



PLAY SOCIAL
INCLUSION & COMMUNITY



D5 PlaySocial Manual

Let's Play Together

A Practical Guide for Inclusive Sport in the Community

Project No. 101183594

Project Information & EU Acknowledgement

PlaySocial – Inclusion & Community is an Erasmus+ Sport project focused on promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities through sport. Implemented by Associação Jorge Pina (Portugal) and the Romanian National Sports Agency, the project aims to strengthen the capacity of local actors to deliver inclusive sport activities and to develop a practical and adaptable model for social integration through sport.

“*This manual was created to help organisations use sport as a practical tool for inclusion, participation and community connection.*”

Project: PlaySocial – Inclusion & Community

Project No.: 101183594

Programme: Erasmus+ Sport

Deliverable: D5 – PlaySocial Manual

Lead Partner: Associação Jorge Pina

Partner: Romanian National Sports Agency



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Introduction

Sport can create moments that people remember for life: a first successful pass, a shared celebration, a smile after trying something new, or the feeling of being accepted by a group.

For many people, however, sport is not always easy to access. Some face physical barriers. Others face social, economic or emotional barriers. Some have been told, directly or indirectly, that sport is not for them.

PlaySocial was created to challenge that idea.

This manual has been developed to help communities, organisations and local stakeholders use sport as a simple and powerful tool for inclusion. It is based on the experience of the PlaySocial project and is intended to support the replication of inclusive sport practices in different local contexts.

“

*Inclusion begins
when people feel
welcome before the
activity even starts.*



About the PlaySocial Project

PlaySocial – Inclusion & Community is an Erasmus+ Sport project focused on promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities through sport.

The project is implemented through a partnership between Associação Jorge Pina, in Portugal, and the Romanian National Sports Agency. It responds to the need for more inclusive, accessible and community-driven sport practices, particularly for vulnerable and underrepresented groups.

PlaySocial understands sport as more than competition or physical activity. Sport can be a space for learning, confidence, friendship, health, participation and social connection.

“*Sport can be a space for learning, confidence, friendship, health, participation and social connection.*”

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Who This Manual Is For

This manual is for anyone who wants to make sport more inclusive in a real and practical way.

It can be used by sport clubs, schools, municipalities, NGOs, coaches, physical education teachers, youth workers, volunteers, social institutions and community leaders.

It is especially useful for organisations working with people with disabilities, children and young people at risk, older adults, migrants, women and girls with fewer opportunities, and people from disadvantaged communities.

No organisation needs perfect conditions to begin. Inclusive sport can start with small changes, simple activities and a strong commitment to making people feel welcome.

This manual can support:

- clubs and associations
- schools and educators
- municipalities and NGOs
- coaches and volunteers
- community leaders

“ *Inclusive sport can start with small changes.*



Why Inclusive Sport Matters

Sport is often described as universal, but access to sport is not always equal.

Many people are excluded from sport not because they do not want to participate, but because the environment, the rules, the communication, the cost, or the expectations make participation difficult.

Inclusive sport matters because it creates opportunities for people who may otherwise remain outside sport and community life.

When sport is inclusive, it can help participants feel accepted and valued, improve well-being, build confidence, develop friendships, and strengthen their connection with the community.

Inclusive sport can help people to:



- feel accepted and valued



- improve well-being



- build confidence



- develop friendships



- strengthen community connection



What needs to change so that this person can participate?

The PlaySocial Approach

PlaySocial is based on the belief that inclusive sport should be simple, human and adaptable.

Many organisations want to promote inclusion but do not always know where to start. PlaySocial shows that inclusion can begin with practical decisions, good planning and the right attitude.

The approach focuses on creating sport activities that respond to people's needs, encourage participation and strengthen community connections.

Five key ideas



- Start with people



- Adapt the activity



- Create safe and welcoming environments



- Promote cooperation



- Learn and improve continuously



What matters most is not the complexity of the activity, but the intention to include.

Principles for Inclusive Sport Activities

Inclusive sport activities should be guided by clear and practical principles. These principles help organisations create experiences that are safe, accessible and meaningful for everyone.

Inclusive sport is not only about participation. It is also about dignity, fairness, respect and the creation of environments where every person feels welcome.

When these principles are applied, sport becomes a stronger tool for confidence, belonging and community connection.

“ *Inclusive sport is built through small decisions that make participation easier, safer and more meaningful.*

Core principles

-  • Inclusion
-  • Diversity
-  • Equity
-  • Accessibility
-  • Safety
-  • Participation
-  • Community



Understanding Barriers to Participation

Before implementing inclusive sport activities, it is important to understand why some people may not participate.

Barriers can be visible or invisible. Some are related to physical access, while others are connected to confidence, cost, communication, culture or previous negative experiences.

Understanding these barriers helps organisations design better activities and create sport environments where more people feel welcome and able to participate.

“ *Inclusion begins before the session starts: in the invitation, the welcome and the support offered.* ”

Main barriers

-  • Physical barriers
-  • Social barriers
-  • Economic barriers
-  • Communication barriers
-  • Psychological barriers



Designing Inclusive Sport Sessions

An inclusive sport session should be planned with clear objectives and enough flexibility to respond to participants' needs.

Good planning helps ensure that activities are safe, accessible and meaningful for different participants. It also helps coaches and educators adapt the session when necessary.

Inclusive sessions do not require complex methods. They require attention, preparation and a willingness to listen, observe and adjust.

When sessions are designed with people in mind, participation becomes easier and more rewarding for everyone.

“ *A good inclusive session combines clear planning with the flexibility to respond to people's needs.*

Key planning steps



- 1. Define the purpose



- 2. Know the participants



- 3. Choose adaptable activities



- 4. Prepare the environment



- 5. Communicate clearly



- 6. Observe and adapt



- 7. Close with reflection

Adapting Activities, Rules and Environments

Adaptation is one of the most important tools in inclusive sport. It allows people with different abilities and experiences to participate together.

Adaptation does not reduce the value of an activity. It increases access, confidence and participation.

Rules, equipment, space, time, communication and group organisation can all be adjusted to make activities more inclusive.

The best adaptation is often the simplest one. Small changes can make a major difference.

“ *Adaptation does not change the purpose of sport — it changes access to participation.*

What can be adapted



- Rules



- Equipment



- Space



- Time



- Communication



- Group organisation

Organising Inclusive Community Sport Events

Community sport events can be powerful moments for inclusion. They bring together participants, families, volunteers and local organisations in a shared and welcoming environment.

An inclusive event is not only about the activity itself. It is also about how people are invited, received, supported and encouraged to take part.

Good planning helps create events that are safe, accessible and enjoyable for everyone. This includes thinking about the venue, communication, volunteers, timing and participant needs.

A successful inclusive event is measured not only by attendance, but by the quality of participation, the sense of belonging created and the relationships built.

“ *Inclusive events are carefully designed so that everyone can feel welcome, safe and involved.*

Three key phases



Before the event

- define the target groups
- choose an accessible venue
- prepare adapted activities
- brief volunteers and partners



During the event

- welcome participants clearly
- offer support and flexibility
- encourage cooperation and enjoyment
- create moments for social interaction



After the event

- collect feedback
- thank participants and partners
- share results and lessons learned
- plan the next activity

The Role of Coaches, Educators and Community Leaders

Inclusive sport depends strongly on the people who lead activities.

Coaches, educators, volunteers and community leaders shape the environment, the atmosphere and the quality of participation. Their role is not only to teach sport skills. Their role is also to create trust, encourage participation, adapt activities and make people feel valued.

An inclusive sport leader should welcome each participant with respect, use simple and positive communication, observe who is participating and who is being left out, and adapt activities when needed.

The attitude of the leader is often more important than the complexity of the activity. A simple game can become inclusive when it is led with empathy, flexibility and attention to each participant.

“ *A simple game can become inclusive when it is led with empathy and flexibility.*

Key responsibilities



- welcome each participant with respect



- use simple and positive communication



- encourage cooperation and peer support



- adapt activities when needed



- celebrate effort and progress



- listen to participants and families

Inclusive Activity Planning Template

This template helps organisations plan inclusive sport activities in a simple, structured and practical way.

It can be used by clubs, schools, municipalities and community groups to prepare activities that are accessible, meaningful and well organised.

The template encourages planners to think about participants, objectives, materials, adaptations and safety before the activity begins.

Good planning supports inclusion by helping each activity respond better to people's needs and by creating clearer conditions for participation.

“ *Good planning helps transform inclusive intentions into inclusive action.*

Template fields



Activity name



Target group



Number of participants



Main objective



Space needed



Materials needed



Duration



Description of activity



Possible adaptations



Safety considerations



Role of coaches / volunteers



How to evaluate participation

Inclusive Activity Planning Template

This practical template helps organisations plan inclusive sport activities in a simple, structured and useful way.

It can be used by clubs, schools, municipalities and community groups to prepare activities that are accessible, meaningful and well organised.

“ *Good planning helps transform inclusive intentions into inclusive action.*

Activity name _____

Target group _____

Number of participants _____

Main objective _____

Space needed _____

Materials needed _____

Duration _____

Description of activity

Possible adaptations

Safety considerations

Role of coaches / volunteers

How to evaluate participation



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Accessibility Checklist

This checklist helps organisations review whether an activity, session or event is accessible and welcoming for all participants.

It can be used before implementation to identify possible barriers and make practical improvements in space, communication, support and organisation.

A simple accessibility review can help clubs, schools, municipalities and community groups create safer and more inclusive conditions for participation.

Accessibility is not only about physical access. It is also about information, communication, comfort, safety and the feeling of being welcomed.

“ *Small accessibility checks can make a big difference to inclusion.*

Checklist items

- ☐ Venue accessible _____
- ☐ Toilets accessible _____
- ☐ Clear arrival / transport information _____
- ☐ Safe and obstacle-free activity space _____
- ☐ Easy-to-understand instructions _____
- ☐ Adapted materials available _____
- ☐ Volunteers briefed _____
- ☐ Quiet / rest area available _____
- ☐ Emergency support available _____
- ☐ Participants' needs considered _____
- ☐ Registration process simple _____
- ☐ Information provided in clear language _____

Date

Completed by

Session Reflection & Participant Feedback

This template helps coaches, educators and organisers reflect on each session and collect simple feedback from participants.

Reflection supports learning and improvement. Feedback helps identify what worked well, what was difficult and what can be changed for future activities.

It can be used after a sport session, workshop or community event. Listening to participants is an important part of inclusion because it helps shape future activities around real experiences and needs.

“ *Inclusive practice grows through listening, reflection and adaptation.*

1. Session reflection

Who participated actively? _____

Who needed more support? _____

What worked well? _____

What was difficult? _____

What adaptations were useful? _____

Did everyone feel included? ☐ Yes ☐ No Comments _____

What should change next time? _____

2. Participant feedback

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Did you enjoy the activity?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Did you feel welcome?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Did you feel safe?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Was the activity easy to understand?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Did you feel part of the group?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What did you like most? _____

What would you change? _____

Would you like to participate again? ☐ Yes ☐ No Comments _____

Volunteer Briefing Checklist

This checklist helps organisers prepare volunteers to support inclusive sport activities in a confident, respectful and effective way.

A short briefing before the activity can make a big difference to the quality of participation, communication and support offered to participants.

Volunteers should understand the purpose of the activity, who the participants are and how to contribute to a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment.

Good volunteer preparation helps ensure that support is practical, sensitive and aligned with the needs of each group.

“ Well-prepared volunteers help turn inclusion into everyday practice. **”**

Checklist items

- ☐ Purpose of the activity _____
- ☐ Participant profile understood _____
- ☐ Basic inclusion principles explained _____
- ☐ Respectful communication guidance _____
- ☐ Possible adaptations discussed _____
- ☐ Support contact person identified _____
- ☐ Safety and comfort procedures explained _____
- ☐ Confidentiality and dignity respected _____
- ☐ Questions clarified before the activity _____

Date

Briefed by

Examples of Inclusive Activities

This section presents simple examples of activities that can be adapted for different ages, abilities and community contexts.

Inclusive activities should be easy to explain, flexible to adjust and focused on participation, cooperation and enjoyment.

They do not need to be complex. What matters is that each activity creates space for people to take part safely, confidently and meaningfully.

The examples below can be used in clubs, schools, municipalities and community events, and can be adapted according to the group's needs.

“ *Simple activities can become powerful tools for inclusion when everyone has a way to participate.*

Example activities



- **Cooperative Ball Challenge**
teamwork, passing and shared goals



- **Inclusive Movement Circuit**
mobility, balance and coordination stations



- **Goalball Introduction**
sensory awareness and teamwork



- **No-Elimination Team Games**
continuous participation for all players



- **Community Movement Day**
mixed-ability activity stations and social interaction



Monitoring, Feedback and Learning

Monitoring and feedback help organisations understand how inclusive activities are working in practice.

They make it possible to identify what participants enjoyed, what barriers remained and what can be improved in future sessions or events.

Learning from experience is a key part of inclusion. Simple observation, participant feedback and short reflection moments can provide valuable insights.

The goal is not only to measure numbers, but also to understand the quality of participation, the sense of belonging created and the impact on the community.

“ *Inclusive sport improves when we listen, observe and learn from every experience.* ”

What to monitor



- Number of participants



- Diversity of participants



- Participant satisfaction



- Sense of belonging



- Adaptations that worked well



- Feedback from families and partners



- Ideas for improvement



Sustainability and Replication

The value of PlaySocial depends on its ability to continue beyond the project and inspire other communities.

Sustainability is not only about funding. It is also about people, relationships, knowledge, motivation and continuity.

Inclusive sport becomes stronger when organisations keep learning, build partnerships and integrate inclusion into their regular activities.

The PlaySocial model can be replicated by any organisation willing to start small, listen to participants and improve step by step.

“Sustainability begins when inclusion becomes part of everyday practice.”

Five steps to replicate PlaySocial

- 1 • Identify your community
- 2 • Build a local partnership
- 3 • Brief your team
- 4 • Start with a pilot activity
- 5 • Collect feedback and continue



Let's Play Together

PlaySocial shows that inclusive sport does not need to be complicated. It begins with openness, respect and the willingness to adapt.

When sport is inclusive, it creates confidence, belonging, friendship and healthier communities. Small actions can open the door to meaningful participation.

This manual is an invitation to continue the work — to create welcoming spaces, listen to participants and make inclusion part of everyday practice.

Together, communities can use sport to build stronger connections, reduce barriers and ensure that more people feel they belong.

“ *Inclusion grows when we play, learn and move forward together.*

A final invitation



- Welcome everyone



- Adapt when needed



- Listen to participants



- Work together



- Keep learning



- Make inclusion part of daily practice



PlaySocial – Inclusion & Community

Building inclusive communities through sport

This manual was created to support organisations, educators, coaches, volunteers and communities in making sport more inclusive, accessible and meaningful for everyone.

Through simple actions, shared learning and practical tools, PlaySocial invites more people to take part, belong and grow together through sport.

Let's play together.



Erasmus+ Sport Project



Lead Partner: Associação Jorge Pina



Project Partner: Romanian National Sports Agency

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*Inclusion is not
just participation.
It is belonging,
respect and
opportunity
for all.*



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