

Best Practice Guide



R-GO

Ready, Steady, Go
inclusive sport events for all





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Project number: 101133320 — R-GO — ERASMUS-SPORT-2023

Implementation period: 01.01.2024 - 31.12.2025

Project consortium

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Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

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1. Introduction

This Good Practice Guide was developed within the framework of the R-GO project to explore how sport can become a powerful tool for inclusion and empowerment. Its purpose is to provide youth facilitators, educators, and professionals with both a theoretical foundation and practical strategies for creating inclusive sports programs that encourage the social integration of disadvantaged children and young people while promoting health education.

This guide aims to raise awareness about the importance of inclusive practices and the positive effects that physical activity can have on children's development and well-being. It offers practical tools and methodologies that professionals can adapt to foster participation, build self-confidence, and reduce the risks of social exclusion. Structured into three main parts — theoretical foundations, national contexts, and practical recommendations — this guide is intended to serve as both a reference and a hands-on resource for those working with disadvantaged youth.

The development of the guide was based on an in-depth, evidence-based review, combining both theoretical and empirical approaches. A literature review of recent publications provided insight into theoretical frameworks, effective methodologies and best practices that highlight the role of sports in promoting inclusion. At the same time, successful initiatives from the partner countries were collected to ensure the guide reflects diverse experiences and adaptable strategies.

To better understand the real-life needs and barriers, empirical research was conducted through structured group discussions (focus group interviews) across the participating countries. These discussions involved youth workers and educators who are directly engaged with disadvantaged young people, as well as the children and youth themselves — both those under and over the age of 14. The focus groups explored sports habits, attitudes toward healthy lifestyles, and obstacles to participation, while also assessing the role of inspiration provided by athletes and tailored programmes.

The knowledge gained from this process has been synthesized into the Good Practice Guide you now hold. By blending theory, practical insights, and lived experiences, the guide provides a comprehensive resource to support professionals in organising inclusive sports events. Available in English, Romanian, and Hungarian, it aims to inspire and equip practitioners to create opportunities that empower disadvantaged children and youth, foster a sense of community belonging, and promote healthier, more inclusive futures.

2. About the Project

R-GO: Ready, Steady, Go – Inclusive Sports Events for All

The R-GO project promotes social inclusion and healthy lifestyles through sports events and experiential camps designed for disadvantaged children and young people. Recognizing the therapeutic and transformative power of sports, the project seeks to provide access to meaningful physical activities that foster cooperation, resilience, and a sense of belonging, while promoting performance and future plans.

At the heart of the R-GO project are children and young people who face social and personal challenges, often growing up without the same opportunities as their peers. The project seeks to create spaces where they can feel included, supported, and inspired. To reach this goal, R-GO brings together a range of engaging activities. Multi-profile sports camps invited participants to explore different disciplines, discover new skills, and experience the joy of teamwork. A football championship added the excitement of competition while nurturing cooperation and fair play. Alongside these events, educational sessions were included into the programmes, promoting healthy living.

The project's efforts extend beyond the immediate experience of the participants. The Good Practice Guide shares methods and lessons learned, ensuring that the approaches to inclusion can inspire others working in the same field. A 30-minute inspirational documentary captures real stories of transformation, showing how effort and perseverance can overcome adversity. In addition, the final conference provided both practical opportunities for growth and platforms for exchange and reflection.

The impact envisioned is profound: children and young people will gain self-confidence, release stress through healthy activities, and strengthen their sense of belonging in a community that values them. Most importantly, they will learn that challenges, no matter how daunting, can be met with courage, persistence, and support.

Activities of the RGO project were supported by the financial support of the European Commission, through the Erasmus+ Sport programme for small-scale partnership (project: 101133320 — R-GO — ERASMUS-SPORT-2023).

3. Methodological Guidelines on Integration through sports activities

Sport has a simultaneous impact on both body and mind. Numerous studies and implemented programs demonstrate that sport is an extremely powerful tool: it engages children in community activities, provides new experiences, strengthens self-confidence, reinforces social relationships, and develops cooperation, leadership, and other personal skills. Last but not least, its positive effects on health are indisputable.

At the same time, it is well documented—supported by a wide range of studies—that sport can contribute to achieve broader social goals, like prevention of social exclusion, by reducing early school leaving and school dropout.

Scientific studies and implemented programs show that **sports activities and social inclusion are closely connected**. Engagement in sport programmes not only influences social behavior, but also reduces school dropout, and contributes to the development of personal and interpersonal abilities.

Numerous initiatives have been using sports to enhance children's health, physical abilities, social, educational, and leadership skills while ensuring they have fun. These initiatives vary widely, from programs centered around sports to those incorporating sports as one of several methods to achieve broader social goals.

But how does it work? To understand, firstly it is important to have an understanding of how social exclusion / inclusion among school aged children works.

Social exclusion can be approached from multiple perspectives. From a social model perspective, the risk of exclusion often begins in the primary environment of socialization, within the family, as the family's social status, values, and available resources fundamentally shape a child's life chances. Psychosocial models further emphasize that this primary environment influences how a child relates to different contexts, topics, and problem situations, as well as how they define themselves and others.

There are numerous theories addressing social inequalities and the dynamics and mechanisms of exclusion. These include phenomena such as ethnocentric thinking, prejudice, and stereotypes, all of which can further reinforce exclusion.

At the individual level, several factors also influence how a child integrates into a community or relates to a sports program. These include intrinsic motivation, perseverance, and coping strategies acquired within the family or immediate environment. These are deep internal processes that significantly affect the extent to which sport can positively shape a child's life. A modern theoretical framework that supports these conclusions is that of [Positive Youth](#)

Development (PYD). This theory highlights the fact that sport can provide opportunities for personal growth, character formation and the adoption of important ethical values, such as respect and fair play.

From the perspective of our project objectives, it is important to highlight that the communities a child comes from, have a substantial influence on how the child relates to specific challenges and problem situations. The following list presents the main factors contributing to social and educational exclusion among children and young people, operating at individual, family, community, and institutional level.

3.1. Main Factors Contributing to Social and Educational Exclusion

- **Economic hardship** is one of the most significant determinants. Families experiencing poverty or financial instability often struggle to provide basic necessities such as adequate nutrition, clothing, and housing. Limited financial resources also restrict access to quality education, healthcare services, and extracurricular or recreational activities, thereby reducing children's opportunities for development and social participation.
- **Educational disadvantage** further deepens exclusion. Limited access to quality education, inadequate school infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient educational support at home negatively affect academic performance and long-term prospects. Schools that lack inclusive methodologies and individualized support may struggle to respond effectively to the diverse needs of children at risk.
- **Health inequities** represent another major factor. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to experience chronic health conditions, poor nutrition, and limited access to healthcare services. These challenges can impair physical development, emotional well-being, school attendance, and learning outcomes.
- **Individual factors** also play an important role. These include learning difficulties acquired as a result of dysfunctional family relationships, congenital intellectual disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders, psychosocial instability, and uneven developmental trajectories. Research indicates that boys face a higher risk of early school leaving, and children displaying aggressive behavior in the early school years are more likely to disengage from education later on.
- **Family-related factors** are central to understanding exclusion. Poverty, low levels of parental education, and limited socio-cultural capital—such as norms, expectations, and values related to education—can significantly influence children's educational paths. Family disintegration, including divorce, domestic violence, substance abuse, neglect, or parental migration for work abroad, often creates instability and emotional stress, negatively affecting children's social and emotional development.
- **Peer group influences** also contribute to exclusion processes. The group of belonging and reference plays a critical role in shaping behaviors and attitudes toward school and social participation. Children and young people who have peers who have dropped out of school are at a higher risk of following a similar trajectory.
- **School environment factors** further shape inclusion or exclusion outcomes. These include the overall school climate, quality of infrastructure and facilities, the nature of relationships

between students and teachers, peer interactions, and the availability of skills, methodologies, and support systems that promote academic success and inclusion for all students.

- **Cultural and environmental factors** influence children's life chances. Community norms, exposure to crime, environmental hazards, and limited access to safe recreational spaces can hinder healthy development and social integration.

Together, these interconnected factors highlight the multifaceted nature of social and educational exclusion and underline the importance of integrated, inclusive approaches that address structural, institutional, and individual dimensions simultaneously.

3.2. Realities of Sport Engagement Among Disadvantaged Children

(Field-Based Insights from Partner Countries)

The empirical research conducted with children, adolescence and youth workers in partner countries reveals a complex reality: children and young people value sport, understand its importance for health, and show strong motivation to participate — yet their engagement is significantly shaped by structural barriers linked to poverty, geography, and social context.

Across focus groups, approximately 80% of young people reported enjoying sport. Popular activities include football, cycling, basketball, gymnastics, martial arts, and informal outdoor play. Both girls and boys expressed interest in similar sports, often participating together in mixed teams.

However, access is uneven. While urban areas may offer a wide range of facilities (over 80 sport opportunities in some cities), rural children rely mainly on informal outdoor activities due to limited infrastructure. Financial constraints, commuting difficulties, and lack of equipment significantly restrict participation — particularly for children living in villages.

Socio-economic context is a defining factor, added with vulnerable family or ethnic contexts it created additional structural disadvantages. Poor economic context (poverty or limited public funding for children in state care) impacts participation in different ways: inability to pay club fees or purchase equipment, lack of transport to training facilities, limited parental support due to economic stress.

Young people often stated that “there is no gender difference in sport.” In practice, however, girls face additional barriers, like domestic responsibilities (caring for siblings), parental restrictions, cultural fears regarding social reputation or limited encouragement within their communities. The research also revealed, that although girls participated actively in school-based physical education, their long-term retention and structured sport engagement remained more fragile, partially due to the limited access to girly sport programmes.

As health and sport activity go hand-in-hand, the research also focused on the health aspects of sports programmes. Most children presented an understanding of the connection between sport and health. However, harmful habits were widespread: consumption of energy drinks, smoking

(especially among older youth), excessive screen time, sedentary leisure patterns. For older adolescents, daily survival pressures and unstable living conditions often override health awareness. The research underlined that knowledge alone does not automatically translate into behaviour change.

On the other hand, youth workers and educators consistently reported strong enthusiasm for sport, especially team-based activities. However, they highlighted missing structured pathways for children with disabilities, youth in family-type care institutions, rural adolescents, those unable to afford competitive sport. In some cases, talented youth discontinue promising sport careers due to financial barriers or lack of stamina linked to broader life challenges.

Based on the responses, a gap between the belief in equality and the lived experience of inequality can be observed. Many young people believe that success in sport depends mainly on determination and perseverance, and during competitions they often feel equal to others on the field. However, structural barriers such as financial hardship, health issues, discriminatory attitudes, and unequal starting conditions continue to shape real opportunities.

The research also shows that role models matter. Older youth can identify successful athletes of both genders, while younger children struggle to name relatable figures. Visible and diverse role models appear to strengthen motivation and belief in personal success.

3.3. How can sport programmes reduce social exclusion and marginalisation?

In contrast to broader social contexts, sport—with its own set of rules and values—has the capacity to override or temporarily suspend existing social inequalities. By focusing on individual or collective performance, sport can offer new experiences that may later become valuable personal and social resources. These experiences can be broadly grouped into two interconnected dimensions: **enjoyment and belonging (fun and friends)**, and **the development of social and personal skills**.

Social inclusion aims to support disadvantaged individuals in gaining essential skills, developing a sense of belonging, and achieving greater independence. It focuses on improving participation in society by expanding access to opportunities, resources, voice, and respect for rights. In this context, sport represents far more than physical activity; it functions as a catalyst for empowerment and positive change at individual, group, and community levels.

The review of recent studies—including the Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework—and the analysis of successful inclusive sport programmes both emphasize the importance of a supportive and value-driven environment. Sport initiatives should not focus exclusively on performance or competition. Instead, they should create opportunities for personal growth, character formation, and the internalization of ethical values such as respect, cooperation, and fair play. Above all, sport programmes must provide positive and meaningful experiences for children.

Research shows that children who experience enjoyment and friendship during sport activities are more likely to remain engaged over time. Sustained participation strengthens their social competencies and reinforces positive developmental outcomes. **Fun** is not merely an additional benefit—it is a fundamental condition for inclusion. When children enjoy sport and feel socially connected, they are more motivated, more confident, and more open to learning.

→ Empowerment at the Individual Level

Sport programmes contribute significantly to individual empowerment, particularly for children and youth facing socio-economic challenges. Through participation, young people experience:

- Self-determination and autonomy, as they set goals and master new skills.
- Identity development, using sport as a space for self-exploration and self-definition.
- Increased confidence and self-esteem, built through achievement and recognition.
- Personal development, including leadership, perseverance, responsibility, and discipline.
- Emotional learning, such as managing frustration, coping with failure, and regulating emotions.
- Health benefits, promoting active lifestyles and reducing the risk of non-communicable diseases.
- Reduction of risky behaviours, including improved safety and lower exposure to violence, including gender-based violence.

Coaches and trainers play a central role in this process. Especially as mentors and role models, they help shape positive behaviours, reinforce ethical values, and strengthen young people's relationships with peers and teachers. Well-designed sport programmes can also contribute to keeping children engaged in school and supporting their broader educational journey.

→ Empowerment at the Group Level

Team-based activities foster collective empowerment. Through shared goals and collaboration, participants develop:

- Teamwork and cooperation skills
- A sense of solidarity and collective agency
- Initiative and proactive attitudes
- Respect for diversity and inclusion

Sport creates a structured environment where children learn to work together, resolve conflicts constructively, and support one another. These group-level dynamics are essential in counteracting marginalisation and strengthening social bonds.

→ Empowerment at the Community Level

At community level, sport programmes promote civic engagement, social cohesion, and shared identity. Community-based sport events and teams:

- Create opportunities for social inclusion and equal participation
- Strengthen connections between families, institutions, and local stakeholders
- Foster community pride and belonging
- Contribute to the development of inclusive and resilient local environments

By enhancing social capital and strengthening relationships within and across communities, sport programmes help create conditions where every individual has the opportunity to thrive and contribute meaningfully.

3.4. From Theory to Practice: What are the key elements of inclusive sport programmes to consider?

Having outlined the theoretical background, the focus now shifts toward practical application. As part of the R-GO project, we identified and analyzed sport programmes that specifically target disadvantaged children and young people. The aim was to understand which approaches and programme elements are most effective in supporting social inclusion and facilitating positive developmental pathways.

The reviewed initiatives include both community-level programmes and individual-focused interventions. At community level, examples such as the collaboration between UNICEF and FC Barcelona, or the Homeless World Cup, demonstrate how football can be used globally as a tool to engage marginalized young people, foster social participation, and strengthen community ties. Alongside these, there are initiatives that focus more strongly on individual development, such as Girls on the Run, which enhances girls' self-confidence through running and shared experiences, or Special Olympics Unified Sports, where young people with and without disabilities participate together, promoting inclusion and mutual understanding.

While financial resources play a significant role in determining access to sport programmes, the analysis shows that non-material factors are equally important. Effective programmes go beyond funding and infrastructure by ensuring accessibility, creating safe and supportive environments, and offering meaningful opportunities for success and personal growth. Equally essential is the development of social and life skills, the involvement of families and communities, and the provision of psychological and emotional support.

Based on the analysis, several key components emerged as common success factors in inclusive sport programmes:

1. **Accessibility and Removal of Financial Barriers**
 - Free or affordable participation
 - Provision of sports equipment and clothing
 - Travel support or locally organized activities
2. **Positive and Supportive Environment**
 - Empathetic and inclusive attitudes from coaches, mentors, and volunteers
 - Safe spaces free from discrimination, exclusion, or stigmatization
 - Emphasis on community experience, not only competition but also shared play and leisure activities
3. **Ensuring Enjoyment and Experiences of Success**
 - Focus on participation and personal development rather than performance alone
 - Focus on fun as both a prerequisite for participation and a key outcome of sport engagement.
 - Setting achievable, step-by-step goals
 - Regular feedback, encouragement, and recognition
4. **Development of Life Skills and Social Competencies**
 - Cooperation, teamwork, and responsibility
 - Conflict management, fair play, and respect for rules
 - Strengthening motivation, perseverance, and commitment
5. **Community and Family Involvement**
 - Involving parents and family members in matches and events
 - Creating shared activities between children and the local community
 - Engaging positive role models such as athletes, coaches, and volunteer mentors
6. **Psychological and Emotional Support**
 - Building self-confidence and improving self-esteem
 - Reducing stress and anxiety through physical activity
 - Providing a safe space to experience, process, and learn from failure

Key Takeaways for Practitioners

designing inclusive sports programmes

1. Start with the real needs of the children

Before designing activities, understand who the children are — their abilities, vulnerabilities, motivations, and barriers to participation. Inclusion begins with listening and observing.

2. Design for enjoyment and belonging

Fun and friendship are not secondary outcomes — they are design principles. If children do not perceive sport as enjoyable and socially rewarding, they are unlikely to stay engaged. Plan activities that encourage cooperation, peer interaction, and positive group experiences.

3. Ensure that every child can experience success

Structure activities so that progress is possible for all. Adjust rules, intensity, and expectations to prevent repeated frustration, failure or exclusion.

4. Embed clear values into the programme structure

Respect, fairness, inclusion, and emotional safety should not depend only on the personality of the coach. Make them explicit programme standards.

5. Define the role of the coach as educator and facilitator - Modeling the expected behaviour

When developing the programme, emphasis should be put on the role of coaches, who are not only technical instructors. Their communication style, emotional control, and fairness sets the tone. They shape group culture, model behaviour, and guide social learning.

6. Plan for differentiated participation

There is no “one-size-fits-all” model. Inclusive programmes anticipate diversity. Tailor methods, intensity, and structure to the local environment, available resources, and community realities. Include options, flexible roles, adapted exercises.

7. Integrate life skills intentionally

Design moments for reflection, teamwork, leadership, and emotional learning. Life skills development should be built into the methodology, not left to coincidence. Help participants understand how skills learned in sport—teamwork, resilience, conflict resolution, goal-setting—apply to school, family life, and community engagement.

8. Involve young people in meaningful ways

Create space for feedback, shared decision-making, youth leadership and shared evaluation. Participation increases commitment and strengthens empowerment.

9. Connect the programme to the wider community

Engage families, schools, local organisations, and other professionals. Inclusion becomes sustainable when sport is part of a broader support network.

10. Include monitoring and reflection in the programme model

Build in mechanisms for observation, feedback, and evaluation. Regular reflection helps you understand what works, for whom, and how the programme can improve.

Resources

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4. Best Practice Sport Programmes and Inclusive Team-Building Games

This chapter presents a collection of best practice sport programmes collected by the partner organisations, alongside practical games and activities, that were tested and implemented by the MUSUBI sport association. These practices promote teamwork, cooperation, and inclusion. They are simple, adaptable games that foster collaboration, trust, communication, and mutual respect in an enjoyable and accessible way.

4.1. Best practice sport inclusion programmes

1. “Fókuszban a gyermek” Sports Camp – Ötrégiós Játékok (Hungary)

The “Fókuszban a gyermek” (Focus on the Child) programme organizes an Olympic-themed multi-sport camp for disadvantaged young people from five regions of Hungary. The initiative aims to promote social inclusion and personal development through sport.

Key Characteristics:	• Target group: Disadvantaged children and youth from marginalized regions. • Activities: Multi-sport competitions (athletics, football, table tennis, karate). • Values-based education: Emphasis on respect, perseverance, integrity, and fair play. • Role model engagement: Elite athletes (including Olympic and world medalists) participate, share personal stories, and interact directly with children to strengthen internal motivation. • Experiential inclusion: Provides children with access to positive summer camp experiences that may otherwise be unavailable to them. • Short-term immersion, long-term impact: While camp-based, the programme fosters aspiration, self-confidence, and goal-setting beyond sport.
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Inclusion Dimension	The programme uses sport as a motivational and character-building tool, offering disadvantaged youth access to structured, value-driven experiences that strengthen resilience and social belonging.
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2. Football for Respect! – Oltalom Sport Association

Implemented by Oltalom Sportegyesület, Football for Respect! supports the social inclusion of disadvantaged and refugee youth through regular, free football training and community engagement.

Key Characteristics:	● Target group: Refugee youth, children in child protection care, and socially disadvantaged young people. ● Free and regular training: Conducted at multiple locations to ensure accessibility. ● Social support integration: Social workers attend trainings and provide assistance with housing, education, healthcare, and administrative issues. ● Gender-sensitive approach: Dedicated girls' club offering tailored support. ● Life skills and employability support: Career guidance, CV writing, interview preparation, and job search assistance. ● Youth leadership programme: Selected young participants receive training and scholarships, becoming peer leaders and co-organizers. ● Fair Play Football Roadshow: Mixed-background teams play using football methodology, encouraging dialogue, equality, and respect. International exposure: Participation in international tournaments enhances motivation, language skills, and intercultural learning.
Inclusion Dimension	This is a comprehensive sport-for-development model that integrates football with social work, youth empowerment, and labour market inclusion, promoting long-term integration rather than short-term engagement.

More information	http://utcaifoci.hu/projektek/lezarult-projektek/
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3. Street Child World Cup Participation Programme

The Street Child World Cup is an international football tournament and advocacy platform for street-connected and marginalized youth. Hungarian participation has been facilitated by Oltalom Sportegyesület.

Key Characteristics:	● Target group: Street-connected youth, children in institutional care, refugees. ● Global platform: Brings together teams from multiple countries. ● Integrated event model: Combines football competition, arts festival, and youth congress. ● Child rights focus: Workshops on children's rights and advocacy activities addressing violence and systemic exclusion. ● Long-term preparation: Systematic training of players, coaches, and social workers prior to the event. ● Voice and empowerment: Youth actively participate in discussions and policy-oriented dialogue.
Inclusion Dimension	Beyond sport competition, the initiative creates visibility for marginalized youth, offering them voice, recognition, and advocacy opportunities at an international level. Sport becomes a vehicle for rights-based empowerment.
More information	http://utcaifoci.hu/projektek/lezarult-projektek/

4. Drávapiski "Chess Village" Initiative

This grassroots initiative aims to transform a disadvantaged rural settlement into a

“chess village,” using chess as a community-based cognitive and social development tool.

Key Characteristics:	● Target group: Children from a multiply disadvantaged rural community. ● Development focus: Emphasis on critical thinking rather than elite competition. ● Community-wide engagement: Goal of ensuring that all local children regularly play chess. ● Intergenerational solidarity: Revitalization of a retired chess professional while creating new developmental pathways for youth. ● Low-cost, high-impact model: Minimal infrastructure required, strong intellectual and social returns.
Inclusion Dimension	Chess serves as a structured cognitive framework that enhances concentration, strategic thinking, and perseverance. It strengthens intellectual development in contexts of socio-cultural disadvantage and fosters community identity
More information	https://www.szabadeuropa.hu/a/hajlektalansag-es-kilatastalan-sag-helyett-elt-utolso-eselyevel-most-pedig-miatta-eg-sakklazban-del-baranya/32706745.html

5. NEMECSEK Sport Programme – Child Protection Framework

The NEMECSEK Sport Programme focuses on creating safe sporting environments through a structured child protection guideline.

Key Characteristics:	● Child safeguarding policy: Clear prevention, detection, and response mechanisms regarding abuse and exclusion. ● Defined responsibilities: Transparent roles for adults working with children. ● Community-wide awareness: Coaches, parents, and children understand shared values and behavioural
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	expectations. ● Living framework: Not merely a formal document, but an operational safeguarding culture embedded in everyday practice.
Inclusion Dimension	The programme ensures that sport functions as a genuinely safe and protective space. Inclusion is strengthened through safeguarding, accountability, and transparent community norms.
More information	https://nemecsek.hu/sport/

6. Sakpalota (Chess Palace) Educational Development Programme

The Sakpalota Program, developed by Judit Polgár, integrates chess-based methodology into mainstream education as a cognitive development tool.

Key Characteristics:	● Inclusive pedagogy: Suitable for integrated and inclusive classrooms. ● Focus on rules, not competition: Chess is used as a structured system for thinking development. ● Cognitive benefits: Enhances abstract reasoning, working memory, attention, and strategic planning. ● Evidence-based impact: Research shows significant benefits for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and socially disadvantaged backgrounds. ● Multilevel differentiation: Allows students to progress at different levels within the same framework. ● Preventive function: Supports neurological harmony and mitigates learning difficulties.
Inclusion	The programme demonstrates measurable cognitive improvements among SEN students and disadvantaged

Dimension	learners, reducing performance gaps and strengthening educational equity through structured play.
More information	https://en.sakkpalota.hu/

7. “Learn to Be Healthy” Programme – United Way Romania & UEFA

The “Learn to Be Healthy” programme supports approximately 800 children from disadvantaged backgrounds by combining regular sport activities with structured health education and life skills development. The initiative uses sport as a platform for prevention, inclusion, and the promotion of long-term healthy behaviours.

Key Characteristics:	● Target group: Children from socio-economically disadvantaged communities. ● Preventive health education: 24 structured educational sessions delivered by psycho-pedagogues focusing on hydration and nutrition (nutrition pyramid, balanced diet), Effects of alcohol and tobacco (short- and long-term impact), healthy sleep habits, importance of regular physical activity ● Values-based and social skills development: Interactive sessions addressing, fair play and sportsmanship, teamwork and cooperation, anti-bullying awareness and self-protection strategies, storytelling and guided reflection are used to help children understand positive and negative behaviours in sport and daily life. ● Regular sport engagement: Weekly sport workshops in football, volleyball, badminton, basketball, and table tennis. Provision of necessary sport equipment to ensure equal participation. ● Structured and consistent participation: Activities take place throughout the year, promoting continuity and habit formation rather than one-off engagement.
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Inclusion Dimension	The programme adopts a holistic sport-for-development model that integrates physical activity with health literacy and social-emotional education. It reduces inequality in access to structured extracurricular opportunities and promotes: • Healthy lifestyle adoption from an early age, • Increased self-confidence and social integration, • Reduction of bullying and risky behaviours, • Development of teamwork and prosocial attitudes.
More information	https://www.unitedway.ro/

8. “Inclusion through Sport for Children with Intellectual Disabilities” – Motivation Romania Foundation & Special Olympics Romania

“Inclusion through Sport for Children with Intellectual Disabilities” promotes equal opportunities and social inclusion by engaging children with and without intellectual disabilities in unified team sports. The initiative is funded through the EEA and Norway Grants and implemented through a broad international partnership coordinated by the Motivation Romania Foundation in collaboration with Special Olympics organisations across Central and Southern Europe.

Key Characteristics:	• Target group: Over 5,200 children and young people aged 6–12, with and without intellectual disabilities • Project duration: January 2021 – December 2023 (3 years). • Funding framework: EEA and Norway Grants Regional Cooperation Fund. • Unified sport model: Team sports competitions (football and basketball) bringing together children with and without intellectual disabilities in inclusive formats. • Large-scale international cooperation: Implemented in partnership with Special Olympics organisations in multiple European countries, with support from Special Olympics Europe Eurasia and academic partners such as the University
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	of Physical Education in Poznan. ● Structured competitions and events: Organization of inclusive sport events designed to foster participation, visibility, and positive social interaction.
Inclusion Dimension	The programme applies a unified sport approach, where children with and without intellectual disabilities train and compete together. This model: reduces stigma and stereotypes, promotes equal participation and shared experiences, encourages peer acceptance and mutual respect, supports community-level social integration. The initiative directly addresses the social isolation often experienced by children with intellectual disabilities, particularly exacerbated during the COVID-19 crisis.
More information	https://motivation.ro/blog/proiectul-incluziune-prin-sport-pentru-copiii-cu-dizabilitati-intelectuale-promoveaza-egalitatea-de-sanse-prin-activitati-sportive/

9. Social Sports School Educational and Social Inclusion Programme

The Social Sports School Programme integrates sport-based methodology into mainstream education and community life as a tool for cognitive, social, and emotional development. Inspired by the values-based educational model of the Real Madrid Foundation, the programme supports children from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds in building resilience, life skills, and academic engagement.

Key Characteristics:	● Inclusive approach: Engages children from vulnerable communities, including those with SEN, ensuring equal participation in mixed teams. ● Sport as a learning tool: Uses football and multisport activities to develop discipline, cooperation, and fair play. ● Cognitive and emotional growth: Strengthens attention, teamwork, self-confidence, and motivation. ● Values-based education: Integrates core values — Equality, Autonomy, Team Spirit, Motivation, Self-Esteem, Health, and
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	Respect — into all activities. ● Holistic support: Combines sports training with counseling, educational activities, and parental involvement. ● Experiential exposure: Offers participation in competitions, exchanges, and community events. ● Preventive impact: Reduces risks of school dropout and social exclusion by fostering belonging and positive development.
Inclusion Dimension	The programme demonstrates measurable improvements in school engagement, social integration, and personal development among children from disadvantaged and SEN backgrounds. By embedding structured play, cooperative learning, and value-based reflection into sports practice, the Social Sports School reduces social and educational gaps, strengthens resilience, and contributes to long-term educational equity.
More information	https://fdpsr.ro/ce-facem/scoala-sociala-sportiva/

10. “Culoare în Mișcare” (Color in Motion) Community Sports Inclusion Programme

“Culoare în Mișcare” is a community-based initiative that highlights the importance of sport in a child’s balanced development, positioning physical activity as both a recreational outlet and a tool for self-education, motivation, and discipline. The programme creates safe and dynamic spaces where movement becomes a pathway to confidence, social inclusion, and personal growth.

Key Characteristics:	● Target group: 256 children from disadvantaged backgrounds, including children from low-income and large families, rural communities, and the state child protection system — many of whom face limited opportunities for recreation, socialization, and development due to socioeconomic constraints and recent public health restrictions
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	● Sport as a developmental catalyst: Uses recreational sport not for performance, but as a structured environment for building discipline, resilience, cooperation, and self-confidence. ● Health education component: Integrates awareness sessions on health education and the impact of sport on the body, mind, and emotional wellbeing. ● Open-air activities: Weekend sessions (July–October) in Park Gherăiești featuring cycling, team games, races, creative workshops, and interactive challenges. ● Volunteer-led model: Activities facilitated by volunteers from Asociația Bronx People, providing positive role models and community engagement. ● Sustainable infrastructure: Development of a recreational sports base, including an outdoor judo space and community facilities. ● Open access: The center remains available to all children seeking safe, active, and supportive leisure opportunities.
Inclusion Dimension	“Culoare în Mișcare” reduces barriers to participation in community life for vulnerable children by offering structured recreational engagement in an inclusive public setting. Through collective play, movement-based learning, and mentorship, the programme strengthens social integration, self-esteem, and community belonging. By transforming public space into a supportive developmental environment, it actively mitigates risks of social marginalization and fosters equitable access to healthy childhood experiences.
More information	https://fdpsr.ro/ce-facem/scoala-sociala-sportiva/

4.2. Inclusive sport games

1. 🎯 Steal the cat tail!

Goals: strengthening tactical movement, spatial awareness, and teamwork

Description:

- Divide the players into two teams and assign each team a colour. Each player tucks a rope ("cat tail") into the back of their waistband, leaving about two-thirds of it hanging out.
- The teams start on opposite sides of a playing area approximately the size of a basketball court.
- On the signal, players try to steal the "tails" of players from the opposing team **without pushing, holding, or physically touching them**. If a player's tail is stolen, they leave the playing area (or move to a designated waiting zone).
- The game continues until one team loses all its tails. The team with at least one remaining tail wins.
- The game is short, dynamic, and usually generates a lot of laughter and engagement.

Nr. of participants: 2 teams of 10-20 participants

Materials: 2 sets of rope pieces in two different colours (e.g., red and blue)

2. 🎯 Rock-paper-scissors, ring-toss point-collecting game

Goals: self-control, movement control, agility control, accuracy, and team spirit

Description:

- Place 15–20 hula hoops on the ground in a straight line. If you are playing on asphalt, you can draw circles with chalk instead of using hoops.
- Divide the group into two teams of 10–15 players. The teams stand on opposite ends of the line of hoops, facing each other.
- At the signal, the first player from each team begins moving forward by jumping with both feet into each hoop, one by one. They continue jumping toward each other along the line.
- When the two players meet, each stands inside a separate hoop and they quickly play Rock–Paper–Scissors to decide who continues. The winner keeps jumping forward along the course. The loser leaves the course, and the next player from their team starts from the beginning of the line.

- The game continues in this way. The objective is for as many team members as possible to successfully cross the entire course and reach the other side.

Nr. of participants: two teams of 10–15 players

Materials: 15–20 hula hoops (or chalk to draw circles)

3. Dodgeball 1.

Goals: space awareness, accuracy, and attention

Description:

- This game can be played by 20–50 children on a court about the size of a tennis court.
- Use 1–4 balls, depending on the number of players.
- A few players start as throwers and stand around or inside the playing area. Their goal is to hit a moving player below the shoulders with the ball. Players inside the court must dodge, run, and stay alert to avoid being hit.
- When a player is hit, they switch roles with the thrower who hit them.
- The game is easy to understand, fast-paced, and engaging for large groups.

Nr. of participants: 20 - 50 children

Materials: 1-4 balls

4. Dodgeball 2.

Goals: Develops spatial awareness, throwing accuracy, attention, and quick decision-making

Description:

- Divide the group into two teams of 20–25 players. Play on a court about the size of a tennis court. Each team stays on its own half of the court.
- From each team, two or three players act as throwers and move onto the opponent's half. Their goal is to hit as many opposing players as possible within a set time limit (2–3 minutes).
- Players who are hit leave the court.
- At the end of the round, the team with the most players remaining wins.
- The game is easy to understand, fast-paced, and can be repeated several times in a short period.

Nr. of participants: two teams of 20-25 participants

Materials: at least, 5- 6 balls

5. Dodgeball 3.

Goals: Develops spatial awareness, passing skills, and basic attacking and defending skills used in many ball games

Description:

- The game is played with 20–25 participants and one ball. Divide the group into two equal teams: attackers and defenders.
- Mark a 10 × 10 meter square playing area. Draw a circle in the center.
- The attackers move along the boundary lines of the square and pass the ball to one another.
- The defenders stay inside the square and protect the circle in the center.
- The attackers try to pass the ball quickly and accurately in order to hit the circle in the middle.
- Each time the circle is successfully hit, the attackers choose one defender to switch roles and join the attackers. The game continues until all defenders have been converted into attackers.
- The activity is dynamic, requires constant attention, and is highly engaging.

Nr. of participants: 20 - 25 participants

Materials: as many balls as the attackers

6. Dodgeball 4.

Goals: Develops spatial awareness, passing skills, and attacking and defending skills used in various ball games

Description:

- Play on a court about the size of a tennis court. Divide the group into two equal teams of 10–15 players. Each team stays on its own half of the court.
- At the start of the game, each team receives 2–3 balls.
- The objective is to eliminate opposing players by hitting them with the ball (below the shoulders). Players who are hit leave the court.
- Teams throw, pass, and move strategically to eliminate all members of the opposing team. The round ends when one team has no players left. That team loses, and the other team wins.

Nr. of participants: Two teams of 10 - 15 participants

Materials: 4 - 6 balls

7. Pebble collecting

Goals: develop endurance and team spirit, as well as to help weaker players catch up.

Description:

- Divide the group into two equal teams of 10–15 players. Set up a running track indoors or outdoors.
- At opposite ends of the track, prepare two “work stations.” At each station, place: one empty bucket (or box), and 150–200 pebbles next to it.
- At the signal, players run along the track. In each round, every child carries one pebble and places it into their team’s bucket.
- Players continue running back and forth, transporting one pebble at a time.
- The team that transfers all their pebbles into their bucket first wins.
- The activity is dynamic, motivating, fun, and physically demanding.

Nr. of participants: Two teams of 10 - 15 participants

Materials: 2 buckets (or boxes), 150-200 pebbles

8. Battle of numbers: doubles/four in fours/two teams versions

Goals: develops alertness, strategic thinking, teamwork, and quick reactions.

Description:

- In this game, each player receives a number written on a piece of paper and places it visibly on their forehead or back (without seeing their own number).
- The objective is to read the opponent’s number before they read yours. If you successfully read and say the opponent’s number out loud, that player is eliminated.
- The game has three versions:
 1. Doubles version: Played by two players in a small space (about 1 square meter).
 2. Fours version: Played by four players in a 6–10 square meter area.
 3. Team version: Two teams of equal size play in a larger area, such as a park or forest.
- In all versions, players must move carefully, protect their own number, and try to see their opponents’ numbers without being exposed.
- The doubles and fours versions are quick and intense.
- The team version is highly engaging and can be played for an extended period.

Nr. of participants: depends on the version

Materials: a piece of paper for each player, a pen

9. Blindfold leading

Goals: building trust, communication and teamwork

Description:

- Players form pairs. In each pair, one player is blindfolded (or keeps their eyes closed), and the other acts as the guide. The guide leads their partner by holding hands or holding the ends of a rope.
- The activity can be organized in two ways: as a walk or run along an unmarked course, or as a timed race on a clearly marked track.
- The guide is responsible for giving clear instructions and ensuring their partner's safety. The blindfolded player must rely completely on their teammate.
- The activity is usually played in two rounds so that partners can switch roles.
- This game often brings out strong emotions and helps build empathy, attentiveness, trust, and mutual support.

Nr. of participants: teams of two

Materials: scarves for each team

10. The clock

Goals: develops alertness, quick reactions, and situational awareness.

Description:

- Set up the playing area like a clock face using 12 hula hoops (or draw 12 circles with chalk). The distance between the hoops can be small, medium, or large, depending on the age and ability of the players.
- Assign one or two players to each hoop.
- One person acts as the game leader and calls out a time (for example, 12:30 or 1:45).
- If 12:30 is called, the players standing at the 12 and 6 positions must quickly switch places.
- If 1:45 is called, the players at the 1 and 9 positions switch places.
- Players must react quickly and move to the correct position without confusion.
- The game is lively, fun, and very popular with children.

Nr. of participants: 1 game leader , 12- 24 participants

Materials: 12 - 24 hula hoops (or chalk to draw lines)

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MUSUBI Sportegyesület, Csíkszereda - Romania



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