



Bsport+

WHITE PAPER ON POLICY MAKERS
SPAIN

Co-funded by the
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B-Sport +: WHITE PAPER ON POLICY MAKERS

INTRODUCTION: SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Active lifestyles are associated with numerous physical developments, they enhance feelings of 'energy', well-being and independence, reduce the risk of many diseases including cognitive decline and dementia.

People with disabilities can experience limitations in hearing, vision, mobility or cognition which may impact on the level of activity if appropriate support is not available. In fact, and according to Active Lives Adult Survey November 2017-18, 'Disabled adults are twice as likely as non-disabled adults to be physically inactive (42 per cent vs 21 per cent)'.

BSPORT+ recognizes how important is to analyse and identify factors that motivate and activate people with disabilities to establish pre-conditions for further actions at all levels.

B-SPORTS+ brings together leading bodies from an enlarged sphere of audiences and groups, including sports, physical activity, science and research, businesses, the civil society, education and training and government bodies. These bodies work together to implement this project, aiming at:

- Research specific needs related to healthy lifestyles and assistive technologies to overcome barriers which prevent people with disabilities to practice sports or to improve their lifestyles.
- Activate actors in new roles promoting cross-sectoral cooperation in the field of improving healthy lifestyles of people with disabilities in general and people with mental health issues/psychosocial disabilities in the case of Spain.
- Create new tools like the "SPORT+LIFE" platform to support individuals and organizations to activate people with disabilities.

This document is addressed to professionals who work with people with disabilities, specially people with mental health issues or psychosocial disabilities, educators (schools, higher education institutions, etc.), coaches and sport staff (sport clubs, federations, unions, etc.), youth workers and community leaders (Civil Society Organisations – CSO, Community Building Organisations - CBO), managers and their team (SME, industry, commerce, etc.) and public servants (local government bodies and agencies).

NATIONAL CONTEXT

In Spain there are two different criteria to define people with disabilities, while in some cases people with disabilities are considered only those who have a medical certificate that states a disability equal to or greater than 33%, in other cases it is used the criterion of limitations in the development of daily activities (Sports and People with Disabilities in Spain White Paper, 2018)

According to the Survey of Social Inclusion and Health, which defines disability following the criteria of limitations, and applied in Spain in 2012, 16.7% of the Spanish population aged 15 and over manifests some degree of limitation in social participation due to their health condition, so they may be considered people with disability. In total, 6,333,670 people, of which 3,866,888 are women.

As age increases, the limitations become more evident: thus, among those under 45 years old, disability is present in less than one in ten people, while among those over 74 years old, more than five out of ten live with any disability. In the age group of 85 and over, three out of four people say they are limited by a health problem.

However, in Spain life expectancy without any disability is one of the highest in Europe (OLIVENZA Report, 2019), with Spain being the third country where people live without disability for the longest period (69.9 years for women and 69 years for men) only surpassed in Malta and Sweden.

At the legal level, there are several mechanisms that regulate the protection of the rights of women with disabilities. Its recognition already appears in the Spanish Constitution of 1978 and there are specific laws which are being updated to meet people with disabilities needs. In addition to the Jurisprudence, there is also the figure of the Ombudsman who plays a preponderant role and of the associative movement of people with disabilities, which has crystallized in the Committee of Representatives of people with disabilities (CERMI). CERMI has promoted, through its advocacy and documentary work, many changes in the legislation towards the inclusion of people with disabilities.

If we focus on the sports practice of people with disabilities in Spain, the lack of official data is striking. There are no national or regional statistics. Disability is not included in national surveys and to estimate the participation of people with disabilities in sports activities, we only have the number of federal licenses they request; hence we can conclude that only 0.32% of the people with disabilities have a sports license, compared to 7.5% of the general population. However, these data do not reflect the reality of this group, as the sport modality mostly practiced by them, is the one offered by the third sector organizations they attend. (Pérez-Tejero, Alonso, García, and Coterón, 2011)



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND SPORT PARTICIPATION FOR PwDs

In addition to the lack of official data on sports participation of people with disabilities, the difficulties in defining criteria to consider a person as a person with disabilities, we may notice the lack of recognition of people with psychosocial disabilities within the group of people with disabilities, when we talk about adapted or Paralympic sports, who just consider physical, intellectual and sensory disability. In none of these three groups would people with psychosocial disabilities be represented.

However, regardless of the difficulties, we can affirm that, only 28.3% of the population with a disability spends their free time doing some kind of physical exercise. However, although it is not practiced by most of them, physical exercise is the first option (23%) in the list of activities that PwD would like to practice in their free time. There are also differences between men and women. While the 36.09% of men with disabilities dedicate their free time to physical exercise, only the 23.17% of women does it. On the contrary, the proportion of women who would like to spend their free time doing physical exercise is slightly higher than the percentage of men (24.06% vs. 21.34%). The official indicators of sports practice for PwD in Spain are, as said before, non-existent, which makes it difficult to know the needs of this population with a rate of sport participation significantly lower than the general population.

One of the alleged reasons for not practicing physical or sports activity is the lack

of adapted sports facilities and health problems, age, transportation difficulties and lack of time. For their part, the reasons for abandoning physical activity can be summarized in two: lack of time and the economic constraints (Ríos M., Arráez, J., et al, 2009).

As said before, the specific associative movement and other third sector organizations for people with disabilities are of vital importance in maintaining healthy lifestyles of people with disabilities and are the most used resources for the sports practice of this group, followed by municipal services and finally private centres such as gyms or private sports clubs.

The benefits of sports practice are the same for people with disabilities as for the general population, and refer to the improvement of physical condition, mental health and skills for daily life. However, sport offers one more advantage to people with disabilities and that is social inclusion. To this end, certain actions have been implemented for sports practice in inclusive environments, to guarantee access to sports facilities and to adequately train sports professionals in order to move from an inclusive practice to a regular or even federated one.

OVERVIEW AND KEY FINDINGS FROM THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

The survey focussed on the target group of the two organizations which are collaborating in the project from Spain: people with mental health issues/ psychosocial disabilities for a long period (more than one year) and are currently under doctor's care. People who participated in the survey also mentioned other health problems as physical pain or cardiovascular problems.

- 55% of them, stated that their health condition limits their daily life activities or work.
- 41% feel dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their lifestyles.
- More than 60% consume stimulating beverages.
- More 50% are daily smokers with an important percentage of them (almost 20%) who smoke more than 20 cigarettes daily.

When we ask participants how many hours spend in sport/recreational activities per day, 64% practice sports less than an hour, of which 30% no practice any sport at all. Some factors which contribute to increase their activity are doctor's prescription and family and friends influence. On the opposite side, the main obstacles are illness/injury (27%), lack of interest (25%), lack of time (17%) and lack

of self-confidence (15%).

Despite the fact that considerable work has been done in the last decades in the area of sensitization and awareness of society about the benefits of practicing sports, the data show that the population with disabilities still face barriers to their fully participation in sports and physical activities.

RECOMMENDED POLICY ACTIONS

- 1.** Include disability in statistical sources and official surveys, to know the population of people with disabilities and understand the factors that affect their quality of life (socio-demographic characteristics, type and degree of disability, beliefs, skills, etc. .) and use this knowledge to design appropriate policies, like greater support to eliminate barriers to the participation of women with disabilities in sports.
- 2.** Promote sports practice and contact with sports during school years for people with disabilities, since access to different sports disciplines during childhood and adolescence has an important influence on sports practice during adulthood and elderly.
- 3.** Specialized training of professionals in the sports field to eliminate barriers and meet the needs of people with disabilities, including people with psychosocial disabilities.
- 4.** Strengthen the role of associations and third sector organizations for people with disabilities, as they play a fundamental role in introducing different sports and motivating people with disabilities to improve their lifestyle.
- 5.** Increase inclusive sports practice, since it often becomes the origin of habitual, continuous or even competitive practice. Inclusive sport in many cases supposes a first contact of the person with a disability to a certain sport modality.

CONCLUSIONS

According to the Survey of Social Inclusion and Health in Spain in 2012, 16.7% of the Spanish population aged 15 and over manifests some degree of limitation in social participation due to their health condition. In total, 6,333,670 people, of which 3,866,888 are women. The associative movement of people with disabilities and the Spanish Committee of Representatives of People with Disabilities (CERMI) play a key role in promoting changes in legislation and towards inclusion, mostly

by providing data and carrying out research, but also are the most used resources for the promotion of sport practice of this group, followed by municipal services and finally private centres such as gyms or private sports clubs.

Only 28.3% of the population with a disability spends their free time doing some kind of physical exercise. One of the alleged reasons for not practicing physical or sports activity is the lack of adapted sports facilities and health problems, age, transportation difficulties and lack of time. For their part, the reasons for abandoning physical activity can be summarized in two: lack of time and the economic constrains (Ríos M., Arráez, J., et al, 2009). The benefits of sports practice are the same for people with disabilities as for the general population, including social inclusion.

In the case of people with psychosocial disabilities who participated in the BSPORT+ survey:

- 55% of them, stated that their health condition limits their daily life activities or work.
- 41% feel dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their lifestyles.
- More than 60% consume stimulating beverages.
- More 50% are daily smokers with an important percentage of them (almost 20%) who smoke more than 20 cigarettes daily.

We propose to include disability in statistical sources and official surveys and use this knowledge to design appropriate policies; promote sport practice during school years and then throughout people with disabilities' lives; provide specialized training to professionals to eliminate barriers faced by people with disabilities; strengthen the role of the associative movement and third sector organizations and increase inclusive sports practices which often become an habit for people with disabilities.

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Who we are

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