

Legacy of Paris 2024

D4.1 – Output 1

Training Modules for Volunteers



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

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.

Table des matières

Introduction	3
1. Reflexion on volunteering in sports events	4
1.1 Overview of volunteering in Europe	4
1.2 Volunteering at sports events.....	5
1.3 Reflection on volunteering at Para Sports events.....	6
2. Supporting the development of a population with specific needs through sport	7
2.1 Needs Analyses.....	7
2.2 Disparities in treatment	9
3. Health benefits from physical activities	10
3.1 Disability and health conditions	10
3.2 The importance of physical activities.....	11
4. Working with vulnerable groups.....	12
4.1 Barriers to participation	12
4.2 Overcome these barriers.....	13
5. Training Modules	16
5.1 Objectives.....	16
5.2 Sources of stigma and stereotypes	17
5.3 Visual impairment and communication	18
5.4 General advice on other forms of disability:	19
5.5 Hands-on exercises	19
5.6 Blind football specific knowledge	20
Conclusion.....	22



Introduction

The development of sporting activities for the visually impaired remains confronted with a difficult reality: the exclusion of disabled people from major sporting events, mainly due to insufficient accessibility.

Accessibility must therefore be improved by taking into account the specific needs of disabled people, but also by developing infrastructures and the visibility of competitions. Accessibility also depends on better training for those involved, whether educators or volunteers.

These conclusions are drawn from a survey of members of the Paris Université Club's parasport section and its volunteers. The training program outlined below is designed to meet the expectations of para-athletes in terms of the behavior and skills they feel volunteers should possess, as well as the expectations and apprehensions of the volunteers themselves.

In order to achieve this, we need to put volunteers in real-life situations to develop their empathy and enable them to better understand and meet the expectations of disabled people in the context of sporting activities.

Useful abbreviations:

VI: Visual Impairment

WHO: World Health Organization

1. Reflexion on volunteering in sports events

1.1 Overview of volunteering in Europe

Volunteering can be defined as individual devotion of time, energy, knowledge and skills for the benefit of other people, groups or causes (Omoto et al., 2000).

Europe has a strong culture of volunteering, albeit with variations from country to country. In the European Union, it is estimated that there are over 53 million active volunteers. European countries tend to have higher volunteer participation rates than the global average.

This culture of volunteering varies from country to country. In the Anglo-Saxon countries, as well as in France and Germany, the high rate of volunteer involvement is explained by a tradition that encourages volunteering (Hodgkinson, 2003). In the Nordic countries, the culture of volunteering is deeply rooted, underpinned by a strong tradition of solidarity and community involvement, as well as advanced social policies that encourage civic engagement. In Mediterranean countries such as Italy, Spain and Greece, volunteering is often influenced by strong family and community ties, with commitment often less formalized but deeply rooted in local culture.

In France, volunteering remains an important force in society.

- 24% of French people volunteer at associations, which represents around 12.5 million people.
- 5.5 millions of these volunteers are active every week (France Générosités).

There has been a significant shift in the profile of volunteers. Young adults (25-34) are now the most committed, with a rate of 30% in 2024, compared with 22% in 2019, and 15-34 year-olds now represent 26% of volunteers, an increase of 10% in 14 years (Associations.gouv).

Volunteering is recognized as a vector for skills development. Indeed, 70% of volunteers feel that their activity enables them to listen to others, and 52% consider that it enables them to lead projects as part of a team. 80% of volunteers put these skills to good use in their day-to-day lives, including 47% in their professional lives (France Générosités).

The reasons for volunteering have changed. Today, the vast majority of volunteers cite the desire to be useful and to act for others as their main motivation (85%), and the feeling of making a difference motivates 44% of volunteers, compared with 41% in 2019.

1.2 Volunteering at sports events

The results of the descriptive analysis indicate that interpersonal contact, career orientation, personal development, community involvement and interest in sports are the motivating factors that encourage volunteers to take part in volunteering with a sports organization (Sport Voluntarism: Indicators of Sport Volunteers' Satisfaction and Motivation, Chaminda Abeysignhe, 2021). Sports have a strong subculture, often attracting volunteers through a sense of sociability and community.

The ability to retain volunteers from one event to the next is one of the major challenges facing the sports sector, particularly associations. Recruiting and retaining volunteers is a major challenge in many European countries. Indeed, volunteering remains a crucial element of sporting events and organizations, essential for the smooth running of events and the sustainability of many sporting structures.

According to data from sports clubs in Scotland, 68% fail to attract new junior volunteers, 55% fail to recruit senior members, and 41% struggle to attract women. According to the same study (Weerakoon, 2016), 34% of sports clubs in Switzerland face serious difficulties in recruiting new volunteers.

It's against this backdrop that numerous human resources management researchers have identified various factors influencing volunteer retention or departure, satisfaction being one of the major factors.

This is based on several criteria, such as integration into the group, empowerment and recognition by the organization, or the feeling of being useful to a cause (Sport Voluntarism: Indicators of Sport Volunteers' Satisfaction and Motivation, Chaminda Abeysignhe, 2021).

Empowerment and organizational support are the most influential factors in volunteers' satisfaction with their volunteering experience.

However, these criteria can be balanced out:

In a 2002 study, Larocque et al. reported a high level of overall satisfaction among volunteers at the 2001 Jeux de la Francophonie, although they were more satisfied with the quality of the team and recognition from the organization than with the quality of the services and responsibilities assigned.

Thus, organizations need to develop strategies to offer meaningful experiences, empower volunteers and reward their positive results, in order to improve their satisfaction and motivation, while encouraging their future participation in events.

What's more, 47% of volunteers apply the skills acquired during their volunteering experience to their professional lives. High-quality training can significantly improve their job satisfaction. This underlines the importance of ongoing training for volunteers, particularly on emerging themes in sports, such as disabled sports, which is attracting growing interest among young people, a rapidly expanding demographic among volunteers.

1.3 Reflection on volunteering at Para Sports events

Human resources play a central role in the success of para-sports organizations and the recruitment of volunteers. Indeed, these organizations require specialized skills and in-depth training to deal with the various disability-related issues.

One of the major challenges facing para-sports organizations is recruiting and, above all, retaining volunteers. Volunteers fall into two categories:

Senior volunteers: they play a regular role in the club.

Secondary volunteers: they are involved on an ad hoc or occasional basis.

Wicker and Breuer (2014) observed that para-sports clubs are characterized by a high percentage of secondary volunteers, compared with other sports clubs. This phenomenon implies specific challenges to ensure stable and effective volunteer management, which is crucial to the smooth running of events and club dynamics.

A disabled sports club is well advised to involve its members directly as volunteers in the organization of events. Direct mobilization of members promotes cohesion within the club. The latter represents a fundamental lever for guaranteeing the stability of the volunteer team and the success of the events that clubs organize.

Last but not least, the involvement of people with disabilities is a considerable asset for para-sports: it must benefit from the invaluable contribution of people with disabilities. They should not only be considered as players, but also as employees, members, spectators and volunteers. The involvement of these people in various functions is essential not only to enrich the para-sports experience, but also to promote inclusion and strengthen the identity of parasports clubs.

2. Supporting the development of a population with specific needs through sport

2.1 Needs Analyses

2.1.1 Key Figures

According to WeThe15, there are 1.2 billion people with disabilities today, representing 15% of the world's population. According to the latest statistics, 253 million people worldwide are visually impaired. Figures from the WHO indicate that around 28.5% of disabled people suffer from VI. This figure also applies to Europe, where around 30 million people have VI, corresponding to 28.5% of the 90 million disabled people in the EU. There are around 280,000 children with VI.

People with disabilities are among the most marginalized and socially disadvantaged groups in Europe.

Eurostat data show that being disabled increases the risk of poverty or social exclusion by more than 50% compared to people without disabilities. Disabled people also suffer more health problems, have lower levels of education, lower economic participation and higher poverty rates than people without disabilities.

There is a great need for inclusive sports programs and events that focus on accessibility for people with disabilities, especially those with VI. Research in this field shows that accessibility and active participation in major sporting events can solve many problems and improve the quality of life of people with VI.

2.1.2 Specific needs

People with VI suffer from extremely high levels of social exclusion compared to other segments of society.

Among younger people with VI, statistics show that they are 10 times more likely to suffer from severe loneliness than the general population (BioMedCentral).

These high levels of social exclusion are also linked to a range of other negative outcomes, with higher levels of social isolation and, in turn, lower levels of mental health. This leads to lower levels of physical activity, which in turn contributes to poorer physical health, and greater mental health problems and social isolation.



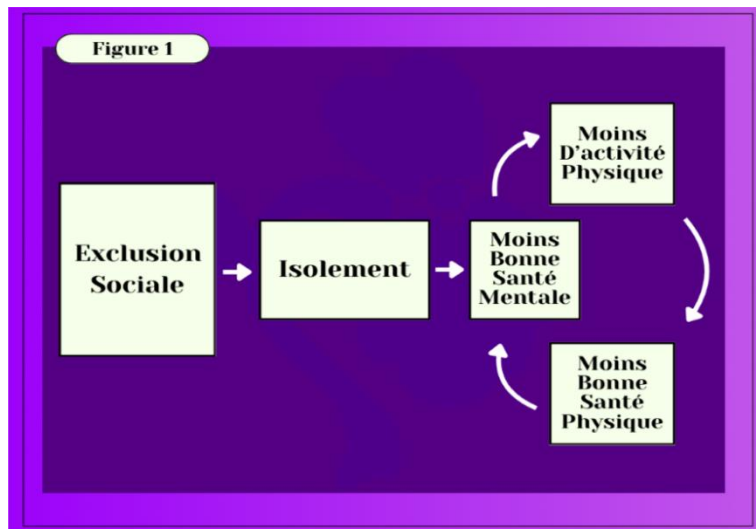


FIGURE 1: Spiral of isolation for people with disabilities

Self-esteem problems and low levels of mental well-being have much higher prevalence rates among those with VI. Studies have indicated that over 50% of all people with VI suffer from anxiety or depression (Optometry Advisor). This figure represents around four times the prevalence level in relation to society as a whole.

Moreover, these problems are more pronounced among younger age groups. High levels of social isolation and loneliness within this group are significantly correlated with rates of anxiety and depression. School-age children with VI also experience lower levels of academic achievement (WHO). Children with VI are three times more likely to develop mental health problems than their sighted peers, around 30% suffer from anxiety or mood disorders and around 50% have quality of life problems (britishblindsport.org). Physical activity, particularly for children with VI, is crucial to improving their overall well-being.

From a mental health perspective, people with VI who regularly engaged in physical activity had rates of depression up to 40% lower than their peers who did not (Science Direct, Capella- McDonnall, 2011, Di Cagno et al., 2013).

2.2 Disparities in treatment

2.2.1 Audiences

Disabled athletes still suffer from a chronic lack of image and awareness of their sporting achievements. Major sporting events featuring para-sports events receive very little media coverage.

In addition, data from the Diversity Barometer highlights the following results (2018 data):

- Percentage of disabled people in sports programs: 0.9%.
- Percentage of disabled spectators at sports events: 1.2%.
- Percentage of disabled people in sports magazines: 0.6%.

The visibility of disabled athletes must therefore be improved, as this is an important vector for the development of the sport. This is true both on TV channels broadcasting parasport competitions, documentaries and reports, and throughout the digital world (websites, social networks, digital platforms, etc.).

In particular, we need to ensure high-quality broadcasting of major events, such as the Paralympic Games, to attract a wide audience.

2.2.2 Athletes professionalization

Top-level athletes have a wide variety of academic and professional backgrounds. Despite the implementation of a dual sporting and professional project, retraining is sometimes complex, and sporting careers can come to an abrupt halt, leading to precarious situations.

For top-level disabled athletes, these situations of job insecurity are even more frequent, due to the additional obstacles encountered by disabled people when trying to enter the job market.



3. Health benefits from physical activities

3.1 Disability and health conditions

Firstly, it's worth remembering that disability is associated with a variety of primary health conditions: some can lead to poor health and high healthcare needs, while others do not prevent people with disabilities from achieving good health. For example, a child born blind may not need constant medical care, while adults with chronic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis or schizophrenia may have complex, ongoing health needs.

3.1.1 Risk of developing comorbid conditions

The detection and treatment of comorbid conditions is often poorly managed for people with disabilities, which can be detrimental to their health later on: for example, people with learning disabilities often experience "diagnostic overshadowing".

People with disabilities can develop the same health problems as the general population, such as influenza and pneumonia. A WHO study indicated that adults with disabilities are more likely to have chronic illnesses such as high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease and diabetes than those without disabilities.

3.1.2 Increased vulnerability to age-related diseases

The aging process can begin earlier than normal, with some people with disabilities showing signs of premature aging as early as age 40, and experiencing age-related health problems more frequently (Alzheimer's, dementia, loss of strength and balance, osteoporosis, etc.). The aging process and associated changes can have a greater impact on people with disabilities. For example, those with existing mobility problems may experience increased functional loss as they age.

3.1.3 High-risk behavior

Behaviors in relation to health adopted by some adults with disabilities may differ in degree from those of the general population. Several studies show that people with disabilities are more likely to adopt inappropriate behaviors related to health such as smoking, alcohol consumption, recreational drug use and low levels of physical activity.

Data from 2011 and 2013 from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System in the US report that people living with disabilities have higher rates of smoking (30.5% vs. 21.7%), are more likely to be physically inactive (22.4% vs. 11.9%), and are more likely to be obese (31.2% vs. 19.6%).

Additional negative impacts can also affect the physical health of people with VI, especially younger people.

These include delayed motor, language, emotional, social and cognitive development, which in turn

has lifelong consequences. Physical inactivity is a major problem for people with VI, especially children. A recent study showed that children with VI spend 91% of their free time doing sedentary activities (Activity Alliance).

3.2 The importance of physical activities

Exercise has been shown to be essential in ensuring better long-term outcomes for people with VI. Not only does it have major benefits in the area of social inclusion (see Module 2), but it also improves the overall quality of life for these VI populations. The latter spend less time indoors, have larger groups of friends and are healthier overall (Anna Malwina Kamelska and Krzysztof Mazurek, 2015).

On a physical level, it is also important for them to develop their motor skills, which are negatively affected by their vision loss. The results of various studies carried out on the subject show that people suffering from VI who are physically active have significantly higher fine motor skills than those who are not. In addition, regular physical activity also helps to reduce the level of "motor stereotypy", i.e. involuntary movements, common in people with VI, with an improvement in symptoms in 28% of cases and disappearance of symptoms in 4% of cases (Effects of physical activity and sports in the reduction of stereotypy in blind subjects, Gaetano Raiola, 2015).

A 2020 study by Emese Agnes Maniu and Dragos Adrian Maniu (Movement And Quality Of Life Of Visually Impaired Students) examined children with VI and the impact of just 12 weeks of regular physical activity, using a range of wellbeing factors.

100 visually impaired or blind students were selected for the study. 50 students took part in physical activities (swimming, climbing or trampolining) for one hour, three times a week. The other 50 students did not participate in any physical activity during the study. Study participants ranged in age from 8 to 16.

The results were particularly convincing, with active students showing a 33% improvement in physical well-being compared to inactive students, 54% better emotional well-being, 53% higher self-esteem, 85% better social relations and 40% a more positive view of school.

4. Working with vulnerable groups

4.1 Barriers to participation

To be able to supervise people with disabilities properly, we need to understand the barriers they face when they want to take part in physical activity. There are different categories and types of barriers.

Arguably, several factors influence the decision to participate in sports activities for disabled people. A study published by the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport identifies two main types of barriers:

Intra-personal: The attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and skills that each individual constructs from their environment, culture and past experiences, which predispose them to participate in or avoid participation.

Interpersonal: The motivation to engage in sport is also influenced by the individual's social environment (approval from the community, family, friends or social pressure).

The second level of barriers is linked to the social dimension of disability. This mainly concerns the lack of professional preparation among sports supervisors, as well as the lack of sporting opportunities or facilities specifically designed for people with disabilities.

The nature of the environment, the quality of service provided, ease of access to reliable, up-to-date information on services, and awareness of opportunities (model roles or event advertising).

Other obstacles identified during the surveys include the following:

- The "feeling of frustration and loss of confidence when comparing their skills with those of their peers".
- Lack of friends to play with.
- Parents' fear for their children's physical and emotional safety.

It's also worth noting that the more severe the disability, the less likely people are to take part in physical activity, as blind children are less likely to engage in physical activity compared to visually impaired children.



4.2 Overcome these barriers

A study by the English Federation of Sport Disability (EFSD, 2012) suggests that, to overcome barriers to participation, it is necessary to improve awareness of sporting opportunities.

The review shows that raising awareness and improving communication about sporting opportunities for people with disabilities can facilitate sporting participation.

4.2.1 The role of elite sports

To illustrate the interconnection between the broadcasting of elite sports, researcher Van Bottenburg developed the double pyramid theory.

This theory focuses on the relationship between elite sport policy and sport for all policy, highlighting two distinct but interconnected influences on participation rates. Thousands of amateur sports participants lead to a few Olympic champions, while at the same time, the existence of champion role models encourages thousands of people to participate in some form of sport.

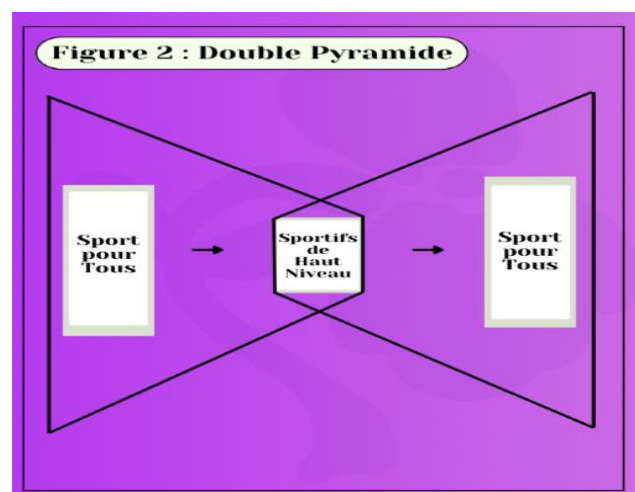


FIGURE 2: Double pyramid of Van Bottenburg

Public policies "invest in high-performance sports for people with disabilities not only to achieve high rankings in world championships, but also to inspire participation in recreational sports among people with disabilities". Success in high-performance sports will lead to increased participation in recreational sports and vice versa.

However, it can be argued that the image of disability promoted by the mainstream media when covering elite events such as the Paralympics may actually reinforce psychological barriers. This image often implies that disabled people deserve society's respect only if they overcome seemingly

insurmountable obstacles to "conquer" their disability.

It's important not to treat para-athletes as heroes, as it can be simplistic to view them solely through the lens of their disability. Their commitment to sports, like that of able-bodied athletes, is based on the principles of competition, hard work and passion for the sport. Viewing them as superheroes risks minimizing their achievements and dedication by reducing them to an exceptional category.

They're not looking to be admired for their disability, but to be seen as athletes in their own right, with sporting achievements that should be recognized without filter or special distinction.

Nixon, a researcher renowned for his work on sports and inclusion, points out that, even when talented disabled athletes reach elite levels in mainstream sports, "conflicting ideas about sports, ability and disability conveyed by the mass media can lead to insidious or dismissive conceptions of their sporting achievements". This highlights the crucial but double-edged role of mass media in the integration and inclusion of people with disabilities.

The media can increase their visibility, but also foster greater respect, offer new opportunities, and contribute to the creation of inspiring societal models.

However, the relationship between sports for all and elite sports should not be seen as automatic, as the accessibility of infrastructures, the training of coaches and the availability of training slots must play a central role in facilitating a positive relationship between the two.

4.2.2 The role of training and infrastructures

According to information provided by the IBSA (International Blind Sports Federation) and the IPC (International Paralympic Committee), the lack of teams specifically dedicated to people with VI and the lack of specific training means that even those who want to play can't do so.

The STEP model can be a useful tool for overcoming certain structural or environmental barriers. STEP stands for Space, Task, Equipment and People:

- Space: Adjust the size of play areas to suit different abilities or levels of mobility of participants.
- Task: Ensure that everyone can participate by simplifying complex skills into steps that are more accessible to those with the greatest difficulties.
- Equipment: Provide equipment adapted to the abilities or age of each participant.
- People: Maintain an appropriate balance between the number of players and their skills, sometimes forming teams of different sizes to encourage inclusion and maximize participation.

4.2.3 The role of schools

Schools play a major role in the need to engage people with disabilities from an early age at school. In this regard, research by Shields and Synnott (2016) has highlighted the importance of developing "inclusive pathways". This concept is based on the idea that motor and social skills, "acquired through practice and early opportunities to develop them, encourage children's participation", particularly in the school context.

The transition from school to club sports for disabled children can be facilitated by deploying club coaches directly into schools. This initiative creates a solid bridge between the school environment and the sports club, offering personalized support and a secure transition.

Specialized trainers, who already have specific knowledge of the needs of young people with disabilities, can adapt sessions and promote inclusion. Their presence also helps to reassure the students, their families and the teaching teams, by ensuring ongoing monitoring and reducing the risks associated with sporting activities. What's more, this collaboration creates a dynamic of trust and commitment, showing young people that they can develop within a club, in a structured and accessible sporting environment, after having been initiated in a school environment.

5. Training Modules

This training is based on three pillars. The first is the experience of specialised professionals, trained both in coaching people with disabilities and in blind football training. The second is the good practices put in place during the training of volunteers for the Paris 2024 Paralympics. Finally, the last section is based on an analysis of the questionnaires described in part 1, in order to gain a better understanding of the expectations of para-athletes and the concerns and needs of volunteers.

5.1 Objectives

Volunteer training aims to educate volunteers about disability and how to respectfully interact and communicate with people with disabilities, including athletes, spectators, coaches and other volunteers.

This training must include:

- General knowledge of disability and more specifically of the visually impaired:
 - Different types of disability
 - Sources of stigma and stereotypes
- How to communicate respectfully with athletes, spectators, volunteers, staff and coaches with special needs:
 - Using person-centered language
 - Challenging assumptions
 - Ask the person about their assistance and support preferences
- How to help disabled athletes.
- Sport-specific information.
- Event-specific information.

Note: It is important to adapt the training content to the needs of the athletes actually present at the event.

The first theoretical part of this training will be based on raising volunteers' awareness of the figures set out above.



5.2 Sources of stigma and stereotypes

5.2.1 The Superhero storytelling

A story frequently told in the media about Paralympic athletes is that of the "superhero".

In this narrative, the focus is on how individuals have "overcome" their disability through their elite sporting performance. This narrative can be detrimental to those involved in Paralympic sport. Many problems can arise from it, including:

- It excludes those who are not elite athletes.
- It puts the handicap before the athlete.
- It reinforces the idea that disability must be overcome.

5.2.2 Other stereotypes

- People with disabilities are perceived as different from fully human people; they are seen as partial or limited individuals, belonging to an "other" and inferior category.

- The successful "disabled" person is seen as superhuman, overcoming challenges in a way that serves as an example to others; disability offers people with disabilities the opportunity to show virtues they didn't know they possessed, and to teach the rest of us patience and courage.

- This stereotype implies that para-sports disciplines require less physical effort or training, which minimizes the commitment and rigor of para-sports athletes.

As a volunteer, challenge your own assumptions about disability and the stereotypes conveyed by the media and other sources. It's important to recognize that athletes aren't there to inspire you, but to compete and show off their athletic skills.

5.3 Visual impairment and communication

Visual impairments can range from mild to severe. The types of support individuals may need can vary according to the severity of their visual impairment. The World Health Organization (WHO) classifies visual impairments according to visual acuity as follows:

- Light - between 6/12 and 6/18
- Moderate - between 6/18 and 6/60
- Severe - between 6/60 and 3/60
- Blindness - less than 3/60

Workers will therefore have to adapt the way they interact with people depending on the degree of their disability and their expectations and requests. However, whatever their disability, certain behaviours are essential.

When communicating with visually impaired people:

- Always present yourself when you arrive and signal your departure.
- Ask if the person needs help before imposing it.
- Follow the instructions they give you.
- Explain aloud exactly what you plan to do and how.

For guidance

- Offer your arm and let the person grasp it above the elbow.
- Do not push the person in front of you. Move slightly in front of the person, maintaining arm contact to ensure their safety.
- Describe the environment and obstacles accurately, and point out obstacles, changes of direction and differences in level.

To communicate with a visually impaired athlete

- Be clear and descriptive. All verbal instructions must be concise and distinct.
- Explain what you're doing: If someone wants help or advice, always introduce yourself and explain precisely what you're going to do before touching someone.



5.4 General advice on other forms of disability:

Focus on the person, not the disability: Look at the person when they speak, not their interpreter or support person.

Assistive devices are extensions of a person's body:

- Do not touch/use assistive devices/animals without permission.
- Don't take it personally if someone asks you not to touch their assistive device/animal.
- Do not separate the person from their assistive device/animal.

Speak at a normal pace and volume, and make sure your face is visible so it can be read.

If you're not sure, you can simply ask the person.

Don't underestimate the roles they can play in society.

5.5 Hands-on exercises

Volunteers will also take part in a series of immersive practical exercises designed to put them in the shoes of a blind person. These activities will enable them to gain a better understanding of the specific needs of visually impaired people and to develop the appropriate skills to respond effectively, both on the day of the event and in their future interactions.

5.5.1 Exercise 1

The aim of this exercise is to get volunteers to deconstruct their habits and skills as sighted people so that they can develop the skills of blind people. This exercise will develop their empathy and enable them to communicate better with a blind audience.

Exercice de description verbale en groupe

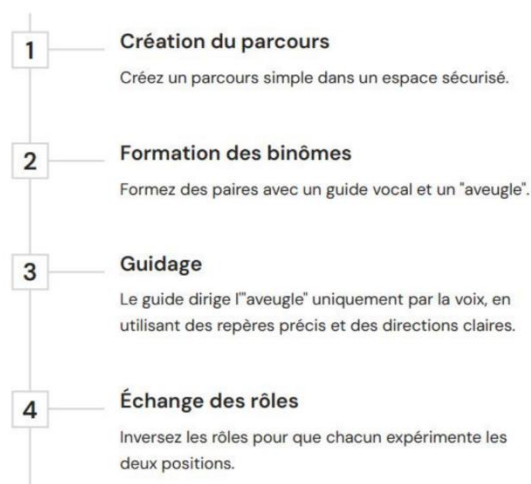


Co-funded by
the European Union

5.5.2 Exercise 2

The aim of this exercise is to identify the role of the voice guide and to understand the precision and clarity of the vocabulary used to guide a person with a learning disability.

Atelier de guidage vocal



5.6 Blind football specific knowledge

Blind football is a version of football adapted to the needs of blind footballers. It is based on Futsal with modifications to the rules to enable players to play.

To become familiar with the sport, volunteers need to know the rules. They will also have to take part in an introduction to blind football.

5.6.1 Blind football' s rules

2 teams of 5 blind footballers play against each other for 2 periods of 20 minutes for the blind and 25 minutes for the visually impaired. The match is won by the team that scores the most goals.

The ball (of contrasting colour for the visually impaired) contains sound elements (bells).

Each team consists of 4 visually impaired players, 1 sighted or partially sighted goalkeeper who guides the defence, 1 coach on the sidelines who supervises and 1 guide behind the opponent's goal to locate it.

When a blind defender moves towards the ball carrier, he must signal his arrival by shouting 'VOY'. The offside rule is not applied.

5.6.2 Introduction to blind football

To help the volunteers show empathy and better understand the needs of the players, they will take part in a blind football initiation under real conditions. Some will be guides, others will be players and then the roles will be reversed.

The objectives are as follows:

- Learn to find your way around the pitch using the barriers and sounds.
- Emphasise the importance of silence during the game.
- Master the 'Voy' technique to signal your presence.
- Develop the ability to listen to the ball and other players.
- Work on controlling and driving the ball without sight.
- Learn to protect yourself with your arms while playing.
- Communicating constantly with team-mates.
- Follow the goalkeeper's and guide's directions.

To achieve these objectives, the exercises in the Inclusive Training Kit that is part of the first Deliverable can be used.

5.6.3 Anticipating needs and difficulties

We need to be aware of the mental fatigue experienced by participants due to the intense concentration required to orientate themselves in space and discover a new activity. Some may also feel stressed or anxious in a new environment. Reassure them and gradually familiarise them with the play area.

Securing the play area:

The pitch dimensions are 40m×20m and the goals are 3×2m. The lengths of the pitch are bordered by an inflatable or foam barrier (1.30m high) to ensure continuity of play. Make sure the pitch is secure and free of obstacles.

Individual needs:

Each blind person may have specific needs. Listen carefully and adapt your approach and the pace of the exercises accordingly.

Discomfort caused by equipment:

Wearing new equipment such as headbands can be uncomfortable, so pay attention to the needs of your participants in this matter.

Conclusion

Sport adapted to the specific needs of people with disabilities is a fundamental way of improving their health, well-being and social integration.

The training of volunteers to support the practice of sport and the organisation of para-sport events is therefore a major challenge for the development of events accessible to para-athletes.

Increasing these opportunities would motivate and encourage more people with disabilities to take up physical activity and join clubs offering disabled sport or inclusive sports.

