may be because the framework presented was too general and did not sufficiently address the distinct contexts of club and school sports, which have different objectives and tools. However, a high percentage (46%) still reported partial understanding.

Table 4: Capacity building and self-assessment learning questions after the training pathway by teachers and coaches

Question	Yes (%)	Partly (%)	No (%)
1. I understand the theoretical and legal framework relating to sport for people with disabilities in my country.	43.0	46.0	10.0
2. I understand the importance of sports practice for people with disabilities in my country.	97.0	3.0	0.0
3. I can promote sports activities that are part of conventional sports or that are specific/adapted to people with disabilities.	90.0	10.0	0.0
4. I understand the theoretical and practical bases of strategies, methods, and inclusion in sport and sporting activities.	81.0	19.0	0.0
5. I can promote the sharing of knowledge and practices, while improving the diversification of inclusive activities.	83.5	15.0	1.5
6. I can reflect on barriers to participation in sport, and on the importance of cross-sector collaboration to promote inclusion.	92.5	6.0	1.5
Total Average	**81.1**	**16.7**	**2.2**

Comparison by setting: Clubs vs. Schools

To better understand variations across professional environments, results were also analyzed based on whether respondents worked in clubs or schools. While both groups showed high levels of confidence and learning gains, teachers in schools reported slightly higher positive responses overall. This may reflect the structure and pedagogical alignment of the training with the school context, or differences in prior experience and expectations between school-based and club-based educators.

Table 5: Average of the 6 questions for capacity building and self-assessment learnings after the training pathway divided by occupation.

Occupation	Yes" Rate (%)	"Partly" Rate (%)	"No" Rate (%)
Clubs	79.4	16.7	3.9
Schools	82.8	14.6	2.6

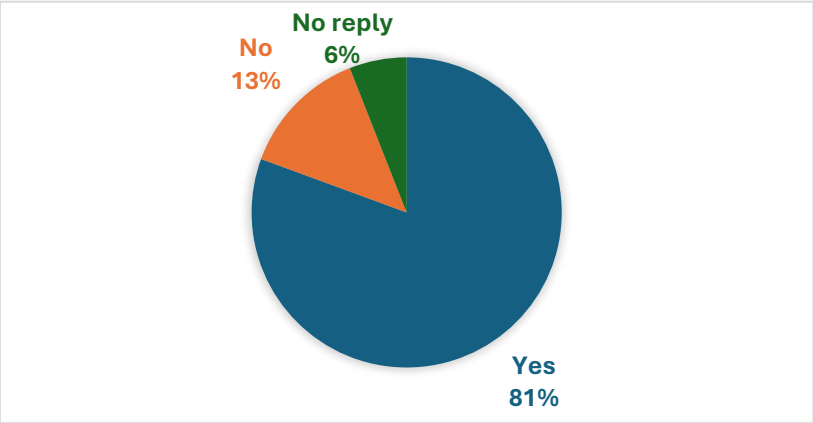
The high percentage of affirmative responses—particularly in areas related to the practical implementation of inclusive activities—indicates that the training effectively supported participants' professional development, confidence and their ability to apply inclusive strategies in real-world settings. The high scores are particularly significant given that, as highlighted in the literature, educator self-efficacy is one of the strongest predictors for the successful implementation and long-term sustainability of inclusive practices (Kiel et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2021; Gentile et al., 2023). This suggests that the positive self-assessments observed in the evaluation may indicate strong potential for real and lasting impact.

5.1.5. Access and use of deliverables (good practices)

This indicator assesses the extent to which the project's core resources—the collection of Good Practices—was accessed and applied by the target groups of teachers and coaches. Understanding how widely and effectively these materials were used offers important insight into the relevance, usability, and practical uptake of the project's outputs. To measure this indicator, we used the question: "*Did you use in your programme any activity from the collection of good examples?*" It is important to note that some individuals in the target group may have accessed or applied this resource after completing the questionnaire, meaning actual usage could be even higher than reported.

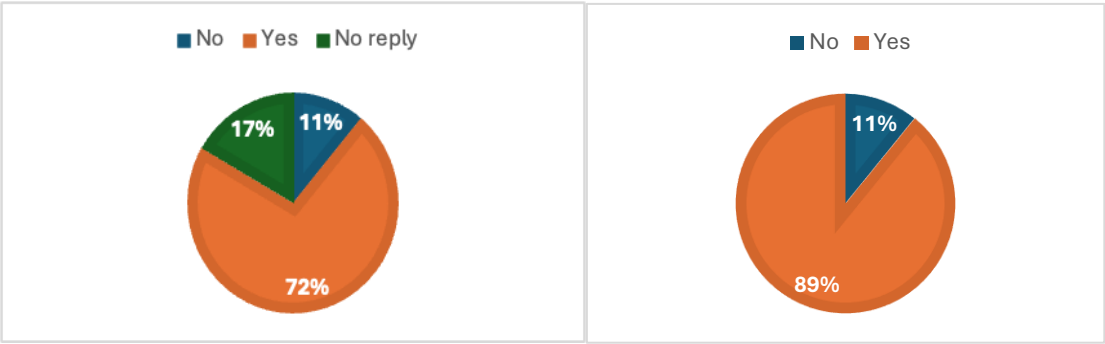
Among the 67 respondents across participating countries, 81% reported having used or intending to use the deliverables, while 13% had not used them, and 6% provided no response. This overall high rate of use reflects strong engagement with the project's tools, suggesting that the materials were accessible, meaningful, and aligned with the daily needs of educators and practitioners in inclusive sport.

Percentage of coaches and trainers that have used the Good Practices resource



When broken down by group, 89% of teachers (n = 46) stated they had used the deliverables, while 11% had not. Among coaches, 72% (n = 18) reported use, with 11% indicating they had not, and 17% offering no reply. These figures underscore the particularly high uptake among teachers, which may be attributed to how well the Training Pathway aligns with pedagogical planning and classroom practice. Coaches, while slightly less responsive overall, still showed a substantial rate of engagement with the materials, particularly where content was clearly linked to their practical implementation needs. Given the club's specialisation in one (or two) disciplines the available choices are more limited than those for schools.

Percentage of coaches that have used the Good Practices resource (left); Percentage of teachers that have used the Good Practices resource (right)



Qualitative feedback supports these findings: in Spain, coaches confirmed that the documentation helped them “in a very practical way” to carry out the activities, while in Portugal, schools integrated the resources into already ongoing inclusive sports programs.

5.2. Qualitative indicators

We have used qualitative indicators to capture the depth, nuance, and contextual meaning behind the project's experimentation and implementation and outcomes. Drawn primarily from focus group discussions and open-ended survey responses, these indicators explore how teachers, coaches, and pupils experienced and interpreted the project's activities. They offer essential insight into perceived changes in attitudes,

behaviours, and institutional practices, helping to evaluate not only what happened, but how and why it mattered within different settings. These narratives enrich the evaluation by highlighting the project's social and emotional impact, as well as areas for further development.

5.2.1. Evaluation by local coaches and trainers on the experimentation and implementation process

This indicator assesses whether the project's implementation and overall approach of the experimentation align with the needs and expectations of local coaches and teachers. As key actors in the delivery of inclusive sport initiatives, coaches and teachers offer practical, experience-based insights into how project implementation is applied and received on the ground. Their involvement in the evaluation process ensures that the perspectives of those directly responsible for implementation are not only acknowledged but actively shape how success is defined and measured.

Engaging these stakeholders enhances the relevance, credibility, and utility of the evaluation findings by incorporating diverse and grounded viewpoints (Patton, 2008). It also recognizes that different participants in the project will have distinct and equally valid experiences of the initiative, all of which deserve attention (Patton, 2015). By systematically gathering feedback from teachers and coaches, the evaluation supports informed judgments about the project's effectiveness, promotes learning and demonstrates accountability.

Incorporating this indicator highlights the project's commitment to stakeholder-informed evaluation, ensuring that those closest to the implementation process have a meaningful voice in shaping the future sustainability of the project and the creation of new ones.

Across the countries involved, the feedback from local trainers and educators reflected a high level of engagement and constructive input. In France, teachers described the training as comprehensive, accessible, and well-aligned with their real-world needs. One teacher noted, *"On the implementation of the sessions, it was very concrete, very effective. We, with the teachers who are in the field, need concrete elements."* The alternation between theory and practice was particularly appreciated, and the materials provided were considered complete and targeted. Moreover, teachers valued being able to select activities that fit their specific school contexts, enhancing ownership and practical relevance. Another teacher noted: *"In the practical training, we really tested what we were going to put in place with our students. It was more meaningful because we were in a situation of disability, in the shoes of disabled students and we were able to reproduce the same thing with our students."* This experiential approach not only increased empathy but also allowed for deeper pedagogical reflection. Another participant emphasized how it helped them anticipate pupil reactions: *"When Guillaume [trainer] explained an activity, I felt that it was not as simple as that. This meant that my students were going to feel the same thing and I thought that was great."*

Similarly, in Spain, instructors reported that they *"received all the information and documentation that helped them in a very practical way to carry out the activities"*, and

described the overall experience as *"very enriching"*, noting the willingness to replicate it in other schools and clubs.

In Portugal, both school and club-based feedback emphasized the project's role in expanding pedagogical knowledge and enriching existing practices. Teachers highlighted the *"potential for developing inclusive strategies"* and learning new methods that supported the inclusion of pupils with disabilities in joint activities like boccia.

In Greece, the experiential learning format through Paralympic sports was seen as highly effective in shifting pupils´ attitudes and building awareness. Teachers recognized that such hands-on approaches offered perspectives that traditional instruction could not achieve.

Feedback from North Macedonia echoed similar benefits, with teachers noting that they had *"tried almost all the games during classes"*, and appreciated being able to reach out to implementing organizations when support was needed. Although they identified gaps in their training, they emphasized how the initiative promoted ongoing collaboration across schools.

In Denmark, despite delays in receiving some project materials, trainers found value in the adaptive tools provided. As one participant shared, *"I think you got quite a few tools on how to adapt a normal game into multiple types of disabilities... that was really good."* Trainers also expressed the need for improved access to structured resources and theoretical background on different types of disabilities.

Evaluations were largely positive. However, common challenges also emerged. Time constraints were noted in France, where teachers felt they *"would have liked to test many more activities"* but were limited by the academic calendar. In Spain, the need for additional sports equipment and more foundational training in the sports themselves for monitors was highlighted even though this did not suppose a problem for the effective implementation of the project. The clubs ended up getting the materials and the coaches rapidly learnt about the sport.

Both North Macedonia and Denmark emphasized the importance of more targeted professional training and theoretical information in disability awareness to complement practical components, "*It would be really useful to get to know more about the different disabilities that we are presented with, because maybe I have dealt with autism, but not with, like, someone with paralysis or something, and it would be really useful to know how can I react to someone that (…) it would be really useful to have a theoretical phase of the different disabilities"*

Despite these challenges, the project significantly contributed to capacity building. Teachers in Portugal and France described meaningful changes in their pedagogical approaches. As one French teacher noted, *"These are things that I had never done and which have greatly changed my practice... not necessarily only in sport. It is something that can be moved to other activities that are reusable and reproducible."* This shift suggests a broader educational impact, where inclusive practices developed in sport can influence teaching more generally.

5.2.2. Assessment of implementation deliverables

This indicator measures how target group members (teachers and coaches) perceive the quality and usefulness of the project's resources. Positive feedback suggests that the training pathway and good practices are clear, relevant, and effective in advancing inclusion in and through sport. Positive feedback on the materials suggests that they are not only well-designed and relevant but also usable in real-world educational and coaching environments. Providing resources that are practical, contextually grounded, and easily applicable can significantly enhance teachers' and coaches' self-efficacy—a known predictor of the sustained use of inclusive methods (Kiel et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2021; Gentile et al., 2023). This indicator helps us complement the quantitative indicator "4. Learning experience/capacity building" with a more in-depth, narrative perspective on the impact of the deliverables on teachers/coaches.

In France, teachers unanimously reported that the training materials provided—delivered in several stages—were comprehensive, practical, and aligned with their real-world needs. They believe they have expanded their capacity to provide inclusive activities for individuals with disabilities. The inclusion of both theoretical models, such as the CHARME framework (a French adaptation of the TREE model), and hands-on practical exercises was praised. One teacher described CHARME as "*practical and enriching to be able to explain things*" and helpful in "*checking all the conditions necessary to adapt*" activities to the needs of pupils with disabilities. Another teacher highlighted the value of experiential learning: "*We really tested what we were going to put in place with our students... It was more meaningful because we were in a situation of disability, [in the] shoes of disabled students, and we were able to reproduce the same thing with our students.*"

The Spanish implementation similarly demonstrated strong satisfaction with the documentation and guidance provided. Monitors confirmed they received all the necessary resources to implement inclusive activities with groups of 25–30 pupils. And the fact that it helped them in a very practical way, underlining the usability of the resources in real school settings. Minor logistical challenges—such as a lack of equipment—were addressed by the organisations involved.

In Portugal, both school and club partners highlighted the relevance of the deliverables. APCAS, one of the organisations already engaged in inclusive training, noted that the project's Training Pathway "*played an important role in enriching the content [of the training they have been already doing for the community]*" while schools felt confident in future implementation thanks to the "*technical support*" received and acquired equipment. Missing materials were addressed locally through partnerships, indicating proactive problem-solving and strong organisational backing.

Feedback from North Macedonia emphasized the practical value of the training and the ongoing support from implementing partners. Trainers appreciated being able to reach out for help and recognized the Training Pathway as a resource they could consult when needed. This contributed to an overall feeling of preparedness and reassurance.

In the Danish implementation, a delay in the dissemination of project deliverables was noted. Trainers reported that they had not received the Training Pathway at the time of

the focus group discussions. Despite this timing issue, participants demonstrated a strong interest in having structured and accessible resources. As one participant suggested, "*It would be really useful to get... just like a how-to guide... so then we have it, and we can share with our clubs back home*." The Training Pathway and Good Practices contain much of the practical information they had requested, reinforcing its value for supporting inclusive sports practice.

Finally, in Greece, the evaluation primarily focused on the implementation's effect on pupils, but the positive experience suggests that teachers felt equipped to deliver inclusive sports activities using the project's resources. The experiential nature of the training through Paralympic sports appeared to play a central role in this success.

However, a separate concern raised during the Danish focus group—and echoed in the French evaluation—was the absence of detailed theoretical content on specific types of disabilities. One Danish trainer remarked, "*It would be really useful to get to know more about the different disabilities that we are presented with… maybe I have dealt with autism, but not with, like, someone with paralysis or something*." These observations suggest an opportunity for future training materials and project deliverables to include a stronger theoretical framework on disability types and inclusive strategies. This enhancement would not only support more informed practice but also equip trainers to feel more confident when addressing diverse needs in inclusive sports environments.

In summary, the Training Pathway and Good Practices were largely well-received across different countries, with participants valuing their relevance, practicality, and alignment with real-world conditions. Where gaps existed—such as delayed access to documents or insufficient theoretical content—participants still expressed a willingness to engage with and build upon the materials. These findings confirm the utility of the deliverables while also pointing to areas for further enhancement to ensure consistent quality and accessibility across future implementations.

5.2.3. Engagement and enjoyment of participants

This indicator captures how pupils respond to the new sports activities introduced through the project. Positive narratives about surprise, excitement, and enjoyment suggest that the activities are engaging and emotionally resonant. High engagement is an early sign of successful inclusion and helps reduce the likelihood of dropout (Roult et al., 2015), while also fostering continued participation and social connection among children with and without disabilities (Rimmer et al., 2007). Narratives on how the activities helped understanding and promoted empathy towards other peers with disabilities suppose a positive impact of the implementation and its path towards the fulfilment of the project's goals.

The selection of this indicator is strongly supported by scientific research. Enjoyment has been consistently identified as a key psychological factor influencing motivation to participate in physical activity (PA). As Fairclough et al. (2018) argue, fun and enjoyment are not peripheral—they are predisposing factors for ongoing participation in PA. Zhang et al. (2024) similarly demonstrate that game-based physical education programs significantly enhance enjoyment among children and adolescents, a factor that plays a

critical role in promoting sustained engagement. Bajamal et al. (2024) further emphasize that enjoyment is a fundamental psychological need that should be prioritized when designing programs aiming to influence children's and youth's health behaviours.

Findings from focus groups across the participating countries affirm these conclusions. In France, participants described the pleasure of playing with friends as a central reason for enjoying the activities: *"When you do it at school, with teammates, it's fun because (...) you have fun with your friends, you do lots of things that you can learn with your friends, have fun, laugh with them (...)."* When asked how they would convince a friend to join, their responses focused on the promise of having fun: *"Come play with me, it'll be super fun!"* or *"There are lots of fun things that you love too much!"* This highlights how enjoyment and social bonding work in tandem to encourage participation, demonstrating that community and fun are often inseparable in children's decision-making. In Greece, children described their surprise and excitement at trying new inclusive sports, such as goalball and sitting volleyball. The novelty and challenge contributed to their enjoyment and learning: *"Goalball was my favourite because you have to use your ears to hear the ball—it's challenging but really fun."*

Across national contexts, pupils repeatedly described the activities as fun, surprising, and inclusive. In France**,** adolescents without disabilities, even those already familiar with classmates with disabilities, found inclusive sports like wheelchair basketball and volleyball to be a revelation. One pupil shared: *"Even if I was already a little used to it, doing wheelchair sports like that is a discovery. I find it really funny. And in fact, it destroys a bit of a gap between people with disabilities and able-bodied people, who cannot necessarily practice together otherwise."* Using the wheelchair was not seen as a limitation but as a source of enjoyment: *"Ever since I discovered wheelchair sports, I've really liked the chair. I would like to do Inclusive Volleyball next year."*

The inclusive adaptation of games made them more engaging. A pupil described how with certain modifications, inclusive baseball became more enjoyable and fair : *"At first, I didn't think baseball was fun, but inclusive baseball became my favourite sport! ... We each earn as many points as possible, there is not one who is better than the other. It is accessible to everyone."*

In Denmark, pupils were surprised and delighted by the creativity of the adapted sports. One child commented: *"I think it was fun. But I always think it's fun to just try some new games in general... It was also a lot of fun when the teacher took away some of the senses or faculties from us."* They especially enjoyed the unique experiences that inclusive games offered: *"And then he ends up catching Lucas directly. And it was awesome... I think it was great, I think it was great fun."*

In Portugal, the spirit of shared challenge and equality was central. Pupils appreciated that in wheelchair obstacle races, everyone had the opportunity to compete on equal terms. Their enthusiasm was clear in how they would recommend the activity to others: *"Try it, it's fun and we can all play." "Come and try it to see that it's not that easy."*

In Spain, the unfamiliarity of the sports did not hinder engagement—on the contrary, it added to the excitement. Pupils with no previous exposure to the activities quickly found them enjoyable: *"It's a fun sport that we can play with our friends.". "We didn't know this sport before, but now we love it."*

The data collected from the participants themselves confirms that the project successfully tapped into the motivational drivers for children and youth engagement into physical activities. Moreover, the positive emotional tone of pupil's responses signals an effective rollout of the inclusive sports activities. The enthusiasm with which they described the games—and their eagerness to share and invite others—reflect a strong alignment between the project's objectives and the lived experience of participants.

5.2.4. Awareness of barriers to inclusion

The inclusion of people with disabilities in sports continues to face numerous barriers, these can have different categorisation: physical, attitudinal, informational, organisational, social, and psychological; internal and external (Jaarsma, & Smith, 2018; Barbosa-Granados et al., 2024). Addressing these obstacles is essential to creating a more equitable and inclusive sporting environment. This indicator explores how pupils perceive the challenges faced by peers with disabilities in accessing sports. Their explanations of these barriers—and suggestions for overcoming them—reflect a growing awareness of inclusion issues. Such critical reflection is essential for building empathy and promoting long-term social change (Abellan et al., 2018; Rocha et al., 2023), as it shows that the project is not only impacting behaviour but also influencing participants' attitudes.

Physical barriers remain a key limitation, particularly when it comes to facility accessibility and adaptive equipment (Sahlin, & Lexell, J. 2015). Focus groups emphasized the inadequacy of accessible infrastructure and transportation options as recurring issues. For instance, French adolescents noted that access to sport is often dictated not by ability but by environmental limitations: "*It is the environment, not the person (…) Mainly transport, adaptation of equipment, timetables, rules."* Similarly, participants in Portugal observed that essential equipment is frequently missing from schools, making participation difficult: *"Some sporting activities require the use of specific equipment that the school doesn't have."* Moreover, the geographic inequality in access to sport was flagged in Portugal, where people with disabilities in remote areas must travel long distances to participate in inclusive sports programs.

Negative societal attitudes remain one of the most pervasive and damaging obstacles to inclusion in sports. Stereotypes, prejudices, and a lack of awareness from both peers and professionals can foster an unwelcoming or even hostile environment. Many individuals report experiencing intolerance and insensitivity, which can diminish self-confidence and willingness to participate. (Ives et al., 2021; Olasagasti-Ibargoien et al., 2023).

Attitudinal barriers were repeatedly identified in the different focus group as some of the most emotionally impactful challenges. These include negative stereotypes, fear of

judgment, and peer rejection. A French adolescent reflected about the rejection and exclusion experienced by disabled pupils*: "[when] the disabled person can't play football. The other teams don't want to adapt the game to their situation."* Another one, when asked about the barriers stated*: "The main barriers... are the challenges linked to the disability situation, such as material challenges and especially the fear of being judged by others."* From Denmark, a participant noted: *"I think he [referring to an older teammate with disabilities] thought a lot about what the others thought of him. Also, because some of them made fun of him."* In Greece, a pupil remarked: *"I believe that children with special needs might not want to do sports because they feel that someone will… will judge them."* North Macedonian children highlighted how inexperience and discomfort with inclusive practices can lead to exclusion: *"Some children might not know how to engage with or support peers with disabilities in sports, which could make those peers feel excluded or hesitant to join."*

Limited access to clear and accessible information about sports opportunities is another significant hurdle. Many individuals with disabilities are unaware of the options available to them due to ineffective communication channels, lack of inclusive outreach, and the absence of accessible promotional materials (Chen et al., 2024). This informational gap not only curtails opportunities for participation but also reinforces broader patterns of social exclusion. In Portugal, this lack of information or knowledge is highlighted by athletes with disabilities and their families, from things such as how to get to practice to the feeling of lack of offer to practice sport.

Organisational barriers encompass insufficient training for coaches, rigid school schedules, and lack of inclusive policy implementation (Chen et al., 2024). Young people in Denmark, for example, identified challenges like conflicts between school obligations and team dynamics as limiting factors for participation. Both in France and Greece, the need for better-trained professionals was seen as a vital starting point to remove systemic obstacles. French adolescents in inclusive sports clubs argued that professional training is the first lever for real inclusion, enabling coaches to adapt sports meaningfully and inclusively: *"training educators in what inclusion is, that would be a good start.".*

Teachers and coaches demonstrated a strong understanding of the barriers faced by people with disabilities in sports, along with a notable self-awareness of the challenges they encounter in their own roles—an important and commendable reflection worth highlighting.

In Denmark, the coaches underscored the lack of education and training for those working with children with disabilities: *"I would like to say that the most important part that we don't have around the world is education for the people that [are] teaching."*. Which also is reflected on a sense of self-incapacity or a question of their own abilities: *"am I up to the task of meeting his needs? Can I do this?*" expressing the anxiety some educators feel when trying to adapt activities for pupils with disabilities. This aligns with the findings by Gentile et al., (2023) who exposed that: "Familiarity and self-efficacy had a direct effect on the use of inclusive physical activity games". A significant barrier identified in both France and Denmark was the lack of systemic support and sufficient

professional development. Teachers in France reflected on the reluctance to change entrenched practices and the emotional labour involved in inclusive teaching: *"It is not easy for colleagues to change their way of doing things and adapt, it is always a challenge."* Another teacher pointed out the strain of managing large groups with varying needs: *"The main difficulties? It is the number of able-bodied students, not the opposite. You have to be able to give to everyone. And these students [with disabilities] require a lot of attention."* Furthermore, concerns about the visibility—or invisibility—of disabilities were raised in the context of lesson planning, highlighting the importance of communication between parents and caretakers and coaches and teachers: *"I will plan out lessons and then get into class [and] there's a person who needs a very different type of lesson."*

5.2.5. Sustainability of inclusive activities

This indicator examines whether schools and clubs have plans or strategies to continue inclusive sports activities beyond the project's duration. Evidence of long-term commitment—such as integration into regular curricula or sport activities programming, institutional planning or even the willingness from those in charge to sustain the activities—demonstrates that inclusive practices are becoming embedded in everyday routines and thus reflect positive impact (Scheirer, & Dearing, 2011). This signals that the project is promoting sustainable change rather than one-time interventions, helping ensure continued access to inclusive sports for children and young people with disabilities.

Across participating countries, teachers and coaches generally expressed optimism and enthusiasm about the potential sustainability of the inclusive sports activities introduced through the IDI4Sport project. While not all had formal plans in place, many saw clear benefits and envisioned long-term implementation if proper support and resources were maintained. In France, professionals emphasized that positive experiences during the project helped foster motivation to continue and were eager to continue with the dynamics driven by the project: *"We showed that it worked and that it was positive, so it's encouraging for colleagues in the implementation [of] good inclusive practices."* Teachers advocated for embedding these activities within broader educational projects, suggesting awareness-building through debates and inclusive video content like *"Everyone has the right to play."* One PE teacher noted, *"It's really a methodology. It's a way of thinking about an activity differently which means that I think that behind it we can adapt to other things."* One middle school teacher even mobilized the school management and colleagues to create an awareness day for adaptation in Physical Education classes. Similarly, in the Clamart after-school centre inclusive sport activities have been incorporated into their programme after the implementation of the project finalised. In North Macedonia, a teacher confirmed both interest and capacity for continuation: *"We have already seen positive changes in how the children interact, and the teachers are more aware of how to create an inclusive environment… We are planning to continue these activities in the future."* In Portugal, logistical support was crucial, with one teacher explaining: *"With the support and readiness of APCAS to provide support and loan materials, it is possible to implement the activities on a regular*

basis." Spain provided a concrete example of institutional investment, where schools and clubs have painted dedicated pickleball courts to ensure inclusive activities are accessible and recurring. In Greece, the commitment was evident through the integration of adaptive sports into the school curriculum and the adoption of Paralympic sports activities for all pupils, pointing to a whole-school approach that aligns with long-term inclusion goals. Conversely, in Denmark, while trainers expressed appreciation for the training and saw value in the activities *"the experience of being part of a game that you're gonna probably use for the whole life, that you're gonna teach"* there were currently no fixed plans to maintain them, largely due to the absence of affiliations with specific clubs and lack of time.

Overall, while some schools and clubs are still navigating institutional constraints, many demonstrated a strong willingness to sustain inclusive activities, either through continued training, infrastructural adaptations, or curricular integration. This willingness suggests that the IDI4Sport project has the potential to promote systemic, long-term change rather than being a one-off intervention, especially where commitment is supported by strategic planning and access to necessary resources.

5.2.6. Changes in perception, attitudes, and behaviour

This indicator assesses the extent to which the project has influenced shifts in attitudes, beliefs, and day-to-day actions among participants, particularly teachers, coaches, and pupils, regarding inclusion of people with disabilities. As stated by Avramidis & Norwich (2002), attitude constitutes a prerequisite for the adoption of inclusive practice in schools. Evidence of change may include increased empathy, reduced stigma, proactive inclusive behaviour, and greater openness toward engaging with individuals with disabilities (Ling et al., 2025). These changes are essential for understanding the deeper social impact of the project and its role in promoting inclusive mindsets and environments.

In France, the role-play and inclusive sports scenarios proved especially transformative. Pupils reflected openly on their previous misconceptions, with one admitting, *"At the beginning, I said to myself, maybe at one point, they didn't even understand the rules. And yet... Not at all."* Others acknowledged behavioural changes, shifting from exclusionary tendencies to active partnership with pupils in the ULIS (inclusive education device) program: *"In the first game with cross boccia, I'm not going to put myself with... those who are in ULIS. And whereas in the second game, I wanted to put myself with them. Because I saw that they were strong. I changed… You could say that I changed my tune."*

Still, some pupils showed resistance, illustrating the persistence of ingrained habits: *"I'm not going to lie to you... It hasn't changed much. (...) It may be crazy. But it's a reflex."* This underscores the need for long-term, sustained exposure to inclusive practices to foster deeper behavioural changes.

Teachers in France also noticed significant shifts in social dynamics. Pupils with disabilities became more integrated into everyday interactions—during recess, in corridors, and during collective times—leading to increased cooperation and a decrease

in conflict behaviours: *"We went from students who were sometimes a little more isolated to students who were picked up to go play, including during recess… It's something that has become stronger."* This improved integration also had emotional benefits, enhancing self-esteem and focus among pupils with disabilities, especially in reverse inclusion settings where *"students who were not disabled were struggling."*

In Greece, pupils expressed newfound respect and understanding after engaging in adapted sports. One pupil shared: *"I never thought it could be so difficult to play without moving your legs. It made me respect people who do this every day."* Another reflected on the physical challenge and resilience required in seated volleyball: *"My legs got tired quickly. It made me realize how strong you need to be in your upper body."* These reflections highlight the project's success in cultivating empathy through experiential learning.

The Greek report also noted that pupils were *"amazed to discover that people without certain body parts could still actively participate in sports,"* suggesting a significant shift in their perceptions of ability and athleticism.

In North Macedonia, participants were pleasantly surprised by how inclusive play allowed everyone to join in, fostering *"a sense of joy and connection."* These activities offered firsthand insight into the possibilities of inclusive environments and were valued for their ability to promote social unity and appreciation of diversity.

In Portugal, pupils reported discovering new inclusive sports and expressed how eye-opening it was to experience the challenges of using a wheelchair. These realisations enhanced their understanding and compassion, contributing to a shift in peer attitudes, which had previously been a major barrier: *"These activities were fundamental in eradicating or reducing them [negative peer attitudes]."* When asked for advice to other institutions, the pupils emphasized the importance of inclusion: *"It has a positive impact on children with disabilities… they feel they belong to a group, and [there is] the acceptance of their peers when they put themselves in their place."*

Finally, the professional staff across countries, particularly in France, also underwent important changes. Teachers recognized that PE could, and should, include pupils with disabilities, despite earlier assumptions that it might be too difficult: *"Ultimately, accessibility can also be implemented in PE and not necessarily exclude students with motor disabilities or other difficulties."* Through the project, educators discovered inclusive sports strategies and gained awareness of their own biases, as one specialist teacher reflected on the ability of PE to *"drive inclusive dynamics."*

The project demonstrated a meaningful impact on the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours of both pupils and educational professionals regarding inclusion in sports. Across participating countries, testimonials and observations confirmed a notable shift toward greater empathy, reduced prejudice, and increased willingness to include and support youth and children with disabilities in physical activities.

6. Conclusions

The IDI4Sport project successfully achieved its overarching aim: to promote inclusion in and through sport for children and youth with disabilities across six European countries. The experimentation and implementation phase demonstrated strong effectiveness, reaching over 1,400 pupils and training more than 100 educators in inclusive practices. This was supported by high satisfaction ratings, extensive use of the project's resources, and consistent positive feedback from both qualitative and quantitative data. Evaluation data confirm that the project's core objectives were largely achieved: capacity building among educators, increased participation of pupils with disabilities, and the development of more inclusive and empathetic environments in both schools and clubs.

Quantitative findings revealed high levels of satisfaction and perceived learning. The training pathway received an average score of 4.15 out of 5, while the Good Practices collection scored even higher at 4.48. Importantly, 81% of respondents reported using the project's deliverables in their practice, and 97% affirmed understanding the importance of sport for individuals with disabilities. These metrics reflect both the relevance, and the usability of the materials provided. Teachers demonstrated strong uptake, with high levels of confidence in promoting inclusive sports and reflecting on barriers to participation.

Qualitative data from focus groups provided us with deeper insights into the personal and social impacts of the project. Children and young people described the inclusive activities as fun, novel, and empowering. Many reported greater empathy and curiosity toward their peers with disabilities, particularly after participating in adapted sports such as wheelchair basketball or goalball. Teachers and coaches, meanwhile, noted meaningful shifts in their own perceptions and practices, with several highlighting how the training altered not only how they approached sport, but their broader pedagogical methods as well. Emotional narratives from both pupils and educators underscored the value of shared experiences, team building, and the visibility of success among children and youth with diverse needs.

Nevertheless, the evaluation also surfaced challenges. Differences in national contexts affected implementation timelines and consistency. Some trainers indicated that the theoretical content on types of disabilities was insufficient and focus group facilitation quality varied due to limited experience and time constraints. Logistical barriers, such as lack of equipment or difficulty integrating activities into school calendars, also emerged as recurring issues. Despite these limitations, the project's participatory evaluation approach fostered continuous learning and reflection—an outcome aligned with the values of inclusivity and empowerment.

To summarise, IDI4Sport made a substantial contribution to encouraging inclusion through sport in both educational and community settings. It achieved meaningful change not only through its content, but through the processes of collaboration, dialogue, and adaptation it inspired. As several schools and clubs move toward integrating these practices more permanently, the project lays a solid foundation for long-term impact and continued innovation in inclusive physical education and sport.

The project's dissemination efforts, the adoption of various sport activities, and the development of sustainable pedagogical resources under IDI4SPORT are ongoing

throughout the project's lifespan. Among these initiatives, the French partners are currently developing an online training module based on the project resources to ensure the continuity and sustainability of its activities on a national scale.

7. Recommendations

To enhance the long-term impact and replicability of the IDI4Sport initiative, we have gathered several recommendations from both the evaluation process and the reflective insights gathered through focus groups. These recommendations aim to strengthen training and resource design, support project scaling and replication, and guide future monitoring and follow-up activities.

First, in terms of training and resource design, it is essential to deepen the theoretical content related to disability. While participants appreciated the practical nature of the training materials, both teachers and coaches expressed a need for more comprehensive information on different types of disabilities, including invisible ones. This knowledge is crucial for enabling professionals to make thoughtful and effective adaptations. Differentiating materials to better suit the specific roles and contexts of teachers (within schools) and coaches (within clubs) would also improve usability and relevance. Additionally, clearer articulation of national legal frameworks and rights related to inclusive sport could help educators better situate their work within institutional and policy contexts. Finally, organizing training content and focus group questions by theme—with simplified formats for younger participants—would improve clarity, accessibility, and engagement.

For scaling and replicating the project, clear and early communication is key. Some schools and clubs joined the project after the initial international meetings and missed crucial context about the initiative's European dimension and long-term vision. Ensuring that all participants—regardless of when they join—are fully informed about the project's objectives and structure can foster a stronger sense of ownership and connection. Parent engagement is another area that deserves greater emphasis. Several focus group participants highlighted how early communication with families—especially regarding children's learning styles or behavioural needs—could significantly ease implementation and avoid misunderstandings. Additionally, embedding inclusive sports into formal curricula and club programming is vital for sustainability. Promising practices, such as integrating adapted games into PE schedules or creating inclusive awareness events, should be encouraged and documented. Flexible participation models, including online or hybrid formats for training and focus groups, could also address time and scheduling constraints, particularly for institutions with limited capacity.

Regarding monitoring and follow-up activities, the project would benefit from continued evaluation beyond the initial implementation and evaluation phase. Follow-up surveys or focus groups could assess how inclusive practices evolve over time and whether they are sustained in daily routines. Establishing regional or transnational communities of practice would allow teachers and coaches to exchange insights, successes, and challenges, building a support network that extends beyond the project's life span.

Furthermore, compiling updated case studies of effective practices from various contexts would aid replication and adaptation in new settings. Most importantly, the evaluation process itself should remain a space for collective learning. Embracing a reflective, participatory approach ensures that the project continues to respond to real-world needs while upholding the core values of inclusion, equity, and empowerment.

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9. Annexes

Annex 1: Questionnaire for teachers and coaches (in English)

IDI4Sport EVALUATION Questionnaire

Template for the online survey and document for partners' translation

English	Partners language: Please add it here your language and translated text below. Please use the same structure of the content on the left side; don´t change your structure in your translation.
Thank you for considering participation in our online survey. Before you decide to participate, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. The purpose of this particular study is to collect your views and experiences when it comes to the IDI4Sport project and your engagement in it. If you agree to participate, you are asked to complete an online survey that will take approximately 15 minutes. We would like to collect your input in regards to your experience in: • Using IDI4Sport Training pathway • Using IDI4Sport Collection of good examples • Implementing IDI4Sport Experimentation programme Furthermore, your participation is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the survey, for any reason. This survey is anonymous, which means that no personally identifying information will be collected at any stage. Your responses will not be linked to you in any way, ensuring your complete anonymity. The data collected will be used for research purposes only and may be shared with the research community through	

publications or presentations. However, all data will be presented in aggregate form, and individual responses will not be identifiable. By proceeding to fill in the survey, you acknowledge that you have read and understood this consent section, and agree to participate in the online anonymous survey. You understand that your participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without facing negative consequences. **I have been informed and understood the nature of the survey and agree to participate.** • **YES and would like to proceed.**	

About you	
General questions In this section we will ask you general questions related to demographics (i.e. statistical data relating to the population and particular groups within it).	
While being involved in IDI4Sport activities, where are you working? • School • Sport club	
If school, please select: • Primary school • Secondary school • High school • Others	
If club, please select • Multi-sport club • One or 2 sports club • Please identify sport of your club (like, basketball, football…)_____	

Your role in school/club (please select from the list below) • Teacher • Principle • Vice Principle • Leader of department • Teacher supervisor • Trainer/coach • Sport club leader	
Country:	
Do you work with children/youth with disabilities? • YES • NO	
Do you include to the programme children/youth without disabilities? • YES • NO	
Do you include to the programme children/youth **with and without** disabilities? • YES • NO	

Questionnaire about the Training pathway	
Preparation for the training	
How do you evaluate the quality of the learning content you received in the Training Pathway? • Scale on 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest)	
National training, meeting (organised by your host organisation)	
How many teachers/trainers joined the national workshop?	

How do you evaluate the quality of the information you received at the national workshop and meeting with your host organization? • Scale on 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest)	
Do you have any suggestions about how it might be improved? (Please be brief and capture it in 1 or 2 sentence maximum)	
What is your main personal takeaway from the national workshop / meeting? (Please be brief and capture it in 1 or 2 sentences maximum)	
Content of the Training pathway	
Please assess the quality of the content related to the main titles below. Please assess (from 0 to 5) the below list of content, where 0 means content with less quality and 5 means the highest score.	
Topic	
Theoretical Framework about: Sport, Disability & Inclusion	
Legal framework and international conventions on sport for people with disabilities	
Organization of Sport for People with Disabilities	
Eligibility and Sports Classification	
Adapted Sport and/or Specific Sport for People with Disabilities	
Inclusive Sport	
Resources (Human & Techniques)	
Barriers, Facilitators & Cooperation	
Good practices for the development of inclusive sport	
Topic	

Are you aware of programmes in organised sport for people with disabilities in your country? YES, NO, Partly	
Are you aware of the Legal framework in your country and international conventions on sport for people with disabilities? YES, NO, Partly	
Are you aware of statistical data about sport for people with disabilities? YES, NO, Partly	
Are you aware how sport for people with disabilities is organised in your country? YES, NO, Partly	
Are you aware of different areas of disability? YES, NO, Partly	

Learning experience after the training	
Topic	
I understand the theoretical and legal framework relating to sport for people with disabilities in my country	
I understand the importance of practising sports for people with disabilities in my country	
I can promote sport activities as integrated part of conventional sports to those that are specific and/or adapted for people with disabilities	
I understand the theoretical and practical bases of strategies, methods and inclusion in sport and sporting activities	
I can promote the sharing of knowledge and practices, contributing to the improvement of diversification of inclusive activities	
I can reflect on the barriers in practising sports, as well as the importance of collaboration between sectors in promoting inclusion in and through sport.	

Evaluation of the Collection of good examples and Experimentation programme	
How many different sport activities did you organise? • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • More than 5 • Additional comments you would like to share	
How many sessions per week you organised? • none • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • More than 5 • Additional comments you would like to share	
Mark activities you organised (Multiple choices are possible) • Sitting volleyball • Boccia • Goalball • Adapted table tennis • Inclusive volleyball • Inclusive tèque (inclusive baseball) • Inclusive or adapted circus • Swimming • Judo • Karate • Movement for All	

• Badminton • Boxing • Bowling • Wrestling • Dance • Hockey • Kin-ball • Trampoline • The Happy League • Short distance running • long jump • Games for all • Flying radio-controlled drones • Cross bocia • Polybat • Padel • Pickleball • Netball • Others (please list):	
Did you organise new sport in the experimentation programme? YES NO	
If YES above: What was a new sport you organised?	
If NO: Why not?	
How many teachers from your school/club were involved in the activities?	
How many children/youth with disabilities were directly involved in your activities?	
How many children/youth without disabilities were involved in your activities?	
Can you estimate the gender percentage?	

• Male • Female • Others	
What are the challenges you faced during implementation of your activities?	
Did you use in your programme also any activity from the collection of good examples? YES NO	
IF YES: Which one? (Please select from below. Multiple choice is possible) • Bevægelse for Alle (Movement for All) • Try your hand at parasports • Sports for people with larger disabilities • Movement for life - Parasport and sports for the mind • LykkeLiga (The Happy League) • Adapted table tennis • Inclusive volleyball • Inclusive tèque" (inclusive baseball) • Inclusive or adapted circus • Goalball • Short Distance Running and long jump • Based on the educational scenario: "Everyone has a right to play!" • Games for all • Flying radio-controlled drones • Adaptive swimming activities • Volleyball • Judo • Informal activity • Karate • Cross Bocia	

• Polybat • Inclusive Badminton • Padel • Pickleball • Netball • Meaningful Sport • Resource Center for Adapted Sport • BIRD - Integrated Sport Resource Base	
IF YES: **Please assess (from 0 to 5) the below list of content in the Collection of good examples, where 0 means content with less quality and 5 means the highest score.**	
Topic	
Type of sport and description	
Description of rules and inclusive approach	
Description of specific and extended accessibility	
Guidelines for a space needed for activities and equipment	
If NO: Why not?	
Thank you for your time and for completing the survey.	

Annex 2: Focus group report template

Qualitative assessment - Focus groups interviews

Template for the report

Targets we agreed on:

Number of participants:

- 6 participating countries
- **Minimum** 2 schools or 2 sport clubs in each partner country
    - Minimum 12 schools or sport clubs in total
- **Minimum** 5 children/youth in school or sport club in each partner country
    - Minimum 60 children/youth in total
- **Minimum** 2 teachers or 2 trainers in one school and in one sport club
    - Minimum 24 teachers or trainers in total

Guidelines and template for the report

Guidelines

- Please write the report by following the topics below.
- Some questions/topics are clustered. You can answer one by one , or summarize more questions together.
- Please summarize your discussion.
- Ideally, we ask you not to use bullet points, but try to write a story you heard.
- Try to catch statements we can use later in the dissemination of your success of implementation.
    - Please ask children/teachers/trainers if we can use their names beside the statement. Maybe even photos, if they allow. If not possible, that is also OK.

General questions for teachers/trainers

Organisation:

Country:

Responsible person for this report:

E-mail of responsible person:

How many schools/clubs did you invite to the Focus group?

How many schools/clubs did join the focus group?

How many teachers did join the focus group?

How many kids did join the focus group?

Focus group(s) with children/youth (about activities and their experience)

What surprised children the most about the new activities provided in school/club?
What kind of sports do they like to do? **Have they played any sports before they joined this programme? What kinds of sports or ways of being active? (Football, fitness, etc?)** **How was it organised? (Pickup games with friends, alone, associations?)** **Where and when do they do your sports? What do they like about it? Or, what has it helped them do?**

Can they describe relationships with their peers they do sports together with? **Can they call the people they do physical activity with "friends"?**
What is a safe environment for them? **Do they feel safe physically, emotionally and mentally in the environment you do sports in?**
If they were to try to convince a friend to join them, what would they say to them?

Can they think of some reasons why children/youth with disability might not participate in sports activities? Please describe their experiences in detail
In case, they've described some problems they have in participating in sports: What could be done to help overcome this? What could sports associations or school do? **Can they describe any barriers they face when participating in sports or physical activities?**
Are there any specific sports or activities they would like to try but haven't had the opportunity to do so yet?

Focus group(s) with teachers/trainers (about Training pathway and Experimentations)

About training pathway • By following IDI4Sport training pathway, did you receive everything you need for implementing activities with children with and without disability? • What did you miss? • What are the key (new) learning points for you? • What would you do differently? • Any recommendations for improvement?
About experimentation activities • What surprised you most when organising activities for children with and without disabilities?

• What are the most important learning points for you? • Can you consider activities you implemented sustainable in your school /club? • Is there a future plan to keep activities? • Who does provide support to you in providing activities? • Do you have any social support from social institutions, other stakeholders from local community? • How did you change your teaching /training method in the experimentation programme after the training you received , compared to your previous activities? • Did you change anything? • Can you please share one advice for schools/clubs for organising activities for children with and without disabilities?

About children/youth: • Did you notice behaviour change in children/youth? If yes, what? If not, what do you think can be done differently? • Can you pick the single biggest barrier you see in including children/youth with disability to your activities? • Can you please share opportunities you see with bringing children with and without disability together doing sport?
About Focus groups: • Did you notice any challenges while conducting focus groups? • What surprised you most? • Do you have any recommendations for the focus group methodology?

Annex 3: Guidelines for the Qualitative assessment of the Project; how to conduct a focus group

Qualitative assessment

Focus groups interviews

Number of participants:

- 6 participating countries
- **Minimum** 2 schools or 2 sport club in each partner country
    - Minimum 12 schools or sport clubs in total
- **Minimum** 5 children/youth in school or sport club in each partner country
    - Minimum 60 children/youth in total
- **Minimum** 2 teachers or 2 trainers in one school and in one sport club
    - Minimum 24 teachers or trainers in total

Length: 1 hour

Why conduct focus groups?

Listening to children/youth and teachers/trainers voices is critical. Indeed, it is a starting point for any useful work with children/youth and teachers/trainers that their experiences and reflections are heard and taken seriously. But focus groups are not just about learning from them; they can also form the basis for empowering them to participate in sports in the manner of their choosing. In other words, focus groups can ideally foster both knowledge and engagement.

When should you NOT conduct focus groups?

Focus groups take time and require a certain commitment from the organizers to ensure that their results are taken seriously and are reflected in practice. If you are not able to take the time needed to do them, think twice about going ahead with them or if you will risk producing unsatisfying results. Similarly, if you do not have the flexibility to reshape your practice based on the focus group outcomes, you risk alienating the participants, who may rightly feel that their voices were not taken seriously.

Conducting a focus group interview

Focus groups will involve a moderated conversation between 6-8 participants (5 children/youth and 2 teachers) on a specific topic lasting no more than 1 hour. Our purpose is to encourage conversation among the participants to reflect on and nuance issues of integration and sports.

Preparation of Focus groups

Who should we recruit?

This depends, of course, fundamentally on the structure of your school or club. In general, focus groups aim at a certain degree of homogeneity in the participants, simply because people with similar backgrounds often have an easier time talking openly to each other. Note that our main target groups, children/youth with disability and teachers/trainers, are of course not a homogenous group per se.

Take care to stay aware of the mental health of the participants. Children/youth with disabilities and teachers/trainers working with them may find the focus group environment stressful and potentially harmful, and it is ethically incumbent on the organizers to keep an eye on this issue.

Finally, focus group organizers should try to ensure that they do not only recruit "easy" participants, e.g. people with good language and communication skills, confident public speakers, etc. While this will obviously make the focus groups run more smoothly, it also risks biasing the results of the focus groups.

How many should we recruit?

Aim per focus group is 6-8 participants. This may mean trying to recruit 10 or so in case not all can make it on the day:

- Minimum 2 schools or 2 sport club in your country
- Minimum 5 children/youth per schools or sport clubs in your country
- Minimum 2 teachers/trainers per schools or sport clubs in your country

TIPS:

- *Prepare a brief explanation aimed at children/youth and teachers/trainers to describe who you are, what you want to do, and why it is important.*
- *This can be an actual piece of paper (translated as needed), but can also just be a prepared list of points to use when approaching potential participants.*
- *Underline at least these three points:*
    - *You are partners in the project. You are not working with the authorities and will not share information from the interviews with them.*
    - *The importance of hearing the points of views of children/youth and teachers/trainers, so you can tailor your work to better fit their needs.*
    - *Emphasize that the interview will be anonymous, so their names will not appear anywhere. They are free to say whatever they think.*

TIPS for practical implementation of Focus groups

What kind of venue should we look for?

Try to find a safe space, so that your participants feel free to express themselves (can be school or local club). It should be large enough that you can all sit around one table. Provide drinks and snacks to support an informal, relaxed atmosphere. It could certainly be at a sports club or school, if that is available to you.

When should we schedule the focus group for?

Think about the time and day that can fit all you invite. It is always a good idea to simply ask some of the teachers/trainers you are looking to recruit.

How many focus groups should we conduct?

The rule of thumb in focus group interviews is that you should keep conducting them until you are not hearing new input. This may not be practical in your situation, depending on how many children/youth and teachers/trainers are willing to participate, and which you are targeting, but you should strive for as many as is feasible. **But we agreed to conduct minimum 2 focus groups in each country.**

How many do we need to be in the "working team"?

Generally, you should be able to make do with two people in addition to the participants. A moderator to open the proceedings and guide the discussion and a co-moderator in charge of recording the interview and supporting the moderator.

Suggestion:

- Moderator and co-moderator of the focus group (from organizer) per
  - 1 school or 1 sport club in your country
  - 5 children/youth per schools or sport clubs in your country
  - 2 teachers/trainers per schools or sport clubs in your country

How should we start?

The opening of the focus group is quite important, as it sets the stage and tone for the following discussion.

A key point to set out at the very beginning is that the participants are the experts that you hope to learn from, and that the focus group outcomes will make a difference to how you work.

This serves three functions:

- It encourages participants to speak their minds and to share experiences in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously.
- It helps establish that you want the participants to be honest and not too polite so that they don't mention problems they think might hurt someone's feelings.
- It makes clear the expectations and purpose of the exercise: namely to try to help others.

There are also important practical matters and ground rules that should be mentioned early on.

Be sure to underline that:

- The results will be anonymised – no one will be identifiable .

- The goal of the focus group is discussion, so please be respectful of each other so everyone feels they can speak freely.
- The role of the moderator is to guide discussion, so you will mainly ask some broad questions and possibly a few follow-up questions to clarify points.

Finally, before you start, make sure that everyone is on board with the focus group and feels comfortable being recorded.

What questions should we ask?

The key is to ask open-ended questions that encourage participation. But you should also adapt the questions to your specific purposes. In particular, it might be useful to ask questions that address any specifically planned activities directly.

- Try not to have more than 10 questions.
- Go from general questions to specifics.
- If you don't get much response to a question, try to give examples of what you might mean (there are some examples in the 'Sample questions' section).
- Ask about past experiences more than guessing about the future.
- Try to imagine how you yourself would answer the questions you pose to see if they are easy to start answering.

How should we go about managing the discussion?

Remember that the purpose of the focus group is to encourage conversation among the participants as much as it is to answer specific questions.

- Ask open questions – avoid closed questions that may be answered yes or no.
- Ask for examples (e.g. 'Have you had an experience where this was an issue?').
- Try to let the participants do most of the talking.

TIPS

- *Try to make sure everyone gets a chance to speak. Often one or two people will dominate, so it can be useful to ask others directly (e.g. 'What do you think of this issue?' or 'Have you had any similar experiences?'), or to let the most talkative speak last.*
- *Sometimes certain issues may keep recurring from certain participants and risk derailing the conversation. Using a "parking lot" approach, these issues can be "parked" until later. This shows respect to the person bringing them up, but also ensures that the conversation can continue and stay on topic.*

How should we wrap up?

Finish off by running through some of the main points raised to ensure that there is agreement on them. It may be useful, for example, to ask participants to pick the single biggest barrier or opportunity they see or to formulate one piece of advice to sports

organisations / schools wanting to include children/youth with disability. This will help prioritize the answers heard in the focus group. Be sure to thank them for their participation, of course. And try to have some relevant information available for them, if they are interested in pursuing sports or being connected with a club, or at least take down their contact information and get back to them.

Sample questions for children/youth

(about activities and their experience)

- What surprised you the most about the activities provided in school/club?
- What kind of sports do you like to do?
- Have you played any sports before you joined this programme? What kinds of sports or ways of being active? (Football, fitness, etc?)
- How was it organized? (Pickup games with friends, alone, associations?)
- Where and when do you do your sports? What do you like about it? Or, what has it helped you do?
- Can you describe your relationships with your peers you do sports together with?
- Can you call the people you do your physical activity with “friends”?
- What is a safe environment for you?
- Do you feel safe physically, emotionally and mentally in the environment you do sports in?
- If you were to try to convince a friend to join you, what would you say to them?
- Can you think of some reasons why children/youth with disability might not participate in sports activities? Please describe your experiences in detail.
- You’ve described some problems you have in participating in sports like. What could be done to help overcome this? What could sports associations or school do?
- Can you describe any barriers you face when participating in sports or physical activities?
- Are there any specific sports or activities you would like to try but haven't had the opportunity to do so yet?

Sample questions for teachers/trainers

(about Training pathway and Experimentations)

About training pathway

- By following IDI4Sport training pathway, did you receive everything you need for implementing activities with children with and without disability?
- What did you miss?
- What are the key (new) learning points for you?

- What would you do differently?
- Any recommendations for improvement?

About experimentation activities

- What surprised you most when organising activities for children with and without disabilities?
- What are the most important learning points for you?
- Can you consider activities you implemented sustainable in your school /club?
    - Is there a future plan to keep activities?
- Who does provide support to you in providing activities?
    - Do you have any social support from social institutions, other stakeholders from local community?
- How did you change your teaching /training method in the experimentation programme after the training you received , compared to your previous activities?
    - Did you change anything?
- Can you please share one advice for schools/clubs for organising activities for children with and without disabilities?

About children/youth:

- Did you notice behaviour change in children/youth? If yes, what? If not, what do you think can be done differently?
- Can you pick the single biggest barrier you see in including children/youth with disability to your activities?
- Can you please share opportunities you see with bringing children with and without disability together doing sport?

Annex 4: Capacity building and self-assessment learning questions after the training pathway by country.

FRANCE (15 responses)

Question	Yes (%)	Partly (%)	No (%)
1. I understand the theoretical and legal framework relating to sport for people with disabilities in my country.	53.3	33.3	13.3
2. I understand the importance of sports practice for people with disabilities in my country.	100.0	0.0	0.0
3. I can promote sports activities that are part of conventional sports or that are specific/adapted to people with disabilities.	80.0	20.0	0.0
4. I understand the theoretical and practical bases of strategies, methods, and inclusion in sport and sporting activities.	93.3	6.7	0.0
5. I can promote the sharing of knowledge and practices, while improving the diversification of inclusive activities.	73.0	20.0	6.7
6. I can reflect on barriers to participation in sport, and on the importance of cross-sector collaboration to promote inclusion.	80.0	13.3	6.7
Total Average	**80.0**	**15.6**	**4,4**

DENMARK (10 responses)

Question	Yes (%)	Partly (%)	No (%)
1. I understand the theoretical and legal framework relating to sport for people with disabilities in my country.	0.0	70.0	30.0
2. I understand the importance of sports practice for people with disabilities in my country.	90.0	10.0	0.0
3. I can promote sports activities that are part of conventional sports or that are specific/adapted to people with disabilities.	100.0	0.0	0.0
4. I understand the theoretical and practical bases of strategies, methods, and inclusion in sport and sporting activities.	80.0	20.0	0.0

5. I can promote the sharing of knowledge and practices, while improving the diversification of inclusive activities.	50.0	50.0	0.0
6. I can reflect on barriers to participation in sport, and on the importance of cross-sector collaboration to promote inclusion.	90.0	10.0	0.0
Total Average	**68.3**	**26.7**	**5.0**

GREECE (18 responses)

Question	Yes (%)	Partly (%)	No (%)
1. I understand the theoretical and legal framework relating to sport for people with disabilities in my country.	50.0	44.4	0.0
2. I understand the importance of sports practice for people with disabilities in my country.	100.0	0.0	0.0
3. I can promote sports activities that are part of conventional sports or that are specific/adapted to people with disabilities.	94.4	5.6	0.0
4. I understand the theoretical and practical bases of strategies, methods, and inclusion in sport and sporting activities.	100.0	0.0	0.0
5. I can promote the sharing of knowledge and practices, while improving the diversification of inclusive activities.	94.4	5.6	0.0
6. I can reflect on barriers to participation in sport, and on the importance of cross-sector collaboration to promote inclusion.	100.0	0.0	0.0
Total Average	**89.8**	**9.26**	**9.26**

PORTUGAL (12 responses)

Question	Yes (%)	Partly (%)	No (%)
1. I understand the theoretical and legal framework relating to sport for people with disabilities in my country.	58.3	33.3	8.3
2. I understand the importance of sports practice for people with disabilities in my country.	100.0	0.0	0.0

3. I can promote sports activities that are part of conventional sports or that are specific/adapted to people with disabilities.	91.7	8.3	0.0
4. I understand the theoretical and practical bases of strategies, methods, and inclusion in sport and sporting activities.	50.0	50.0	0.0
5. I can promote the sharing of knowledge and practices, while improving the diversification of inclusive activities.	100.0	0.0	0.0
6. I can reflect on barriers to participation in sport, and on the importance of cross-sector collaboration to promote inclusion.	100.0	0.0	0.0
Total Average	**83.3**	**15.3**	**1.4**

SPAIN (5 responses)

Question	Yes (%)	Partly (%)	No (%)
1. I understand the theoretical and legal framework relating to sport for people with disabilities in my country.	80.0	20.0	0.0
2. I understand the importance of sports practice for people with disabilities in my country.	100.0	0.0	0.0
3. I can promote sports activities that are part of conventional sports or that are specific/adapted to people with disabilities.	100.0	0.0	0.0
4. I understand the theoretical and practical bases of strategies, methods, and inclusion in sport and sporting activities.	100.0	0.0	0.0
5. I can promote the sharing of knowledge and practices, while improving the diversification of inclusive activities.	100.0	0.0	0.0
6. I can reflect on barriers to participation in sport, and on the importance of cross-sector collaboration to promote inclusion.	100.0	0.0	0.0
Total Average	**96.7**	**3.3**	**0.0**

NORTH MACEDONIA (7 responses)

Question	Yes (%)	Partly (%)	No (%)

1. I understand the theoretical and legal framework relating to sport for people with disabilities in my country.	14.3	85.7	00.0
2. I understand the importance of sports practice for people with disabilities in my country.	85.7	14.3	0.0
3. I can promote sports activities that are part of conventional sports or that are specific/adapted to people with disabilities.	71.4	28.6	0.0
4. I understand the theoretical and practical bases of strategies, methods, and inclusion in sport and sporting activities.	42.9	57.1	0.0
5. I can promote the sharing of knowledge and practices, while improving the diversification of inclusive activities.	85.7	14.3	0.0
6. I can reflect on barriers to participation in sport, and on the importance of cross-sector collaboration to promote inclusion.	85.7	14.3	0.0
Total Average	**64.3**	**35.7**	**0.0**