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Transnational Report

WP2

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Introduction

The European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights reflects the EU's commitment to the rights of people with disabilities.

“The EU recognises and respects the right of persons with disabilities to benefit from measures designed to ensure their independence, social and occupational integration and participation in the life of the community”¹.

Via Erasmus+ projects, the EU is working to remove barriers between people with disabilities and sports.² ActivAbility is among these Erasmus+ projects and is aimed specifically at promoting active ageing for people with intellectual disabilities (PwID) through the practice of physical activities.

The present document is a transnational report on the practice of physical activities by people with intellectual disabilities in the countries of the organisations participating in the ActivAbility project: Romania, Italy, Portugal, Ireland and France.

The report is based on desk research on good practices regarding and laws and policies put into place in the consortium countries.

The last part of the document is based on field research in the form of 90 semi-directed interviews with people with intellectual disabilities and social and sports professionals working with this population. 33 PwID, 32 social and medical professionals and 25 professionals specialized in the organization and supervision of sports activities. The interviews aimed to collect the needs, difficulties and recommendations of professionals and people with intellectual disabilities in order to produce the most suited learning material during the next steps of the project.

I. Good practices

This part aims to present a collection of good practices promoting the practice of physical activities by PwID. Two good practices were collected per country. A good practice is not only

¹ Article 26 of the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights

² Creating opportunities in sport for people with disabilities, European Parliament Briefing, 2021

a practice that is good, but one that has been proven to work well and produce good results, and is therefore recommended as a model. It is a successful experience that has been tested and validated, in the broader sense, has been repeated and deserves to be shared, so that a greater number of people can adopt it.

a. Italy

1. Sportiva...Mente (2009-2011)

Sportiva...Mente is a project funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and organized by the Uisp (Sports for All Union) aimed at preventing risk factors for PwID's mental and physical health. The project also sought to promote mental health by increasing social support and eliminating prejudices.

More concretely, the project consisted in organizing a shared rehabilitation programme based on the practice of sports in addition to the routinely used therapeutic and rehabilitation activities.

Sportiva...Mente is an innovative project at the system level because it responds to a need for improvement of the organisational structure while offering methodologies and tools to enhance the impact on the beneficiaries of the initiatives. It is a promising project because it has a solid structure and has been tested in different contexts with a large sample size.

The practice started in 2009 with a validation of the experiences of four target cities: Turin, Modena, Rome and Sassari. The project was then expanded to 10 other cities. The proposed sports activities were realised thanks to the collaboration with specialised centres that took care of the patients and the sports professionals of the Uisp Territorial Committees of the cities involved. The sports activities practised were football/kickball for 44.1% of the subjects, swimming for 24.5%, volleyball for 2.9%, gymnastics for 7.7% and multiple disciplines for 21%. The frequency was once a week for 55.9% of the cases, twice for 36.4% and three or more times for 7.8%.

The last act of 'Sportiva...Mente' took place on 16 September 2011 in Montalto di Castro, on the occasion of the national event 'Matti per il calcio' (Crazy for football). The protagonists of the validation and experimentation phases met to talk about their experience and listen to those of others, linking the experiences of patients, psychiatrists, operators and Uisp managers.

Sports and therapeutic activities were accompanied by monitoring to establish the impact of the good practices developed by the project on the rehabilitation and autonomy levels of participants. Data gathered by monitoring was compared to a control group that took part in rehabilitation activities but did not participate during sports activities.

Research showed an improvement in those patients who, in addition to following pharmacological or psychological therapies, participate in actively practised sport sessions;

all within a framework in which many details of the same sporting activity are monitored, not only playing, but also autonomy, personal care, and the reliability and concreteness of what is done in the field, i.e. those indicators that make us understand that the patient somehow improves in the sphere of social autonomy.

The significance of this research is demonstrated by several strengths: physical health was significantly ($p < 0.001$) improved by 42.9% in the experimental group against 16.0% in the control group, with a 52.0% worsening in the control group against 11.0% in the experimental group.

Even greater improvements were found in the item 'problems and/or difficulties in family relationships' with a 54.5% improvement, compared to a 28.0% in the control group.

The physical activity implemented in the context of the project thus had a positive impact both in terms of physical health and in psycho-social terms, increasing self-efficacy and social-relational skills.

2. All Inclusive Sport (2016)

Ongoing since 2016, financed by public and private donations, All Inclusive Sport is a project aimed at promoting the inclusion of children and young people with disabilities in traditional sports associations in their area, with two objectives:

- to create inclusive sports opportunities for leisure time
- to promote a culture of inclusion among teammates, families and the sports world in general

The project was born in the Volunteer Service Centre CSB Emilia and is now ongoing in a number of private and public institutions. All Inclusive Sport has consolidated a format that allows children with disabilities to practise their chosen discipline in the afternoons together with their peers, without distinctions related to (dis)ability, with the support of dedicated staff and without additional costs for the family.

All Inclusive Sport has defined a scheme for the sporting inclusion of young athletes with disabilities that favours quality over quantity in order to deliver a support tailored to their needs and ambitions.

The process involves the following steps:

1. First contact: the young person with a disability or his or her family contacts All Inclusive Sport through the volunteer office or through the public Sports Medicine service

2. Orientation: the supertutor guides the family and the young person to the most suitable inclusive sports club
3. Sports club: the supertutor makes direct agreements with the association or sports club for the child's inclusion
4. Tutor: where necessary, a tutor is chosen and enrolled to support the young person with disabilities in their inclusion
5. Training: the young person with a disability begins his or her training in the sports club
6. Monitoring: the supertutor monitors the effectiveness of the inclusion for everyone: youth, team, coach, sports club
7. Training: every year All Inclusive Sport organises a training course for tutors
8. Communication: All Inclusive communicates the opportunities offered by the project to families, schools, and sports clubs.

Today, the All-Inclusive sport project has succeeded in building an important and large network responding to 185 young people, enabling them to participate in 24 different disciplines, both individual and group sports, thanks to the support of 80 local sports clubs.

b. Romania

1. Special Olympics Romania (since 2003)

First developed in the US in 1968, Special Olympics have had a Romanian version since 2003. Organizing sports and athletics competition programs for people with disabilities, Special Olympics Romania also has multiple projects targeting PWID: Developing motor skills in people with Down Syndrome - an essential step towards independent living, Young Athletes, Fitness and Smiles Championship, Leaders through Sport - Advocacy Programme for People with Intellectual Disabilities, etc.

These projects, worked on with local institutions, volunteers, and partners to implement and provide year-round sports training and athletic competition for individuals with intellectual disabilities. It offers a wide range of sports activities, including athletics, swimming, basketball, and football, tailored to the specific needs and interests of young PWID. By promoting inclusivity and providing opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities to engage in physical activities, the practice fosters social integration, improved physical health, and enhanced self-esteem for the participants.

Special Olympics Romania is financed through a combination of sources, including corporate sponsorships, fundraising events, donations from individuals, organisations and grants.

2. GOAL (Go out and live) 2018-20

GOAL is a project about creating conditions conducive to maintaining the highest quality of seniors' lives. It aims to improve the quality of life for seniors by promoting active and healthy lifestyles. The project involves education and training for professionals working with seniors, aiming to enrich the standards of care services by developing recommendations for effective methods of motivating older adults in leading a more active and healthier lifestyle. It provided professionals with working methods and instruments and offered an opportunity to exchange knowledge and experience in implementing pro-health attitudes among adults over 60 years old. The results can be used to equip professionals with better communication skills and knowledge to implement physical activity for seniors.

c. Portugal

1. MOVE IT (2022)

MOVE IT is an initiative developed in Portugal, but also in Spain, Norway and Italy. The Cerci Oeiras, located in Oeiras, Lisbon, is the responsible body that carries out this initiative in Portugal. This practice consists of developing a training programme to improve physical exercise for people with intellectual disabilities (PwID) through exergames and technology.

This initiative began in April 2020, co-financed by the European Union, and aims to introduce PwID to the use of technologies in the form of exergames, with practical examples and links to solutions available to implement ICT-supported physical activity routines.

The project will involve over 100 end users (PwID, professionals and family members) in various stages of the project to co-create, develop, and validate an innovative training framework to promote their skills and competencies to implement and sustain physical activity programmes. *MOVE IT* aims to raise the awareness of People with Intellectual Disabilities (PwID) of the importance of performing and maintaining an active lifestyle through the implementation of physical activity routines, including practical examples and programs to perform adapted physical activity; and to introduce PwID to the use of technologies in the form of exergames, with practical examples and links to available solutions to implement physical activity routines supported by ICTs.

Besides the development of skills in PwID, *MOVE IT* also aims to empower professionals and family members through the acquisition of training materials in physical activity and technology. At the same time, it fosters the use of applications to enhance the practical training of professionals and family members in the implementation of physical activity programmes, including the guided exploration of these training materials in real environments.

2. REMEXE (2016)

REMEXE is an initiative developed in Portugal, in Alcobaça, Leiria. This initiative has been delivered since 2016 by Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Alcobaça. The REMEXE initiative aims to promote active and healthy ageing of older people and people with PwID, through the implementation of psychomotor, occupational therapy and animation activities in the community where these people live.

The psychomotricity, occupational therapy and socio-cultural animation activities are carried out in the parish of Évora and Alcobaça for the senior community and people with PwID, promoting active and healthy ageing, community cohesion, inclusion and acquisition/maintenance of physical, cognitive, relational and social skills of the participants, maintenance and promotion of psychomotor skills, making the community's resources profitable in improving the quality of life of its population, enhancing skills, abilities and knowledge and increasing self-esteem and self-confidence. Psycho-motricity activities, occupational therapy activities and entertainment activities organised twice a month in the parishes.

The REMEXE initiative is financed by the promoter and funded by the local councils,

d. Ireland

1. Special Olympics Ireland

Special Olympics Ireland is a widely recognized and respected organization in the Republic of Ireland that focuses on providing sports and physical activity opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities. They promote active ageing by offering a range of sports and fitness programs tailored to the specific needs and abilities of ageing persons with intellectual disabilities.

One of the best practices of Special Olympics Ireland is their emphasis on inclusive participation. They strive to ensure that individuals with intellectual disabilities have access to a variety of sports and physical activities, regardless of their age or ability level. This inclusive approach promotes active ageing by encouraging individuals to stay physically active, maintain social connections, and continue participating in activities that bring them joy and fulfilment.

Special Olympics Ireland also works closely with coaches, trainers, and volunteers to provide training and support in adapting sports and physical activities for ageing individuals with intellectual disabilities. They recognize the importance of specialized instruction and accommodations to meet the unique needs and abilities of this population. This approach promotes the engagement and long-term participation of ageing persons with intellectual disabilities in physical activities, contributing to their overall well-being and active ageing.

2. National Federation of Voluntary Bodies

The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies is an umbrella organization representing voluntary providers of services to individuals with intellectual disabilities in Ireland. They actively promote the rights and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities, including the promotion of physical activities for active ageing.

One of their best practices is the collaborative approach they take in developing and implementing physical activity programs for ageing persons with intellectual disabilities. The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies works in partnership with various stakeholders, including service providers, professionals, and individuals with intellectual disabilities themselves, to design and deliver programs that meet the specific needs and preferences of ageing individuals.

This collaborative approach ensures that the physical activity programs are person-centred, taking into account the individual's abilities, interests, and goals. By involving individuals with intellectual disabilities in the planning and decision-making process, the programs become more tailored and relevant, promoting active ageing in a way that aligns with their personal aspirations and desires.

e. France

1. Tous en Scène (2023)

The residents of three AFEJI establishments: Résidence Rembrandt, Résidence Les Bazennes et Résidence Fairise, used to practice dancing activities adapted to their intellectual disabilities in a local association. In 2022 the association closed and due to the lack of professionals offering adapted dancing activities in the region surrounding Dunkirk, the residents had to stop practicing these dancing activities.

The “Tous en scène” project (“Everybody on stage”) aims to fill in this gap by organizing the training of an adapted dance company. Once trained, this group composed of 10 people, 3 professionals and 7 residents with intellectual disabilities, will organize and supervise adapted dance workshops in other AFEJI institutes.

The training of the dance company will follow the AVIO method and will be supervised by a trainer of the French Federation of Adapted Dance. The cost of the training has been estimated to be 8700€. Equipment is required for training: mainly mirrors and dancing bars, the costs of which have not been estimated yet.

Dancing has a positive impact on the physical, mental and social well-being of PwID. On the physical side, dancing improves balance, strength and muscle coordination. Through dance, PwID can express emotions that they may not be able to express verbally. Dancing is also good

against anxiety as it encourages the ability to focus during the practice as well as relaxation right after the practice.

Tous En Scène envisions dancing in a group setting, which can help foster social connections and develop social skills, as dancing moves communication beyond the verbal realm that may otherwise limit PwID's abilities to socialize.

2. Afeji's Olympiades (since 2022)

The Afeji's Olympiades (AFEJI Olympics) is a sports event gathering various vulnerable public hosted in Afeji's establishments (including PwID) in an inclusive, Olympics-themed environment in order to practice physical activities.

The Olympiades is a good example of an event promoting physical activities among PwID and other vulnerable target groups (people with physical disabilities, children living in foster homes, young migrants etc.) offering a setting that facilitates socialization and involves external factors such as sports clubs.



In 2022, the Olympiades involved 100 participants and 53 accompanying educators. The event lasted 3 days covering different types of sports and workshops.

For the first Olympiades, various partners were mobilized in the event in order to provide facilities, equipment and staff. For instance, the city of Gravelines under the "Terre de Jeux" (Land of Games) programme, provided the facilities in which the event takes place. Various sports clubs were also present in order to provide activities such as athletics and archery. Specialized staff such as adapted sport educators and physiotherapists were also involved in the event.

Through this event, PwID can discover and practice various adapted sports, which have many benefits for their physical and mental health.

The event can motivate at least some of them to start or resume the practice of a physical activity. Finally, the event is a good opportunity for PwID to

leave their social comfort zone and socialize with people from outside the establishments accommodating them.



II. National Policies

This part aims to give an overview of the national legal frameworks in place in the partner countries, as well as the policies, current and future, that are founded on these frameworks. A global legal overview will be given, then current and future policies will be presented and discussed for each country.

a. Legal Framework/Quick historical overview

All countries of the ActivAbility partnership have laws regarding the rights of people with disabilities. At first, the legislation's focus was on people with physical disabilities. For instance, in France, the first laws on the rights of people with disabilities were passed after the First World War and were centred around professional inclusion of people with physical disabilities. In Italy, laws were passed in the 1970's in order to guarantee access to work and education, but as in France, which also legislated on people with physical disabilities in the 70's, these laws do not tackle access to physical activities.

Overall, laws guaranteeing the rights of people with disabilities to practice physical activities started appearing in the 90's and early 2000's in the countries of the partnership.

In Italy, the first step towards these rights was taken in 1992 with law Law 104/92, also known as the "Framework Law for the Assistance, Social Integration and Rights of Handicapped Persons". This was the first Italian law that refers to the accessibility of sports activities for people with disabilities. It was also the first major legislative step in considering the rights of

people with disabilities not only with regard to access to employment, but more generally in promoting their well-being.

In Romania, the first important law in this sense is Law 448/2006 and its later amendments, concerning the protection and promotion of the rights of people with disabilities, including setting the obligation for the Public Administration to facilitate the access of people with disabilities to cultural values, tourism, sports and leisure activities.

In Portugal, the legal regime on people with disabilities was first developed in 2004, with the General Basis of the Legal Regime for the Prevention, Facilitation, Rehabilitation and Participation of People with Disabilities nº 38/2004, creating the obligation for the state to develop specific measures necessary to make leisure accessible to people with disabilities, including access to competitive sports (Article 39). Article 31 (Right to Health) provides for specific measures necessary to ensure health promotion and surveillance, preventive examinations and diagnoses, early initiation of treatment and restoration of medical rights and functions for persons with disabilities (FPPD, 2016).

In Ireland, the first step towards more access to sports happened in 2005 with the Disability Act, as it provides for a complaint mechanism in the case of non-provisions of services. It also provides for the facilitation of better access to public building and public services by persons with disability, and it obliges the State to promote equality and social inclusion.

In France, a law was passed in 2005 to guarantee equal rights and opportunities for people with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities. This law was then reinforced by a 2022 law on the promotion of sports that includes provisions specific to people with disabilities, for instance, establishments accommodating them now have to appoint a sports referent.

Finally, all countries of the partnership have ratified the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the UN, which states in article 30 that

“States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities (...) to have the opportunity to organize, develop and participate in sports and recreational activities specific to persons with disabilities and, to this end, encourage the provision, on the basis of equality with others, of adequate means of education and training and resources”

b. Main current policies: Content/ Practical Implications/ Potential limits

After having passed laws guaranteeing access to physical activities for people with disabilities (including intellectual disabilities), all countries of the partnership have put into

place policies in order to achieve the objectives of these laws. These policies vary from country to country.

Italy:

There have been major changes in recent years regarding sports legislation, particularly with the major sports reform that began with Law 86 of August 8, 2019, which also affects sports and disability.

The law, which will be effective July 1, 2023, in addition to giving dignity to those in the sector who are still unprotected, protects the disabled and minors and opens up the recognition of athletes with disabilities as sports workers, in both the amateur and professional sectors.

Another important step that is changing the configuration of sports at the legislative level is the amendment of Article 33 of the Constitution by amending Article 33 of the Constitution by adding, at the end of the text currently in force, the sentence, "The Republic recognizes the educational, social and promotion of mental and physical well-being value of sporting activity in all its forms". These important legislative changes show the attention that is currently being given to sports and movement in general as an important source of well-being for everyone, including people with disabilities and the elderly.

The CIP is also working to improve the conditions and accessibility of sports for people with disabilities, and it was in March 2023 that a meeting was held between the Italian Paralympic Committee and sports promotion bodies, where they discussed strategies put in place to expand the range of sports for people with disabilities in the territories. It is hoped to see the results of this interest-rich phase soon.

Romania

The National Strategy for the Rights of People with Disabilities 2021-2027 is the main official document regulating the practice of physical activities by people with disabilities. Following the lines of action established in Law 448/2006, the promotion and safeguarding of physical activities for People with Intellectual Deficiencies is a strategic objective in the National Strategy as well. More in detail, this latter aims at increasing access of people with disabilities to sport. Indeed, as recognised in the National Strategy, the right of people with disabilities to participate in sport has complex benefits in three distinct areas: it increases the chances of a healthy physical and mental life; it helps personal development, with cognitive benefits such as increased self-esteem; and it fosters integration into society. Therefore, people with disabilities need to be able to participate in sports adapted to the type of disability in order to develop harmoniously and improve their health, and for adults sport

must become part of their lifestyle. Lastly, the National Strategy recognised that sports activities also have a rehabilitative dimension for some disabilities; however, people with disabilities participate in sport to a much lesser extent than those without disabilities.

There are several explanations for the limited access of people with disabilities to sport. In the first place, policy planning in the field of sport does not include the needs of people with disabilities. Moreover, sport legislation and the organisational regulations of sport federations do not create an adequate framework to ensure participation of people with disabilities in mainstream sport activities in the school system or in amateur sport clubs. The costs of participating in sports activities are often prohibitive, involving transport costs in addition to equipment costs, and there are no mechanisms for public funding of these activities. There are no specialised staff in sports clubs to work with people with disabilities among instructors, coaches or support staff.

Portugal

In Portugal, in addition to the legislation, sports for people with disabilities have been represented by several organisations. Adapted sport has become a national concern, there are now sports organisations for people with disabilities, which promote this adapted physical activity in the various existing modalities, which enables their inclusion in civil society.

The Portuguese Federation of Sport for People with Disabilities (FPDD) is an organization which combines specific sport organizations that work with different types of disabilities:

- National sport association for blind people (ANDDVIS)
- National Sport Association for intellectual development (ANDDI)
- Sport Portuguese League for deaf people (LPDS)
- Cerebral Palsy – Sport National Association (PC- AND) and Association of Athletes with disabilities (AAPD)

These associations are responsible for promoting sports activity and competitions in the field of disabilities, but there is also a chance to involve people with certain disabilities in mainstream teams particularly in smaller towns, assisted by organisations engaged in the field of disability. Public organizations also develop events, awareness, and initiatives to promote sports for people with disabilities.

In terms of national policies, the Portuguese Government has elaborated a National Action Plan for Physical Activity³ that considers people with disabilities as particular groups, with the following objectives: to increase the practice of physical activity by people with disabilities, with emphasis on children and young people; to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in

³ Website: <http://www.panaf.gov.pt>

society through the practice of physical activity and sport; to increase the training and skills of professionals working with people with disabilities and with children and young people with special educational needs. This work plan was developed with the support of the Federation of Sport for Persons with Disabilities and promoted various sports disciplines.

Every year, Special Olympics works with hundreds of thousands of volunteers and coaches from all over the world to serve athletes with intellectual disabilities. There has been a growing number of people with and without intellectual disabilities who have participated in Special Olympics since it was founded in 1968. The purpose of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports instruction and athletic competition in a range of Olympic-style sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. This gives them ongoing opportunities to improve their physical fitness, show bravery, feel joy, and share their talents and friendships with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

Ireland

Ireland has developed a National Physical Activity Plan that aims to increase physical activity levels across all segments of the population, including individuals with intellectual disabilities. The plan recognizes the importance of inclusive physical activity opportunities and encourages the participation of people with disabilities in community-based sports and recreation programs.

Disability Sport Ireland is the national governing body for the development and promotion of sports and physical activity for individuals with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities. They work to ensure equal access and opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities to participate in a variety of sports and physical activities. Their programs and initiatives aim to enhance the physical fitness, well-being, and social inclusion of ageing individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Sport Ireland, created in 2015, is a nationwide network of Sports Inclusion Disability Officers (SIDOs) that are based around the country in Local Sports Partnerships. SIDOs work to support people with a disability and local communities to get more active. Sport Ireland also published a policy in order to aid with enhancing the proportion of the population engaging in regular physical activity is beneficial for the individual, the community and wider society.

Finally, on the local level, various community organizations, sports clubs, and leisure centres in Ireland have implemented inclusive physical activity programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities. These programs are designed to provide opportunities for social interaction, skill development, and physical fitness. They often include adapted sports, group

fitness classes, and recreational activities that cater to the needs and abilities of older adults with intellectual disabilities.

France

At national level, the Ministry of Sports is responsible for the promotion of physical activities among PwID. Overall, the Ministry is providing information, gathering and disseminating knowledge, as well as supporting and steering the work carried out in the field by the various organisations (public, local-level structures, or associations and private structures).

The Ministry also offers financial support to young people (from 6 to 30 years old) with disabilities wishing to practice physical activities: With the Pass'Sport programme, young people with disabilities can be granted up to 50€ to cover the inscription fees of sports clubs. The ministry has also created an online directory listing sports clubs and associations adapted to people with disabilities.

On top of the Ministry of Sports' initiatives, at national level, the Adapted Sports Federation is dedicated to providing a better access to physical activities for PwID. This Federation regroups several associations and sports clubs fully or partially dedicated to the practice of adapted physical activities. The federation organises adapted sports competition, communicates about physical activities and organises awareness-raising events and adapted sports programmes in medical and social establishments accommodating PwID.

On a more local level, the French state's efforts to promote physical activities among PwID are mainly represented by the Departmental Disabled People's Centres (DDPC). The DDPC supports people with disabilities (physical and/or mental) by, for example, helping them in finding a sport adapted to their tastes and abilities. However, the support offered by DDPCs can vary from one department to another. Some DDPCs have drawn up a departmental directory of facilities for people with intellectual disabilities to take part in physical activities. On the other hand, other DDPCs make little mention of the possibility of physical activity on their websites. The DDPC remains a structure whose sports activity is just one of the many issues (management of claims and payments of various disability-related benefits, support with school and career paths, etc.) that it deals with, and physical activities may not be their number one priority.

Aside from the DDPC, there are two broad types of actors playing a major role in the practice of physical activities.

First, sports clubs and associations. These are sports structures that welcome people with disabilities. The type of these structures varies, depending on the disability, the age group

targeted and the sporting discipline. Some accept PwID, others do not. Some are affiliated to a federation, while others are independent.

The second type of actors is the variety of medical and social establishments accommodating PwID. These establishments vary depending on the age and level of dependence of the PwID they accommodate. A 2013 report from the Aquitaine region can give us an overview (though dated and limited to one region of France) of the practice of physical activities in these establishments.

- The majority (70%) of surveyed establishments organise physical activities for the people they accommodate
- These facilities organise physical activities in two different ways: internally and externally (generally in partnership with local clubs).
- Competition and performance are avoided in favour of socialisation and complementing care.
- Physical activity is more common among children than adults.
- Most of the staff involved in physical activities are medical-social educators from the establishments. Sports instructors are still a minority.

c. Future policies

Most countries of the partnership have planned to further promote the practice of physical activities by PwID through new laws and policies.

Italy

Among future policies, we can identify the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience plan, which will also affect the area of "Sports and Social Inclusion," for which there will be considerable investment.

It is intended to encourage the regeneration of urban areas by focusing on sports facilities in order to promote social inclusion and integration, especially in the most disadvantaged areas. Funded projects must support:

- The construction and regeneration of sports facilities located in disadvantaged areas, including metropolitan suburbs;
- The distribution of sports facilities in disadvantaged areas;
- The completion and upgrading of existing sports facilities (e.g. functional rehabilitation, renovation, extraordinary maintenance, removal of architectural barriers, energy efficiency).

- The draft law 'Delegations to the Government on policies in favour of the elderly' was approved in January 2023, which commits the Government to adopt by 31 January 2024 one or more legislative decrees for the definition of measures aimed at promoting active ageing and the dignity, autonomy and social inclusion of the elderly and the prevention of frailty.

Romania

It is expected that the Ministry for Youth and Sport promote will play an important and active role in providing support for athletes with disabilities and encouraging their participation at agonistic level.

Indeed, according to a press release by the Minister for Youth and Sport, the Ministry will propose a plan of measures to be implemented in collaboration with all stakeholders involved in the Paralympic activities and preparation, with the aim of placing Romania among the top ten countries by 2032 in terms of number of medals won at the Paralympic Games. This includes the creation of accessible sports infrastructures, by setting up sections dedicated to people with disabilities in sport clubs, with the aim of achieving a percentage of at least 20% of registered Paralympic athletes.

The plan of measures includes encouraging and stimulating sports federations to really take care of Paralympic athletes by allocating dedicated financial resources, creating a dedicated programme for people with disabilities who choose to register and practise a sport in a sports club, establishing collaboration protocols with the National Authority for People with Disabilities to benefit from support at county level, as well as more effective collaboration with the National Paralympic Committee, whose role will become more and more important.

Portugal

Although in Portugal there are several sports associations responsible for the access and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in the world of sport, it is also important to identify three barriers: i) the majority of people with disabilities are still excluded from sports practice (geographical distance); ii) low number of sports practitioners with disabilities compared to their percentage of the population in Portugal; iii) Underfunding, it is necessary to create a public policy for the development of sports activity that finances the actions of dissemination, attraction and training of all agents involved in inclusive

Ireland

Plans are in place to improve access to students with intellectual disabilities through a €9 million fund to higher education. However, physical activities are not mentioned in this fund.

Furthermore, the Disability Action Plan 2022 – 2025 Report on the Public Consultation did not report that it was a high priority in the country.

France

The 2020-2024 national strategy “Sports and Disabilities” plans to implement several provisions in order to make the practice of physical activities more accessible to PwID. These provisions range from improving the mediatisation of adapted sports to developing tools to better understand and customize the experience of sports by PwID.

However, there is one element missing in current or future policies in France : the question of ageing people with disabilities in general, and ageing PwID specifically. While some of the measures planned by the Ministry (in particular the individualisation of responses according to people's specific needs) may indirectly help to support ageing people with disabilities, ageing is not an integral part of the Ministry's current strategy.

In general, the concepts of ageing, physical activity and disability are rarely combined together. According to several researchers, there is, in France, a tendency to develop "categorical policies" creating an artificial and administrative barrier between policies on disabilities and policies on aging.

“More broadly, this division reinforces the difficulty of conceiving that people with disabilities are ageing, a phenomenon that is still recent and whose evolution we are struggling to identify. It contributes to keeping the old age of people with disabilities in a form of unthought”.

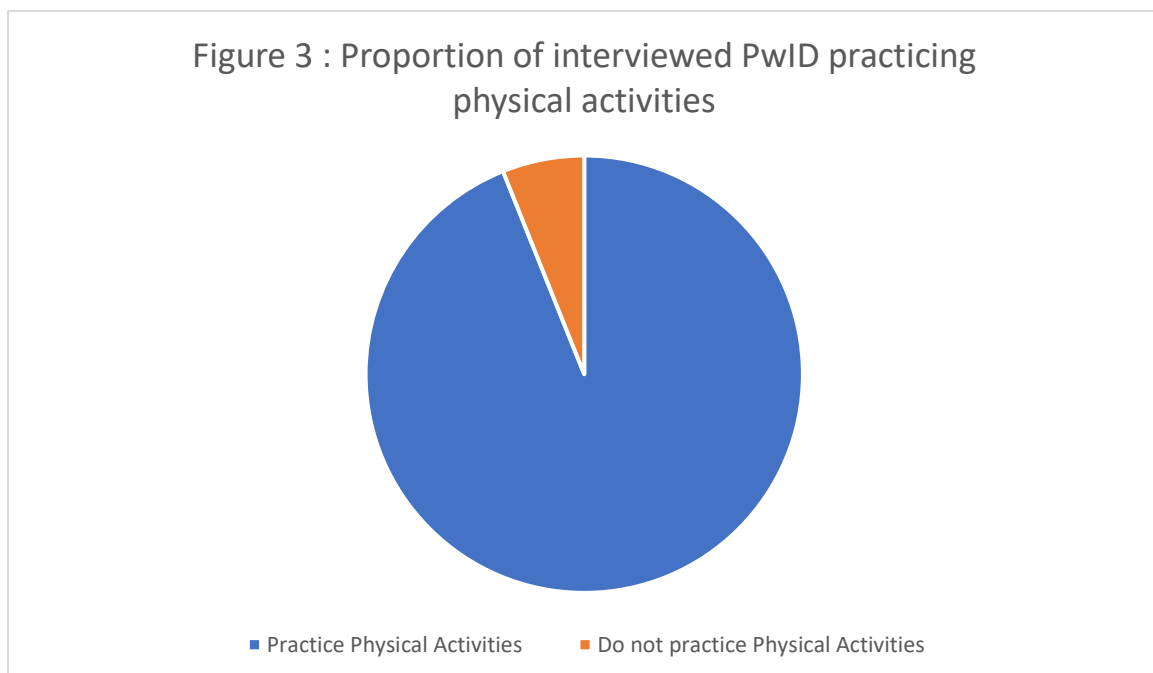
This observation seems to be also true in all other countries of the partnership, where policies directly aimed at ageing PwID do not exist.

III. Interview Results

This part summarizes the findings of interviews with PwID and professionals. Interviews with PwID and professionals working with them have been conducted in all countries of the partnership. In total, 90 people were interviewed: 33 PwID, 32 social and medical professionals and 25 professionals specialized in the organization and supervision of sports activities. Questions depended on whether the interviewee was a person with physical disabilities or a professional, but focused mainly on the benefits of physical activities, the types of physical activities practiced by PwID, difficulties encountered and the needs of PwID and professionals.

a. Interview results for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Interviews were conducted with 33 PwID in total, aged between 22 and 65. 31 of these 33 interviewees reported practicing physical activities. Among the two interviewees that did not practice physical activities, one stated that it was due to a physical disability, and the second reported disliking physical activities.



The vast majority (30 out of 33) of interviewees have very positive feelings about physical activities. They reported feeling better, calmer, happier after a session of physical activities.

Some of them also expressed their knowledge of the positive impact of physical activities on their wellbeing and the fact that, in order to be healthy, they need to participate in sports and other activities. Interviewees also mentioned the social dimension of physical activities, often teams become groups of friends, allowing them to play sport without shame and without fear of being judged and an important opportunity for interaction with people is created. The three remaining interviewees reported disliking physical activities, two interviewees finding them boring and the last one being afraid of hurting himself and of not “doing it right”. But overall, PwID reported both physical and mental health benefits thanks to the practice of physical activities.

At a first glance, in terms of feelings and thoughts on ageing, most interviewees said that they do not often think about the future and ageing. However, when further discussed, it appeared that in certain cases, social isolation and the decrease in physical abilities were a source of concern. In these cases, physical activities were often seen by interviewees as a way to limit the negative impacts of ageing.



The types of physical activities reported by interviewees vary from one country to another and from one structure to another.

Overall, interview results have revealed a wide panel of collective and individual, competitive and non-competitive sports and physical activities practiced by interviewed PwID.

Team-based physical activities are the most practiced type, from football, rugby and basketball, to less competitive activities like group dances. More individual physical activities like rehabilitation gymnastics, weightlifting, running, swimming, walking and yoga are also practiced by interviewees. In certain structures, PwID also practice adapted sports such as boccia.

The frequency of physical activity sessions also varies. Frequency ranges from 1 time a week to 5 times a week, with an average of 2 to 3 times a week. Frequency can decrease depending on external factors, such as medical appointments. On the other hand, strong family support can lead to PwID practicing additional physical activities on top of the ones they practice in specialized structures.

Among all partner countries, one of the most recurring difficulties encountered by PwID concerns understanding the rules of certain physical activities. Interviewees also reported having trouble staying focused and engaged on an activity when it lasts too long. Some interviewees reported that group settings were sometimes stressful to them and that they preferred to exercise alone.

The competitive aspect of some activities can also be a problem, some interviewees reported that when they lose or when they do not perform as well as they expected, they can become angry and aggressive.

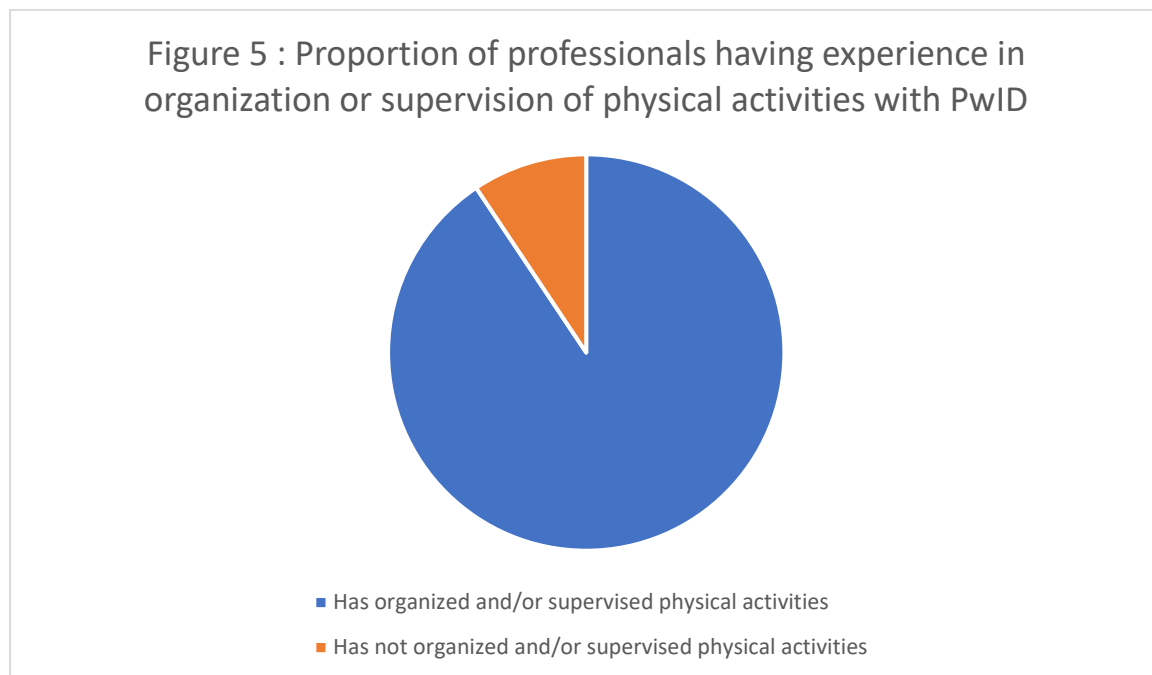
Another difficulty arises when physical activities require specific equipment which is usually expensive, leading to an economic barrier between interviewees and sports. However, respondents stated that you can start practising some sport even with some economic and non-professional equipment, at least at the beginning.

Motor difficulties make some movements hard to make have also been reported, however these difficulties can be due to a physical disability rather than an intellectual one.

Lastly, another point was identified by some interviewees as an obstacle to practising physical activities: the perceived hate from external people. One respondent in Romania declared that he felt judged, teased and criticised when practising sport in front of other unknown people, this clearly being an episode of discrimination that discouraged him.

b. Interview results for professionals

This sub-section summarises interviews conducted with 32 social and medical professionals: educators, social workers, psychometricians, physical rehabilitation technicians and psychologists.



All interviewed professionals (but 3) have experience participating in the organization of physical activities of PwID, if not directly supervising such activities.

Physical activities are often organized on a weekly basis but the frequency at which these activities are organized depends on several factors: the time of the year, the availability of the professionals and the structure in which the professionals are working. For example, the lack of time and the other responsibilities of the professionals can shorten sessions or lead to some of them being cancelled. Furthermore, the lack of training in adapted physical activities of the interviewed professionals limits the list of activities they feel confident with supervising.

Activities vary greatly in terms of type: yoga, wrestling, dance, football, walking, basketball, archery. Professionals tend to prefer group activities in order to help PwID socialise.

All interviewed professionals are interested in receiving training and having access to additional learning material and resources in order to better their practices, especially in connection to active ageing, which they feel (in Ireland’s report) is neglected with the target group. For instance, some believe that there are too many assumptions that disabled people, especially older ones, cannot be active.

In terms of encountered difficulties when implementing physical activities with PwID, professionals report two broad types of problems:

- Organizational and logistic difficulties: finding time to plan and supervise activities and the cost of sports equipment can be limiting factors.
- Difficulties in engaging PwID during physical activities:
 - Professionals reported that PwID tend to have a shorter attention span and become bored quickly.
 - A lack of motivation from PwID. For instance, PwID could be reluctant to take part in physical activities because they are afraid of hurting themselves.
 - The lack of sports culture throughout their lives makes it difficult for these groups to engage in daily physical activity.
 - The reluctance of the families that consider the physical activities proposed as unsafe for the beneficiaries of the centres. Moreover, it happens that the families of PwID negatively influence each other, thus persuading all other families to not participate in the proposed activity.
 - PwID can also have a hard time understanding rules. Some professionals reported having difficulties evaluating whether not certain rules will be understood by PwID when planning physical activities.
 - PwID tend to have a hard time regulating their emotions, which can lead to increased frustration and even anger when losing during a competitive sport, or when failing to perform as well as they were expecting.
- Discrimination: Especially when outside, for example when practicing in a sports club, PwID can suffer from discrimination. One psychologist from France reports for example that the staff of the establishment she is working in have a hard time finding sports clubs willing to welcome PwID. When Sports clubs do accept to welcome them, they do not necessarily have staff trained to successfully supervise physical activities for PwID.

In terms of difficulties specifically linked to aging PwID, professionals reported:

- A higher lack of motivation compared to younger PwID, due to more fears of hurting themselves compared to younger PwID, but also a disinterest for physical activities.
- A lack of confidence, older PwID tend to believe that they won't be able to be successful when practicing. They are also afraid of not being accepted in group settings.
- Problems of body-image, which can lead to a reluctance to practice physical activities in a group setting.

- Physical limitations due to ageing and a sedentary lifestyle, comorbidities and polymedication. It is necessary to find facilities and spaces that are accessible, that do not have architectural barriers if there are also motor and physical difficulties, these facilities and spaces generate additional costs.
- The “Why”: Older PwID might not be aware of the positive impact of physical activities, or might think that their previously mentioned difficulties outweigh the benefits.

Regarding success factors, professionals reported the following useful behaviours and strategies:

- Simple wording of the instructions and when addressing PwID can help with comprehension issues.
- Engaging environment: Colourful equipment, neatly organised rooms where the activity takes place can create a more engaging environment, making physical activities more appealing. Music can also be used to motivate PwID and keep them engaged longer.
- The person supervising the session should be smiling and dynamic to motivate participants. Overall, the attitude of the supervisor is primordial to the success of the session. Finally, when a participant is frustrated, it is best to talk to them alone and face to face to understand what happened so as not to repeat the situation of failure that caused the frustration in the first place. Overall, creating a bond with PwID will make understanding them and supervising physical activities easier.
- Physical activities should be organized as a game, not as sports for the sake of sports. Another way would be to give a purpose to physical activities beyond fitness. For example, walking to go shopping, instead of just walking for the sake of walking.
- Toning down the competitive aspect can also be beneficial: If competition can be a motivation for some, it can also lead to frustrations, anger and tensions in group settings. The participation of PwID in physical activities has to be celebrated as a success in itself.
- Creativity: when the needed equipment is too expensive, it is necessary for those who develop physical activities to be more creative and innovative. That is, sometimes it is not necessary to buy materials, but to adapt the available resources

Reported benefits of physical activities are:

- Mental health benefits:
 - Socialization: Through physical activities in group settings, PwID can meet new people, create bonds, learn social norms. Overall, physical activities can be a way for PwID to overcome the isolation and loneliness that can characterise intellectual disability.
 - PwID are also reported to be calmer and more serene after sessions.
- Physical health benefits:
 - Reinforcing physical condition and autonomy
 - Preventing or delaying many of the health problems that seem to come with age
 - Quicker recovery from illness.

In terms of needs, professionals reported wishing:

- Some sort of curriculum of sports activities listing and detailing physical activities adapted to PwID.
- Training, hints and tips to engage the target groups, more precisely:
 - How to communicate with people with intellectual disabilities
 - How to motivate this group of people
 - How to create an interpersonal relationship with PWID
 - Personal skills development: managing frustration, professional expectations, emotional intelligence, barriers to communication, how to overcome difficulties, teamwork, ...
- Community facilities
- Resources and equipment

Finally, professionals reported that several activities are beneficial for PwID and identified some examples. Walking is one of the most cited activities, it is simple, can be done with any number of people, does not require equipment and its pace can be easily adapted to fit the physical abilities of the participants.

Other activities were given as examples:

- Gymnastics
- Water aerobics

- Playful games
- Horse riding
- Pilates

Regardless of the activities referred by professionals, they reported that the most successful and beneficial activities for this group are physical activities that people with PwID most enjoy and feel motivated to perform. Any activity they perform should be according to their preferences and tastes, as well as their needs and abilities

c. Interview results for professionals in the sports field

The 25 interviewed professionals in the sports field formed a heterogeneous group: physical education teachers, teachers specialized in adapted sports, athletes, coaches and educators with a background in sports.

Interviewees are involved in a variety of physical activities such as:

- swimming
- motor activity
- Nordic walking
- postural gymnastics
- tennis
- rugby
- football
- cycling
- sailing
- judo
- dance
- equitation

Just like with the two previous groups of interviewees, we can observe a broad range of physical activities, from collective to individual and from competitive to leisure or health-oriented activities.

Difficulties encountered by professionals in the implementation of physical activities are:

- The competitive edge, sports can create winners and losers and this can become physically and emotionally overwhelming. Furthermore, PwID have to accept that physical activity is about lifestyle, not competing and wanting to be the best.
- Lack of motivation from PwID, their short attention span also makes it difficult to keep them engaged for a long time.
- PwID can also refuse or be reluctant to take part in activities that do not suit their tastes.
- A lack of resources and sports equipment.
- Emotional impact of working with PwID: Professionals themselves experience emotional challenges while working with PwID, particularly when progress may not always be evident. The unpredictability of results and the need for a tailored training plan contribute to these emotional strains.

Regarding ageing/aged PwID:

- Physical limitations due to age and/or medication: younger PwID have an easier time choosing sports that they like to practice whilst older ones are limited by ageing, medication, comorbidities...
- Lack of family/social support: it has been observed by interviewees that many of the younger PwID have a structured family support network
- The lack of motivation is stronger among older PwID.

Regarding success factors:

- Information and counselling before the activity is considered as fundamental for the success of physical activities. Professionals need to inform both PwID and their families in order for them to understand the benefits of physical activities and the absence of risks from practicing them. These exchanges also help the professionals to understand the varied needs and wants of PwID in order to organize activities tailored to each individual. Overall a strong interpersonal relationship between the professional and PwID is essential to the success of physical activities.
- Close cooperation with healthcare professionals: Successful implementation involves close collaboration with doctors, carers, therapists, and nutritionists. Having a

multidisciplinary approach ensures that all aspects of the PWID's care are considered, leading to more effective and comprehensive fitness plans.

- **Patience and simplified instructions:** Professionals need to demonstrate patience and to be willing to repeat and simplify instructions to accommodate the learning pace of ageing PWID. Providing instructions in a quiet and less stimulating environment and under constant supervision ensures better understanding and execution of exercises. Practising patience and showing empathy are vital qualities and foster a positive and supportive environment.
- **Gamified activities:** Integrating elements that have personal significance to participants, such as objects to which they are emotionally attached to can serve as a motivating factor and aid in maintaining focus during activities.
- **Familiar surroundings and routines:** It is essential to consider the familiarity of surroundings and routines for older individuals. Allowing them to choose between activities and incorporating a social factor can contribute to their overall well-being. Activities that challenge memory, balance, and coordination are particularly beneficial.

According to interviewees, physical activities are highly beneficial to PWID:

- **Overall improvement in physical parameters:** Engaging in physical activity leads to significant improvements in various physical parameters for PWID. As their physical condition improves, there is a positive impact on their psychological well-being, including enhanced concentration, coordination, and overall mental clarity. Weight training can be highly beneficial for seniors and PWID, contributing to improved physical strength and overall well-being.
- **Appetite and focus improvement:** Physical activity can have additional benefits, such as improved appetite and increased focus for PWID.
- **Enhanced range of motion:** Physical activity can aid PWID in increasing their range of action, particularly for individuals predisposed to certain types of movements. This can contribute to better physical function and overall well-being. Engaging in fitness activities goes beyond routine movements around the house, which only targets some muscle groups.

- Mobility and coordination: Engaging in physical activity helps PWID maintain and enhance their mobility and coordination. It serves as a preventative measure against dangerous falls, which is particularly relevant for ageing individuals.
- Reducing pain and discomfort: Physical activity can help reduce pain and alleviate various ailments experienced by PWID. Customised fitness programs can target specific areas of discomfort, contributing to improved pain management and overall comfort.
- Opportunity for self-care and relaxation: Physical activity can offer PWID an opportunity for self-care and relaxation.

Benefits are also observed when it comes to the social aspect of physical activities:

- Physical activities can act as a sort of universal language, helping them socialize with people without being hindered by the comprehension barriers that intellectual disabilities can create.

Finally, interviewees have reported the following needs:

- Access to resources: Sports professionals require access to resources that assist them in implementing activities better adapted to ageing individuals and PWID. These resources can include specialised equipment, educational materials, and guidelines tailored to the unique needs of their clients.
- Continuous Learning: There is a need for ongoing education and learning opportunities for sports professionals. They require training in nutritional aspects, gaining more in-depth information about the specific needs of individuals with disabilities or PWID, and learning about instruments that can help them better adapt activities to suit their clients' capabilities.
- Emotional training and empathy: Sports professionals need emotional training to handle difficult situations and cultivate empathy. Working with ageing individuals and PWID may present emotional challenges, and professionals must be equipped to navigate such situations effectively without feeling overwhelmed.
- Experience in working with ageing people or with disabilities: It is important for professionals to have a community that they can rely on, ask for advice, resources, etc.
- Understanding mental disabilities: Sports professionals should be equipped with knowledge and a better understanding of mental disabilities and related issues. This understanding is essential for promoting inclusivity, avoiding stereotypes, and fostering better integration of PWID in the activities.

- Pedagogical skills: These skills enable professionals to effectively communicate with their clients, tailor activities to their needs, and foster a supportive and inclusive environment.

IV. Key conclusions and recommendations

The present research has presented and analysed the situation with regards to the practice of physical activities by people with intellectual disabilities in general and when this population is approaching old age.

The first main takeaway from this research is that, among the countries of the partnership, there is a rising awareness of the importance of physical activities for people with disabilities. Indeed, all countries of the partnership have passed laws guaranteeing the access to sports for people with disabilities and have implemented policies to promote the practice of physical activities by PwID. All countries of the partnership also plan to further develop these policies in the decade to come. This is reinforced by the awareness of both professionals and PwID: physical activities are perceived as being a way to live longer and better in terms of physical and mental health and can also play a key role in the social inclusion of PwID by creating bonds of friendship and community.

National and local organisations (federations, associations, public authorities...) have put into place varied practices to promote physical activities. These practices take the shape of punctual sports events (like Afeji's Olympics in France) or long-term sport programmes (Special Olympics Ireland and Romania, or Sportiva...Mente in Italy).

However, another observation from this research is that there are no policies or good practices that specifically tackle the question of active ageing of PwID. Ageing and intellectual disabilities, and the role of physical activities for active ageing of PwID remain with development required.

Despite the policies to promote physical activities for people with disabilities, and the wide range of institutions that assume a great responsibility in the access of these people to the adapted sport, it should be pointed out that:

- I. Sports demographics figures - We still do not know the number of people with disabilities practising formal and informal sport.
- II. Dissemination and promotion of the work carried out by national associations, affiliates and professionals - Sharing knowledge and good practices.
- III. Underfunding - A Sports Activity Development policy is urgently needed to fund actions to disseminate, attract and train all agents involved in inclusive sport.
- IV. Cooperation - Only through close cooperation between public bodies, public administrations and between them and non-governmental organisations of people with disabilities (NGDOs), social, solidarity and cooperative sector organisations,

businesses and other relevant organisations, will it be possible to create synergies that contribute to problem solving, joint learning and the fostering of partnerships.

- V. Geographical location - The vast majority of these associations are based in big cities, which means that many people with disabilities are excluded from practising sport.

On the other hand, the vast majority of interviewees, whether they are PwID or professionals, are aware of the important mental and physical health benefits of physical activities, and the following factors must also be considered:

- From collective to individual activities, from competitive sports to fitness or leisure-oriented activities, there is a wide range of physical activities available to PwID, even if some have to be adapted to the specific characteristics of intellectual disabilities.
- The vast majority of PwID interviewed practice physical activities on a weekly basis.
- However, PwID can encounter a range of difficulties when practicing physical activities.
 - o Troubles remaining engaged: Lack of motivation, confidence, interest, short attention span.
 - o Troubles understanding instructions
 - o Discrimination when practicing outside of the structure accommodating them/ outside of a group solely of PwID
- Ageing PwID have additional difficulties:
 - o They tend to have an even harder time to be motivated, to remain engaged.
 - o Physical limitations due to ageing and medication
- Overall, professionals pointed out a lack of equipment and funding. Some professionals, especially non-sports professionals, also reported a lack of training regarding the organisation of adapted physical activities.
- All professionals are willing to receive additional training and learning material to better tailor physical activities to the needs of PwID.

Based on these conclusions, the ActivAbility partnership has several recommendations:

Policy recommendations:

- **Foster Inclusive Participation:** Encourage and support organizations and community programs to adopt an inclusive approach that ensures individuals with intellectual disabilities have access to a variety of sports and physical activities, irrespective of age or ability level. This can be achieved by providing adapted equipment, modifying rules, and creating inclusive environments that cater to the diverse needs and abilities of ageing persons with intellectual disabilities.
- **Promote Collaboration:** Encourage collaboration between organizations, service providers, professionals, and individuals with intellectual disabilities to develop and implement physical activity programs for ageing individuals. This collaborative approach ensures synergies that contribute to problem-solving, joint learning and the promotion of partnerships, programmes that are person-centred, considering individual preferences, abilities, and goals, thereby promoting active ageing in a meaningful and tailored manner.
- **Provide Training and Support:** Invest in training programs for coaches, trainers, and volunteers working with individuals with intellectual disabilities to enhance their knowledge and skills in adapting sports and physical activities for ageing persons. This support will enable them to create inclusive and engaging experiences that meet the unique needs and abilities of this population.
- **Continuously Evaluate and Improve Programs:** Identify demographic data on sport, namely PWID who practice formal and informal sport. Emphasize the importance of ongoing evaluation and improvement of physical activity programs for ageing individuals with intellectual disabilities. Collect feedback from participants and stakeholders to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programs, identify areas for improvement, and make necessary adjustments to enhance the overall experience and outcomes for active ageing.
- **Raise Awareness:** Conduct awareness campaigns to educate the public, professionals, and caregivers about the benefits of physical activities for active ageing in individuals with intellectual disabilities. Highlight the positive impact of physical activities on physical health, mental well-being, social inclusion, and overall quality of life.
- **Align Policies and Practices:** Ensure that national policies, such as the National Physical Activity Plan and National Physical Activity Guidelines, align with the principles of inclusion and active ageing for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Continuously update and revise these policies to reflect current best practices and evidence-based approaches.

- Support Community Programs: Provide resources, funding, and guidance to community organizations, sports clubs, and leisure centres to develop and implement inclusive physical activity programs for ageing individuals with intellectual disabilities. This support will enhance their capacity to offer a wide range of accessible and engaging opportunities for active ageing.
- Conduct Research: Invest in research studies and evaluation initiatives that focus on the benefits of physical activities for active ageing in individuals with intellectual disabilities. These studies can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of different interventions, identify barriers and facilitators to participation, and guide the development of evidence-based practices and policies.

Recommendations for the next steps of the ActivAbility project:

- Varying the activities proposed in order for beneficiaries to not get bored, but at the same time not proposing a completely different activity, since both PwID and their families can feel lost and discouraged to take part in them if they are not familiar with them.
- Communication is important before any event involving sports, in order to reassure PwID and their families and persuade them to participate. Another measure to encourage PwID in taking part in sport activities could be making them attend some sport competition, no matter whether at amatorial or at agonistic level, in order to stimulate their involvement and participation.
- Another important recommendation provided is the necessity to adapt the activities proposed to the level of disability of participants, and to keep the rules of the game as simple as possible, in order to be easily understandable by everybody and thus not causing any negative experiences for PwID. To help with comprehension difficulties, it could be useful to create a short guide describing what concepts and words PwID might have trouble with, in order to help professionals anticipate issues when planning activities.
- Not all professionals and establishments have access to equipment suited to physical activities. Furthermore, some establishments do not have large spaces in which they can organise physical activities. Therefore, ActivAbility should take this into account and offer activities (or activity creation methods) that require little to no equipment and that can be practiced in relatively small spaces.
- Even though sports clubs offer an environment where PwID can meet people outside of the structure accommodating them and access physical activities they would not

be able to practice otherwise, there is a risk of discrimination. ActivAbility could develop tools to address this risk.

- The lack of financial and human resources is unanimous among all: more public funding is needed to ensure all the requirements of people with disabilities and provide an easy access to them. The group of sports professionals and practitioners interviewed worked in particular major cities and often rural communities have not been focussed on. It would also be pertinent to expand these interviews to a larger geographical area so that these data could be more representative of the reality in all areas.
- It is important to highlight that professionals and sports professionals have different opinions regarding i) the support and material needed to develop physical activities; ii) the difficulties in developing physical activities and, iii) the difficulties felt in involving older people with disabilities and young people with disabilities.
- These different opinions are justified by the typology of intervention, i.e. being only a physical activity practised daily in an institution, when participants do not have a sport culture, it may be more difficult to motivate them to carry out the activities. When we talk about an association/organisation of adapted sport, the people who attend want and are involved in the sporting dynamics and motivated to compete, so there is a sporting culture, regardless of age.
- Sports institutions and organisations assume most of the responsibility for people with disabilities to have access to sports, however, without greater cooperation and collaboration between public bodies, public administrations and these and non-governmental organisations of people with disabilities, it is not possible to evolve and achieve a more inclusive Europe.
- The practice of a competitive adapted sport involves a greater number of financial expenses, due to its nature and the material necessary to carry out the sport. In institutions, although financial resources are scarcer, it is possible to adapt existing materials with creativity and proactivity, it all depends on the professionalism and receptivity of the participants. The conduction of the interviews, listening to these three different groups of people with intellectual disabilities, professionals working with people with intellectual disabilities, and sports professionals working with people with intellectual disabilities, reinforces the urgent need to reformulate public policies and ensure that they are applied and implemented in the coming years.
- It should be noted that the people with intellectual disabilities interviewed are daily in an institution prepared for this target group, where they develop various activities

daily: artistic activities, cognitive stimulation, physical rehabilitation, technology workshops, cooking, DIY (do-it-yourself) , agriculture, gardening, among others, and also physical activities.

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