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# LEARNING NEEDS ANALYSIS AND MATRIX OF SKILLS FOR INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

# REPORT



**PHYS**ic**AL**



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## **1. Introduction**

The *PhysicAL* project aims to develop a learning course aimed at trainers and health personnel, who carry out their professional practice with persons with disabilities and great support needs. This training course will provide sports and inclusion skills and competencies to improve the health and lifestyle of persons with disabilities, integrating and promoting the activity in their daily learning and training experience. The project has as a priority a strong inclusive approach since persons with disabilities are the final beneficiaries of having better qualified educators, trainers and staff (professionals in the sector) who will provide them with an improved learning experience based on the promotion of physical activity.

The target group is persons with intellectual, physical and sensory disabilities. This target group will benefit from receiving quality care in the practice of physical activity adapted to their support needs, thanks to skills training for professionals who perform physical activity and sport job functions. According to Campos-Izquierdo and Martín-Acero (2016), adequate training is necessary for professional practice in the development of physical-sports and sports activities so that they acquire the necessary skills and carry out a quality professional performance. This training in the different contexts where physical activity and sport is carried out (eg: educational centers, sports promotion schools, sports centers, etc.) is a very relevant aspect to improve the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

The first task collected in the *PhysicAL* project has been to have a baseline assessment of the current situation regarding the participation of persons with disabilities in sports activities in the partner countries and specifically for each region. This evaluation will provide specific details that will compose the bases of the training program, such as: (1) global participation in physical activities for persons with disabilities; (2) current state of the

educational base of coaches and staff on inclusion through sport, (3) other relevant project results in the regions; (4) evaluation of integration barriers: aspects of accessibility, content complexity, environmental interaction.

The second task collected in the *PhysicAL* project has consisted of an analysis of the training needs of the professionals involved in the training and care of persons with disabilities (eg: coaches, educators, sports technicians, etc.). The purpose of this analysis will be to determine their learning needs to carry out inclusive physical activities within their functions. Based on the previous tasks, a matrix of skills, competencies and capacities of the "Sports Assistant" profile will be defined. The resulting matrix will address the common needs and priorities of both regions in the fields of inclusive physical activity for persons with disabilities.

## **2. Assessment of the Training Needs of Physical Activity and Sport Professionals who Work with Disabilities**

### **2.1. Instrument**

The questionnaire consists of four parts. The first collects sociodemographic data of the participants, as well as information on the type of training, current workplace and years of experience in relation to disability and physical activity or sport. The second part consists, on the one hand, of questions about information and training in sports physical activity and, on the other hand, about the barriers to participation in physical-sports activities for persons with disabilities. The third part consists of an adaptation of the questionnaire "Scale of Perception of Teaching Competence in Physical Education in the Attention to People with Disabilities" (ECoDEFyD) (Díaz del Cueto, 2009) on professional competences for the physical-sports practice of persons with disabilities. This questionnaire consists of 11 questions with a 4-point Likert response,

ranging from 1 to 4, where higher scores indicate higher levels of competencies. This instrument consists of the following 2 parts: (1) perception of professional competence for the practice of physical-sports activity in persons with disabilities (7 items) and (2) needs perceived by professionals in the field of care for disabilities (2 items). The fourth part consists of 4 questions on environmental factors associated with physical-sports practice in persons with disabilities.

## **2.2. Procedure**

The sample of participants in Spain was obtained from a list of emails that the AVIVA Foundation had from the direct care professionals themselves, from the Castilla y León Sports Federation technicians, from the direct care technicians in leisure activities and sports from the COCEMFE Regional Federation, of professionals and technicians from ASPACE-Salamanca, of the teachers of the Reina Sofía Special Education Center, of teachers of the La Milagrosa School Integration Center and teachers of the G37 Working Group of Castilla y León. Already in Portugal, the sample of participants was obtained from an email list that the Associação do Porto de Paralisia Cerebral had from its own professionals, health/rehabilitation centers, sports associations, Activity and Training Centers (CACI) / residence and educational centers. In this email they were sent brief information about the *PhysicAL* Project together with a link through which they accessed the questionnaire in online format. In the informative email sent from the study, the period in which they could answer the questionnaire was indicated, sending a reminder two days before the end of the period. The confidentiality of the participants and the anonymity of the responses were guaranteed. Completing the questionnaire required approximately 10 minutes.

### **2.3. Sample Profile**

In the description of the participants, it should be noted that, while in Spain there was a higher percentage of men, in Portugal they were women. With respect to professional experience, in both countries the participants had a high level of experience in the subject and with a predominance of age between 33-46 years, with the vast majority of them carrying out their professional practice in urban areas.

One of the main characteristics in terms of training is the wide variety of qualifications. Even though, in Porto, they were almost all from the health field, having health/rehabilitation centers as their workplace.

### **2.4. Information and Training in Physical-sports Activity**

- Professionals manifest difficulties in accessing information and say they receive little information on adapted-physical activity or inclusive sport.
- Professionals report the need for training on the current disability paradigm and on the characteristics of functioning according to the type of disability.
- Professionals show a lack of knowledge about the different support products that can facilitate access to physical-sports activities for persons with disabilities. The results show important gaps in the information about equipment, support products and adapted and specifically designed technology that are used to carry out sports activities in persons with disabilities.
- A high percentage of professionals point out the need to receive training on strategies to adapt sports games and activities and for a sport without barriers. The results show that a high percentage of

professionals do not access training for the acquisition of skills for the adaptation of physical-sports activities, taking into account the diversity of persons with disabilities.

- Professionals demand training and access to information on resources to offer specific support to people with great support needs. They value that this training is a means to provide this group with opportunities to participate in physical-sporting activities.
- In relation to the needs for information and access to documents or support tools on adapted physical activity or inclusive sport, the results reflect the need of these professionals to have resources and materials for the development of inclusive physical-sports activities.

## **2.5. Barriers Perceived by Professionals for Teaching Competence in Physical-sports Activity**

The barriers that professionals have encountered the most in their teaching practice have been the few options and opportunities for choice that persons with disabilities have for physical-sports practice, the lack of support resources and the lack of economic resources. On the contrary, the ones that indicate the least are the lack of interest and motivation on the part of the person with a disability, the lack of support from the people around them and the lack of interest on the part of the family and professionals.

## **2.6. Perception of Teaching Competence for Physical-sports Activity in Attention to Persons with Disabilities**

The professionals show a high degree of competence to take into account both the characteristics of persons with disabilities and their training needs. The professionals perceive that their level is quite competent when it comes to adapting the programming or sessions based on the support

needs of the person with disabilities. However, it should be noted that 34.9% of those surveyed indicate that they have some difficulties in being competent when adapting an activity.

Professionals perceive that they are quite competent to stimulate all students to be involved in learning. However, it must be taken into account that 23.8% perceive that they are not very competent when it comes to involving persons with disabilities in the learning process. The professionals perceive that they are competent when it comes to presenting physical-sporting activities clearly and precisely.

Professionals perceive themselves as sufficiently competent to modify and adapt a physical-sporting activity based on the specific support needs required by the person with a disability. However, it must be taken into account that 20.6% of those surveyed indicate that they have some difficulty in making unforeseen modifications and adaptations in physical-sporting activities.

Professionals demand the availability of resources to promote the learning of the person with disabilities. A high percentage of professionals perceive that they are competent to establish a communication exchange with their colleagues who participate in the learning process of persons with disabilities.

## **2.7. Description of Professional Needs**

- Professionals have considered with high percentages the demand for information, resources and didactic materials in relation to physical-sports activity.
- Professionals report the need to have support staff during physical-sports activity sessions.



## **2.8. Environmental factors related to the Practice of Physical-sports Activity in Persons with Disabilities**

- The professionals present very positive beliefs and values towards the inclusion of persons with disabilities through physical-sports activities.
- Professionals generally perceive that in the context where they work, diversity is valued and respected and positive values towards diversity and inclusion in sport predominate. However, it should be noted that 33.3% of those surveyed consider that only the diversity and inclusion discourse prevails.
- The professionals surveyed recognize the importance of inclusive sports practice for persons with disabilities. The professionals maintain a close relationship and communication with the families of persons with disabilities. However, it should be noted that 28.6% of those surveyed indicate that they only maintain communication relationships with the family.

## **3. General Conclusions of Spain and Portugal**

The analysis of the training needs carried out has shown that professionals who develop their professional practice in physical-sports activity with persons with disabilities advocate inclusion, although for them it constitutes a challenge. In general, the study of the results reflects that teachers are not sufficiently prepared to implement inclusion in practice, although they show a positive attitude towards the inclusion process. In short, it seems to show that professionals perceive that they are incompetent to address the needs of persons with disabilities and that they express a clear need to improve their skills so that their practices are more inclusive. The evaluation of the training needs of the professionals

involved in the teaching of physical-sports practice for persons with disabilities carried out in Spain and Portugal has provided the following information:

- The training gaps of professionals in Spain and Portugal are very similar.
- The profiles of the professionals of both partners are somewhat different. In Spain, it is men who predominantly carry out physical-sports education, while in Portugal it is women. In both countries, professionals have years of work experience and the age range is between 33-46 years. In Spain they carry out their professional activity mainly in ordinary education centers, while in Portugal in health/rehabilitation centers.
- The professionals show lack of training on the current paradigm of disability and on the peculiarities of the functioning of persons with disabilities.
- Professionals make training demands on adapted physical activity and inclusive sport.
- Scarce training on the biopsychosocial model proposed by the World Health Organization (2001), on the Quality of Life and Supports/Rights Model and on key concepts such as self-determination and support systems.
- Professionals express the need for training on support products to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in physical-sports activities.
- Professionals express the need to receive practical training to adapt sports and sports activities.

→ Professionals demand support materials and resources.

#### **4. Skills Matrix for Inclusive Physical Activity**

Once the baseline assessment of the current situation regarding the participation of persons with disabilities in sports activities in the partner countries and the assessment of the training needs of physical activity and sport professionals who work on disability, both Spain as in Portugal, a matrix of professional skills is presented below.

This matrix includes both the competencies to be worked on and the objectives, which serve as the basis for the design and implementation of a training program aimed at professionals who carry out their professional practices in physical-sports activity in inclusive environments (Table 1).

Table 1. Proposed professional skills matrix.

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Goals and needs addressed</b>
C 1. Know basic concepts in the field of disability.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know the current paradigms that support professional practices.</li> <li>2. Know the basic concepts of attention to diversity, especially the inclusive paradigm.</li> <li>3. Analyze the terminology related to Disability.</li> <li>4. Know and apply the principles of inclusion in physical education.</li> <li>5. Know the etiology and characteristics of different disabilities</li> </ol>
C 2. Train professionals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Acquire advanced knowledge about sport for persons with disabilities and its different modalities.</li> <li>2. Acquire knowledge about inclusion in the</li> </ol>

<p>for physical-sports activity for persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>field of physical education.</p> <p>3. Know the basic principles and guidelines methodologies for planning physical-sports activities.</p>
<p>C 3. Acquire basic knowledge regarding techniques and tactics of different adapted sports.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand, elaborate and know how to apply the procedures, strategies, activities, resources, techniques and methods that intervene in the teaching-learning process with efficiency.</li> <li>2. Acquire basic knowledge in relation to technique and tactics of different adapted sports.</li> </ol>
<p>C 4. Train to plan and develop inclusive and adapted physical activities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Basic principles and methodological guidelines for planning physical-sports activities.</li> <li>2. Plan physical-sports activities, using the different inclusive strategies appropriately.</li> <li>3. Adapt educational intervention to individual characteristics and needs.</li> <li>4. Fluently develop procedures and protocols to resolve unforeseen events during the teaching of physical-sports activity.</li> <li>5. Design evaluation proposals.</li> </ol>
<p>C 5. Create support resources</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepare adapted physical-sports activity material.</li> <li>2. Learn about resources available online on adapted physical activity.</li> <li>3. Achieve through collaborative work the</li> </ol>

	<p>development of resources.</p> <p>4. Through collaborative work, achieve the dissemination of materials among professionals.</p>
<p>C 6. Train to establish a network of training of trainers to improve the practice of professionals in adapted physical activity.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Getting professionals trained in adapted physical-sports activity to become advisors and theoretical and practical guides for other professionals.</li> <li>2. Master the techniques and the reflective capacity to organize, direct and coordinate training actions in the field of adapted sports.</li> <li>3. Get a space for debate and reflection to solve the difficulties that arise during adapted physical-sports activities.</li> <li>4. Provide a space for reflection and debate about the adaptation processes of the inclusive activities scheduled according to the support needs of the participants.</li> <li>5. Compile Internet resources with complete and up-to-date information on the most interesting web addresses that best suit the needs of trainers.</li> </ol>

