FORTHE

Forging the inclusion of persons with disabilities in climate action through 3x3 basketball urban sport (FORTHE).



KEY MESSAGES OF THE PUBLICATION

"BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ORGANISING GREEN URBAN SPORTS FOR DISABLED PERSONS IN EUROPE"

Co-funded by the European Union

This publication has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects solely the views of the authors. The Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of information contained herein.



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Project Number: 2022-2-CY02-KA220-YOU-000095422

Key messages of the publication "Barriers and opportunities in organising green urban sports for disabled persons in Europe"

This document is a synthesis of an open access publication with the title "Barriers and opportunities in organising green urban sports for disabled persons in Europe".

The scope of this publication is to

- help youth organisations and sports coaches understand how climate action can be operationalised through green urban sports for the benefit of disabled youth, and
- voice the views and ideas of disabled youth and people who work with them in adopting inclusive and accessible practices in the organisation of green urban sports.

The full version of the publication is available at the FORTHE official website.

Please cite as:
Nuno Dias, Stefania Oikonomou. (2023).
Synthesis of WP2A4 publication. FORTHE consortium.

Introduction

This document is a synthesis of the publication “Barriers and opportunities in organising green urban sports for disabled persons in Europe for the FORTHE project (‘’Forging the inclusion of persons with disabilities in climate action through 3x3 basketball urban sport”). The full version of the guide is available in English at the FORTHE official website.

The publication reflects the insights generated by the organisation of local roundtable discussions for disabled youth and climate action in partner countries, namely:

- Cyprus: event hosted on 21st of September 2023 by 3on3 CY Ltd.
- Italy: event hosted on 6th of September, 2023 by MSV.
- Portugal: event hosted on 28th of September, 2023 by SEA.
- Poland: event hosted on 3rd of October, 2023 by EPF.

A synthesis of the main takeaways of the publication follows.



Wider context and objective of the publication

As the world is faced with unprecedented crisis, from the COVID-19 pandemic to climate change, the need to address barriers and conditions that pose the wellbeing of underrepresented groups under threat should become a number one priority for public and private stakeholders. Through its focus on young persons with disabilities, the FORTHE project brings to the fore the needs of disabled youth with regards to their participation in urban green sports that enhance their social wellbeing, while renders them advocates of eco-friendly practices among youth.

FORTHE aims to strengthen youth and sports organisations’ capacity to implement green urban sports for disabled youth, thus the organisation of the public roundtables with local stakeholders were deemed instrumental in mapping barriers and opportunities in this field. A synthesis of the key points raised and identified by participants of the roundtables is presented below.




Wilson
3X3

Enhancing Urban Sports

Inclusion for Disabled Youth and Climate Action



The four FORTHE roundtables engaged a total of 80 participants who exchanged their ideas and experiences on the relationship between green urban sports and disabled youth. The overall objective of the roundtables was the identification of barriers and opportunities in the implementation of green sports for youth with disabilities.
In particular, one of the key points highlighted through all roundtables is that the integration of eco-friendly practices in sports facilities and events is not only feasible but also essential in promoting sustainable urban development. To this end, it became clear that accessible and inclusive sports programmes play a pivotal role in fostering social inclusion for disabled youth while simultaneously engaging them in climate awareness activities.

The importance of cross-sectoral collaboration between sports organisations, local governments, and environmental advocacy groups, mainly from civil society, was emphasised as a critical strategy for the successful implementation of green urban sports initiatives.

Finally, a resounding consensus emerged on the need for ongoing research and data collection to further refine strategies, improve accessibility, and measure the environmental impact of such programmes. By conducting a comprehensive analysis of the outcomes of the four roundtables, the key insights identified regarding the organisation of green urban sports for disabled youth and climate action can be summarised as follows:

Barriers

- **Insufficient Financial Support:** Inadequate funding hinders the development of sports programs for youth with disabilities, limiting equipment, coaching, and infrastructure.
- **Limited Awareness and Education:** Increased awareness campaigns and educational programs are essential to inform the public about the benefits of disabled youth participating in sports and dispel misconceptions.
- **Inadequate Infrastructures and Accessibility:** The absence of accessible sports facilities and transportation options prevents youth with disabilities from participating fully in sports activities, highlighting the need for inclusive design.
- **Challenges in Reaching the Target Group:** Engaging the intended audience, often scattered and diverse, is complicated due to varying needs, abilities, and interests among youth with disabilities.
- **Absence of Tailored Social Programs:** Tailored social programs for youth with disabilities, covering mentorship, peer support, and inclusivity, are lacking, affecting the overall experience and motivation of participants.
- **Shortage of Expert Professionals:** The scarcity of skilled coaches, trainers, and medical staff with expertise in adaptive sports is a critical barrier to ensuring the safety and development of disabled youth athletes.
- **Deficiency in Strategies by Sports Federations:** The lack of comprehensive strategies and dedicated programs from sports federations restricts the growth and competitiveness of youth with disabilities in sports, calling for inclusive policies and initiatives.
- **Safety Concerns by Parents and Guardians:** Parents and guardians often express concerns about the safety of their children when participating in sports, emphasising the importance of developing clear safety protocols and reassuring communication.
- **Lack of Role Models:** The absence of visible role models among youth with disabilities in the sports world negatively affects motivation and aspirations, underlining the need to showcase successful athletes with disabilities.
- **Inadequate Governmental Policies:** Existing governmental policies do not provide sufficient support for the inclusion of disabled youth in sports, necessitating the establishment of inclusive legislation, funding, and advocacy efforts to address this gap.

A main quest of the roundtables was also to explore further opportunities that would encourage and enhance the capacity of institutions and individuals to participate in green urban sports. The overview of the opportunities mapped by participants is as follows:



Opportunities

- Growing Participation in Sports: Despite the need for improvement, there is a noticeable increase in participation by disabled youth in sports.
- Inclusion of Adapted Sports by Some Clubs: Certain clubs are integrating adapted sports, raising awareness within local communities.
- Established Disabled Sports in Certain Areas: Well-established disabled sports in specific regions contribute to the rising number of disabled athletes.
- Community Building through Urban Sports Events: Urban sports events, as means of awareness raising, can foster community building and attract more disabled athletes.
- Increasing Number of Initiatives in Sports Organizations and Schools: There is a rising number of initiatives focused on the involvement of youth with disabilities in sports and climate actions in sports organisations and schools.
- Significance of Research: Research plays a pivotal role in creating new strategies for the inclusion of youth with disabilities in sports.
- Career Opportunities in Sports for Disabled Youths: The shortage of professionals in green sports for disabled youth presents a potential career pathway for individuals interested in this field.
- Impact of Environmental Challenges on Policymaking: Environmental pressures significantly influence policymakers, paving the way for better strategies in sustainability.



Conclusions

The synthesis of the FORTHE publication aimed to provide a short overview of the topics and ideas developed and treated in it. The four round tables successfully identified primary barriers and opportunities in urban sports for disabled youth and climate action. Engaged participants, responding thoughtfully to facilitators' inquiries, generated dynamic discussions marked by fresh perspectives. The insights gathered emphasise the urgent need for novel strategies to overcome financial, educational, and infrastructural challenges. These roundtables not only contribute to ongoing FORTHE project initiatives but also advocate for expanding research to other European countries.



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