



DITEAM12



Current state of inclusion in sport clubs

Report for Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Slovenia, and Spain



**EUROPEAN
PARALYMPIC
COMMITTEE**



PEDAGOŠKI INŠTITUT



INEODMA
PSICOLOGIA Y DEPORTE

SCHOLA EMPIRICA

ICSSPE

March 2021

Authors

Saskia Kanfer, Theresa Linares Gaustad (*European Paralympic Committee; Austria*)

Francisco Batista Espinosa, Jorge Pastor Ruiz de la Fuente (*Informa Psicología y Deporte; Spain*)

Detlef Dumon, Anne Schomöller (*International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education; Germany*)

Manja Veldin, Igor Peras (*Pedagoški inštitut; Slovenia*)

Egle Havrdová, Teresa Bilanová (*Schola Empirica; Czech Republic*)

María Davinia González Pineda, Yeray Fernández Medina (*Asociación Mi Hijo y Yo; Spain*)

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views of the authors only, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which is made of the information contained therein.

With the support of the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction	3
1.1 Background.....	3
1.2 About the project	6
1.3 Goals.....	6
2.0 Survey Study.....	9
2.1 Method.....	9
2.1.1 Participants.....	9
2.1.2 Instruments.....	10
2.1.3 Procedure	11
2.1.4 Data analysis	11
2.2 Results	13
2.2.1 Managers.....	13
2.2.2 Coaches	24
2.2.3 Parents.....	33
2.2.4 Czech Republic	41
2.3 Discussion.....	46
3.0 Interview Study	50
3.1 Method.....	50
3.1.1 Participants.....	50
3.1.2 Instruments.....	50
3.1.3 Procedure	50
3.1.4 Data analysis	50
3.2 Results	51
3.3 Discussion.....	55
4.0. Conclusion.....	57
5.0 Literature	58
6.0 Appendix	60

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

In this chapter, we will present a short theoretical background of the report, concerning inclusion and diversity in grassroots sports for children under 12. For this, we relied on our previous study, a literature review on this topic done by ICSSPE ([Inclusion and diversity in grassroots sports teams for children – A systematic review](#), Dumon et al., 2020). The literature review was based on a pedagogical approach and focused on challenges of practice, including didactic considerations for inclusive sports education, the coach-children relationship, and the involvement of parents in inclusive sports settings. The reviewers answered a series of research questions: “*How can the competitive aspect be oriented to a more educational approach in sports for children under 12?*” and “*How can diverse and inclusive teams be created?*”.

The conclusion from the systematic review provides us with a background for addressing three different groups (coaches, directors, and parents of children who participate in sports clubs) that have been recognized as the most important influencers when addressing, creating, and offering inclusive sports. Furthermore, we will present short overviews of the themes that have been connected to creating an inclusive environment, such as the importance of competition and how it can be oriented toward a more educational approach and how beliefs are connected to practice in sports, etc.

The results of the literature review showcase the positive effects of physical activity for children with disabilities. Researchers determined that inclusion and competition, reduction of competition and/or alternatives for competition in inclusive sport settings, implementation strategies for diverse and inclusive sport settings, and parental involvement were beneficial.

Starting with **inclusion and competition**: Several programmes and initiatives of integrated and inclusive sports can be found, although few of them are initiated by existing sports clubs. High-performance level competition, however, is not conducive for inclusion and social participation, as performance excellence is the primary goal. Special Olympics World Games focus upon competition as participation and enjoyment rather than upon winning and comparison to others. Because the World Games and the Olympic Games hold differing viewpoints, the combination of the two events has not developed. This contrary approach to the classic approach has made some efforts to combine the Special Olympics with the Olympic Games but has not yet succeeded.

Daniels (2007) highlighted three different types of competition: the military model (focus on “taking out” the enemy), the reward model (focus on win-at-all-cost philosophy and ego-oriented rewards such as social status or national championship), and the partnership model (focus on cooperation, personal effort and challenging of own skills). The third model, partnership, involves cooperative competition, and personal effort and improvement rather than winning and losing. Some inclusive sports programmes have adopted this model. However, ambiguous results relative to the significance of competition in inclusive sport settings have been cited. Fussball Freunde (Greve & Bechthold, 2019; McConkey et al., 2013; Pochstein et al., 2014) aims to focus on social skills promotion of teamwork, team, spirit, and fair play, has

highlighted positive aspects of joy, self-confidence, and respect for self and others. Additionally, researchers found that competitiveness has negative outcomes, particularly for children without disabilities (partners), that competition plays an important role, yet partners express difficulty in coping with a lack of technical skills in those with disabilities (ibid.). In the field of non-inclusive sports, there are positive effects of competition for people with and without disabilities, including a higher self-perception, a sense of purpose, and learning life lessons that relate to the results of the competition. Several researchers described under which conditions competition can assist in positive youth development (Collins & Barcelona, 2018; Cote et al., 2008; Daniels, 2007). Preparedness to participate in competitive sport, including appropriate levels of competition for children, maturity to understand rules, emotional ability to handle stress have been found to be important. Inclusive programs, then, can promote socialization in cooperative and effort-oriented environments. Ironically, many players do not participate in inclusive sport settings.

In summary, competition is a natural element during youth development. Researchers have shown that this competitive aspect seems to emphasise group-based social hierarchies and thinking in categories among the players in an inclusive sport setting despite the focus upon values involving equitable participation and enjoyment (Curdt, 2018).

To reach the goal of inclusion, after a thorough perusal of the literature, how competitive aspects can be de-emphasized or replaced to reach the goal of inclusion **how competitive aspects can be de-emphasized or replaced**. Numerous programmes present strategies for a less competitive environment, endorsing enjoyable and playful sport settings. Some of these programs use the “Give-us-back-our-game” approach, a fun, age-appropriate game form that strives to establish an environment where children are rewarded for positive effort and related behaviours. (Fenoglio & Taylor, 2014). This type of programme is designed for all types of settings (not just inclusive), as they promote inclusivity as a core value. The “Easy-Play-Model” (EPM) (Lu & Steele, 2014) and the “6+1 Model of an adapted physical education” (Tiemann, 2013) are two additional models that show alternative approaches to inclusive sports by de-emphasizing competitive aspects to accommodate the developmental goals of children. The “Easy-Play-Model” is based on the principle “play easy on each other and hard for each other”. The success of personal skill development in cooperative and enjoyable environments are key in this model. It provides prioritized attention to process (participation, teamwork, and activity) rather than product (win-lose outcome). The “6 + 1 Model” includes modification of rules, equipment, tasks, the physical and social environment of training, communication (Tiemann, 2013). Tiemann 13 (2016) describes the great value of playing in inclusive settings, since this can lead to interaction with players so that they can understand and relate to one another. None of the described models is designed to eliminate competitive aspects of game play. Games are merely modified by including adaptations in a way that players can participate equitably.

It is crucial to mention the **involvement of parents** in their children's physical activities, especially those who have a child with a disability. There have been many studies focusing on the role of parental support behaviours. Atchison and Goodwin (2019), for example, found that parents play an essential role in the transition from separate physical activity programs to inclusive ones for their children. Results showcase that the transition from separate to inclusive

programs was negatively anticipated by parents based on their previous negative experiences (ibid.).

Many studies target the importance of giving parents a clear understanding of their **roles and responsibilities** with children in youth sport. Participation can result in the strengthening of a task-oriented sport environment which can allow positive development through physical activity (Bach, 2006; Daniels, 2007; Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010; Witt & Dangi, 2018). Sportsperson-like behaviour, an attentive silence rather than yelling comments, cheering for everyone, encouragement through feedback, praising and empathic behaviour, and protective interventions, without creating conditions that will lead to potential conflicts, are some of the great characteristics that parents should promote (Bach, 2006; Witt & Dangi, 2018).

Dumon and colleagues (2020) revealed a lack of published empirical investigations. A perusal of existing inclusive sport programs can provide insights into the potential and possible improvement in parental behaviour in inclusive sport settings. Parental evaluations provide expressions of general agreement with unspoken cooperation between associations, coaches, players, and parents. Based on these results, an atmosphere of openness to diversity must be evident by associations, coaches, players, and parents for successful inclusive programs to be developed and maintained. When creating inclusive clubs, parental challenges with transition from existing to inclusive programs must be attended to. Through evaluation of present inclusive programs and investigations on parental involvement in existing programs, parental engagement can be assessed and used to improve the overall sporting experience. The positive and supporting behaviour of parents, a good parent-coach-relationship, supporting parents' when they face the transition challenges, diversity awareness, and knowing the principles of youth development are central aspects on the way to a successful inclusive sports programme.

1.2 About the project

This report is part of the DITEAM12 project, which is co-funded by Erasmus+. Lasting a total of 2 years, it includes partners from Mi Hijo y Yo (MHYY) in Spain, the European Paralympic Games (EPC) in Austria, the Educational Research Institute (ERI) in Slovenia, Informa Psicología y Deporte in Spain (IDP), Schola Empirica (SE) in the Czech Republic and the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE) in Germany.

The participation of youth and children in sports is seen as an integral part of human development (Dumon et al, 2020). However, as much as sports can promote inclusivity, it can also bring exclusion, disrespect, and even violence, especially in a highly competitive environment. To meet a growing demand for children's participation in inclusive sport activities the DITEAM12 partnership was established to explore the psychological and emotional development of children under the age of 12 in sports clubs. Through this exploration, the partnership will develop a preferred method of inspiring and guiding children toward participation in activities that include values of inclusivity and diversity.

1.3 Goals

The main goal of our project (DITEAM12) is three-fold: to raise awareness of the positive aspects of non-competitive sports for children under 12 years of age, to promote inclusiveness among sports clubs, and to develop preferable methods of coaching children, all of which is inspired by the values of inclusivity and diversity.

The process for this project will firstly explore the current state in the sports clubs among our project consortium countries (Germany, Austria, Spain, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic), followed by addressing the recognised needs and attitudes via contextualised and customized training. As the consortium is international, there are different starting points towards fostering inclusion in our respective country contexts. The clubs involved, while differing, all focus on the shared goal of the DITEAM12 project: creating diverse and inclusive teams for children under 12. In the following paragraphs, we briefly discuss the starting point of each country in the project.

In Slovenia, the project partners report that inclusion in regular sports clubs is still in the development stage (on a mainstream/national level). The goals of some clubs include the implementation of inclusion activities, but more work needs to be done on the mainstream level, as most clubs do not seem to focus on inclusion (e.g., provide an environment where athletes with and without disabilities train together). All clubs in Slovenia that participate in this project already tried to actively implement inclusion (e.g., some have inclusive groups that are part of the club, some try to include children with disabilities in existing groups, and some clubs are open to host everyone). All clubs, however, expressed a need for more professional support relative to inclusion; therefore, the DITEAM12 project can assist them. Therefore, when taking into consideration the national context of Slovenia, most existing clubs do not seem to focus on the inclusion of athletes with disabilities. Project partners in Slovenia aim to disseminate results

and tools created in the project to the clubs that have not created an inclusive setting and wish to do so in the future.

In Spain, adapted and inclusive sport are still in their infancy. There are different federations that govern the non-inclusive competitive sport and a federation for inclusive adapted sport (both for physical and intellectual disabilities). A few clubs or entities promote and favour inclusive sport at the level of sport practice and training, while it is forbidden to be inclusive at the level of competition. In this sporting context, we have sought to ensure that most of the clubs participating in the project are non-inclusive clubs in order to see the opinion and perspective they have regarding inclusive sport. Therefore, the nature of these clubs is that they do not include athletes with disabilities in competitions. Only one of the participating clubs in Tenerife, a water polo club, is an inclusive club, as it allows children with autistic spectrum disorders to train (they only train as they cannot compete due to federation regulations). The rest 4 clubs are non-inclusive, as they only train and compete with non-disabled athletes and it is important to take this aspect into account when generalising or extrapolating the data from Spain, as the vast majority of the clubs participating in this study are non-inclusive clubs, or in other words, clubs that do not have athletes with disabilities.

In Germany, inclusion in sport clubs, schools and other settings has gained massive attention during the past decades. Many sport-related jobs (e.g., sport inclusion coordinators and managers) have been generated by sport federations, federal states, and cities. The challenge is to transfer theoretical concepts into a daily practice of sports clubs. All German clubs in this sample aim to offer inclusive sport activities. In some cases, there are one or more official inclusive training groups; in other cases, there are children with disabilities who take part in sport that are not officially designated as inclusive sport activities, so all are invited to participate. Although already working inclusively, the clubs expressed their interest to be part of the DITEAM12 project and to receive professional support and guidance to be more inclusive.

In the Czech Republic, inclusion has been an important and, to some extent, controversial topic in the past years. The amendment to the Education Act adopted in 2015 might be perceived as crucial in terms of inclusive education. It was the first legal action that explicitly recognised the need for supportive measures and declared equal access to education for all children. As an inclusion in schools is still a relatively new concept in the Czech Republic, children's clubs remain largely non-inclusive. Exceptions have been emerging; however, we can see a growing number of clubs that focus on the development of children's socio-emotional skills and cultivating a positive attitude to physical exercise rather than on good results and rankings. Within the clubs surveyed for the DITEAM12 project, many parents and coaches communicated their concerns about the admission of children with disabilities to clubs and that it would hinder the progress of typically developing children. Therefore, it is necessary to offer children's sports clubs in the Czech Republic that can assist them to become more inclusive.

The first study presented in this report (a survey) is aimed to identify barriers, strengths, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and practices toward inclusion in sport clubs (including

directors/managers, coaches, and parents) for children under 12 years of age from five different EU countries. The second study (an interview) aimed to gather a more in-depth understanding of the state of inclusiveness in sport in different countries, from various perspectives (academic and practitioner). By investigating through interview and survey techniques, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the state and status to develop competencies, knowledge, and attitudes in sport practitioners and parents of children in sport.

2.0 Survey Study

2.1 Method

2.1.1 Participants

A convenience sample, consisting of 477 participants from five EU countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Slovenia, and Spain) took part in the survey. 26 managers/directors of sports clubs, 107 coaches, and 344 parents of children who participate in sport clubs were included. Participants from Austria are included in the German sample, as there were only 7 in total and they answered the same questionnaire. Detailed sample characteristics are displayed in Table 1 and a short description of the clubs involved by country follows below.

In Slovenia, more than 50 clubs were contacted to participate in the DITEAM project. Most of these clubs were regular sports clubs that currently do not actively focus on inclusion (training athletes with and without disabilities together). Most clubs opted out of participation in the project, as their focus is not currently on inclusion. Thus, the final sample consists of 5 regular sports clubs who already try to implement inclusion in their trainings and competitions (e.g., some clubs are open to hosting everyone who wants to join and try to find a place for them inside the club, some clubs try to include athletes with disabilities in groups in which athletes without disabilities train, some clubs have inclusive groups for athletes with disabilities as part of the regular club). The following sport clubs participated: judo, swimming, and karate.

In the first phase of club recruitment in Spain, 21 sports entities (between clubs and federations) were contacted on the island of Tenerife and 16 sports entities (between clubs and federations) on the island of Gran Canaria. Based on criteria of proximity and having established connection and contact with these entities previously (through other projects) or other actions carried out professionally. Of the 21 contacts on the island of Tenerife, written commitments were obtained from 15 clubs and sports federations (through signed letters of commitment), which were thanked for their interest and participation in the selection process. On the island of Gran Canaria, 6 collaboration commitments were formalized during the selection process of participating entities. Different criteria were established for this process:

- The number of athletes they have
- Participation in previous projects
- Commitment to adapted and inclusive sports
- Having a women's section within the club
- Willingness to evolve as an organization
- Previous experience in inclusiveness
- Booming sport on the island

In addition to the above criteria, five sports clubs were chosen on the Island of Tenerife (water polo, soccer, club, basketball, swimming, and multi-sport), totalling 1250 men and women athletes. Handball, surfing, paddle tennis, field hockey, football, and a Canarian wrestling clubs were selected on the Island of Gran Canaria, with 2300 men and women athletes.

In Germany, 36 clubs were contacted via telephone. In addition, 3 inclusion coordinators were contacted via phone or email and asked if they could share the information about the DITEAM12 project with their community and/or insert information about joining the project in their newsletter. A call to join the project as a sports club was published in the ICSSPE newsletter and on the ICSSPE Facebook channel. The final confirmation to participate in the project was received by 5 sport clubs, out of which 3 participated in the survey. The three included sport clubs that offer inclusive sport activities for children under 12 and do not focus on a specific sport. One sport club distributed the surveys at a local sport event and administered it to other sport clubs, who completed the survey. They are incorporated into the study sample.

In Austria, clubs were contacted in the same manner as German clubs because they were treated as one German-speaking sample in this study.

In the Czech Republic, 15 clubs were contacted to participate in the DITEAM12 project via email. These were regular sports clubs that do not currently actively focus on inclusion. Most clubs did not react to the email. The final sample consists of 2 sports clubs and one after-school centre with many sport teams. All these clubs are already trying to implement some inclusive strategies in their training and lean towards more inclusive values (e.g., some clubs focus on developing socio-emotional skills rather than on achievement). They were hoping to find some methodological support and inspiration in the DITEAM12 project. The clubs participating in the project train the following sports: parkour, football, and floorball.

2.1.2 Instruments

Three questionnaires were created by one of the project partners (Informa Psicología y Deporte) for the purpose of this study. They were designed in Spanish and translated into English, Czech, Slovenian, and German. The Czech version differed from the other language versions. There are only two surveys; one conducted to coaches and another conducted to parents. The coach survey consisted of a total of ten questions with 10 respondents. The parents' survey was conducted on 15 individuals with a total of four questions. Questions addressing the demographics and additional background information, state of inclusion in sports clubs and beliefs, were adapted regarding the target groups, namely directors/managers, coaches and parents of children that are included in the sports clubs. The questionnaires incorporated closed and open-ended questions (only in the manager questionnaire), multiple-choice questions, nominal (yes-no) answer options and items answered on a Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree – 5 = Strongly agree).

The manager survey consisted of 31 questions, from which 12 were open-ended. The coaches survey consisted of a total of 40 questions, including 20 items answered on a Likert scale to measure the respondent's level of agreement with various statements. Finally, the family survey was composed of 32 questions, including 13 items answered on a Likert scale. See Appendix for all three questionnaires (English versions).

2.1.3 Procedure

In Germany, sports clubs were contacted throughout the country by phone and/or eMail. Information material about the project was sent to sports clubs that were interested in the project. The clubs that agreed to participate distributed the printed or online questionnaire among parents, coaches, and managers.

In Slovenia, 5 inclusive clubs that applied for participation in the DITEAM12 project, throughout the whole duration, were invited to answer the questionnaires. Links to the parents' and coaches' online questionnaires (Google Forms) were sent to the club's projects coordinators (mostly managers) in September 2020 and they disseminated it to their members (parents) and co-workers (coaches). Questionnaires for managers were implemented in a form of an on-site interview, allowing the researchers to gather more information (as this questionnaire included open-ended questions), present the project in more detail, and get in touch with the clubs.

In Spain, the goal of the surveys was to gather information on the state of the country about sport and disability. Through them, we sought to analyse the situation of each geographical area at several levels: a first basic level regarding each club individually, a second level on the status of adapted competition of sports federations and a final level on how the access of athletes with disabilities at the country level is. We started by dividing the surveys into three options: one for sports coaches, one for families of sportsmen and women, and one for managers of sports entities. We thought of a survey of few questions, multi-response, or short answers (20 in total). The surveys were conducted through the google form application. The links to these questionnaires were sent to the participants by different means. Some were sent by e-mail and others directly by WhatsApp.

In the Czech Republic, some questions were adjusted specifically to the Czech context. For the coaches' survey, we contacted coaches who had expressed their willingness to participate in the project, and we asked them to distribute the survey to their colleagues as well. Regarding the parents' survey, we posted a link in Schola Empirica's monthly newsletter, explaining what the project is about and who can fill in the survey. We also contacted some respondents directly. We prepared both surveys in Google Form and subsequently translated the answers to English.

2.1.4 Data analysis

The questionnaire responses were analysed with descriptive statistics methods, such as mean values, absolute values, and relative values. The questionnaire also contained open-ended questions. The answers from the open-ended questions were analysed and categorised into themes. We identified broad categories of responses that matched the same concepts. From there, we organised our data and presented the different categories visually using figures. The software Microsoft Excel was used. Due to the small sample size, differences between the clubs, and the national contexts in which the project has been implemented, the results cannot be generalised. Thus, data analysis is descriptive in nature to better understand club participation in DITEAM project.

Table 1: Characteristics of the participants

		Managers/Directors				Coaches				Parents/Guardians			
		DE	SL	SP	CZ	DE	SL	SP	CZ	DE	SL	SP	CZ
N of participants (477)		5	4	17	/	17	19	66	5	33	80	216	15
N of clubs (23)		4	4	10	/	4	5	11	/	10	5	11	/
Gender (%)	Male	100	50	76,5	/	35,3	68,4	83,3	/	51,5	72,5	38,9	/
	Female	0	50	23,5	/	64,7	31,6	16,7	/	45,5	27,5	59,7	/
	Other	0	0	0	/	0	0	0	/	3,0	0	1,4	/
Age (%)	Under 18	0	0	0	/	0	0	0	/	45,5	7,5	5,1	/
	18-25	0	0	0	/	47,1	21,1	34,8	/	9,1	0	0	/
	26-35	0	25	5,9	/	17,6	21,1	22,7	/	0	8,7	7,8	/
	36-45	20	25	41,2	/	5,9	26,3	22,7	/	33,3	66,3	37,5	/
	45->	80	50	52,9	/	29,4	31,6	19,7	/	12,1	17,5	45,3	/

Notes: N = number; DE = Germany, SL = Slovenia, SP = Spain, CZ = Czech Republic; / = no data was gathered.

2.2 Results

In this chapter the findings from the surveys are presented in three subchapters, each one referring to one of the three different surveys that were undertaken (managers, coaches, and parents), including the data from Austria/Germany, Slovenia, and Spain. An additional subchapter is dedicated to the results from the Czech Republic, as they gathered their data via a modified questionnaire.

2.2.1 Managers

The data collected from the manager and directors of the different clubs that participated in the survey cover a wide range of questions regarding the club's capacity to train athletes with disabilities, the existence of federated competitions at a national level, and the involvement of athletes with disabilities in these competitions. Some subchapters include different results from similar topics. In this section, we will include closed and open-ended questions.

Inclusiveness and adaptation of the club

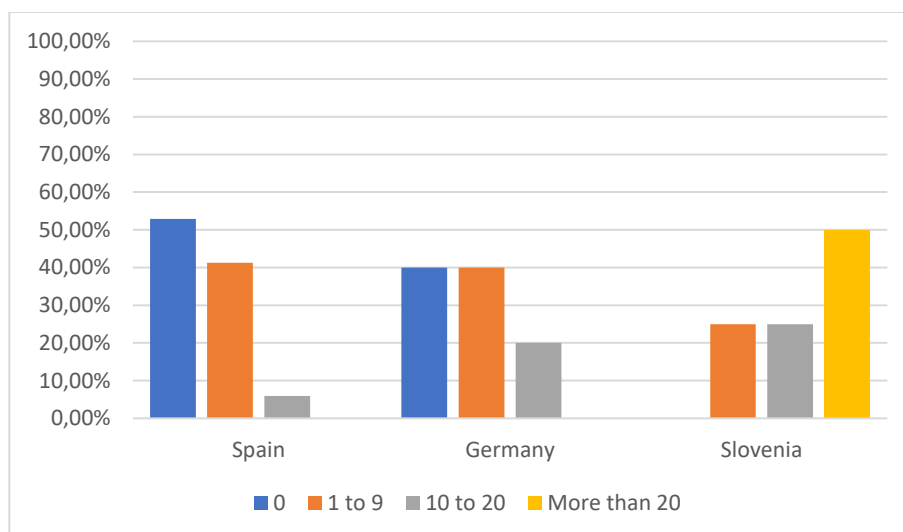


Figure 1: Percentage of athletes with disabilities in the club

25% or more of the club included in the survey host from 1 to 9 athletes with disabilities. 20% of the clubs (Germany) host more than 20 athletes with disabilities. More than half of the clubs of Spain do not host any athletes with disabilities, whereas 50% of the clubs in Slovenia host more than 20 athletes with a disability (see Figure 1).

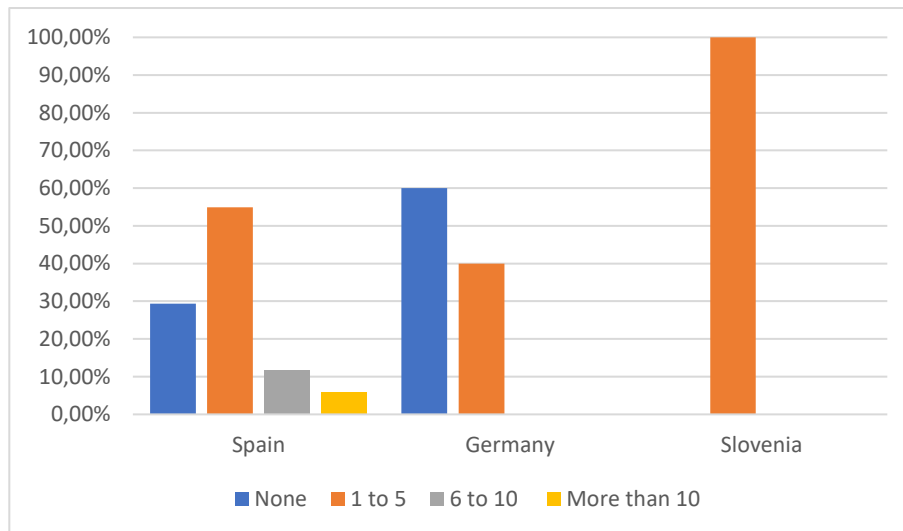


Figure 2: Number of coaches with professional qualification to train athletes with disabilities (%)

Over half of the clubs in Germany, and 30% of clubs in Spain have no trainer with a professional qualification to train athletes with disabilities. Compared to that, all Slovenia sport clubs have at least 1 coach with a professional qualification to train athletes with a disability (see Figure 2).

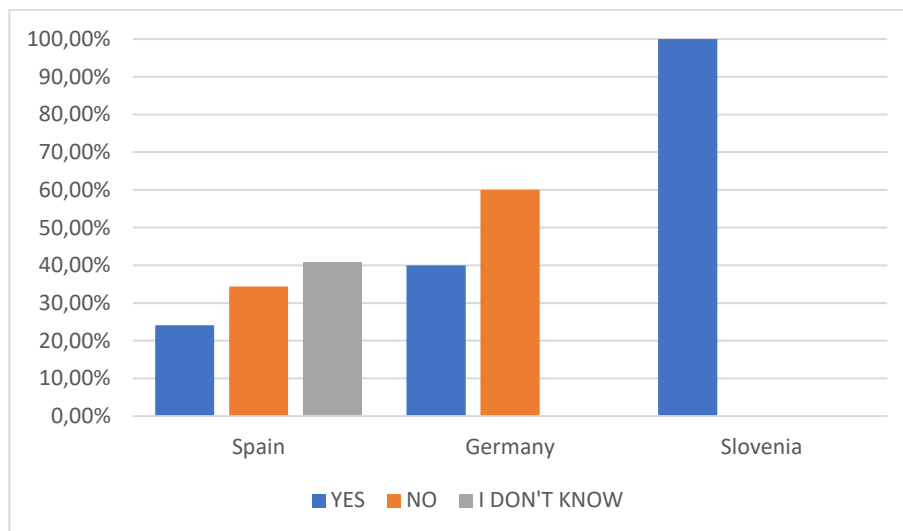


Figure 3: Existence of adapted means to train athletes with disabilities (%)

There is a clear contrast between the countries, regarding the clubs' adapted facilities, with managers from Slovenia claiming all training facilities are adapted to train athletes for typically developing and those with disabilities, while in Spain less than 25% and in Germany 40% claim so (see Figure 3).

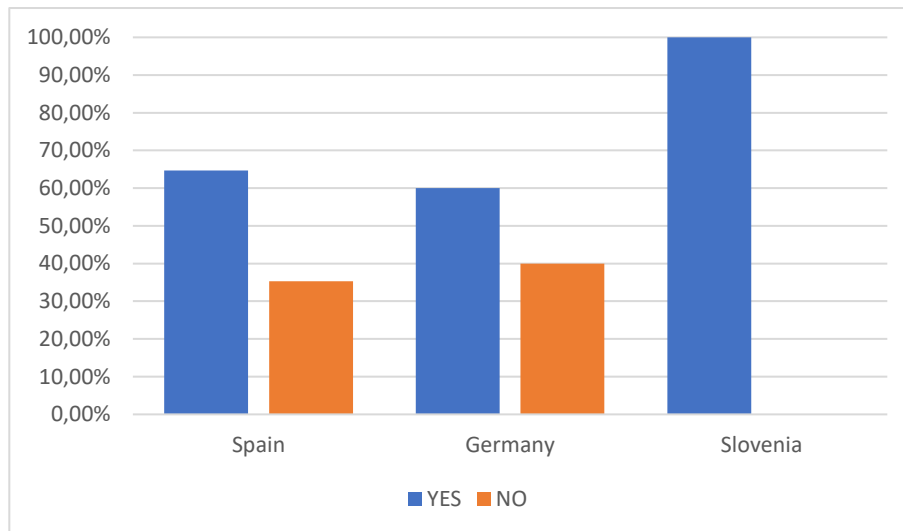


Figure 4: Interest of athletes with disabilities and family members to become a part of the club (%)

Over half of the managers (more than 60%) state that there was (at least once) an interest from athletes with disabilities and families to become part of the club (see Figure 4).

Only 17,60% of managers from Spain state that they do not participate in competitions hosted by a sports federation, while all others (also from Germany and Slovenia) claim differently.

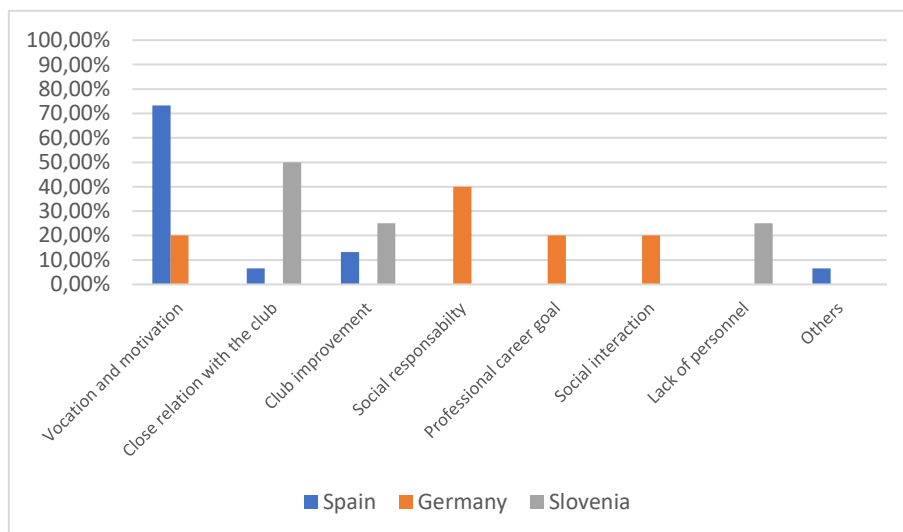


Figure 5: Reasons to be a manager of the club (%)

The main reasons for being a manager of the club are different in every country. For instance, in Spain, we can observe that vocation and motivation are the most common reasons, while in Germany it is a social responsibility and in Slovenia, it is a close relation with the club (see Figure 5).

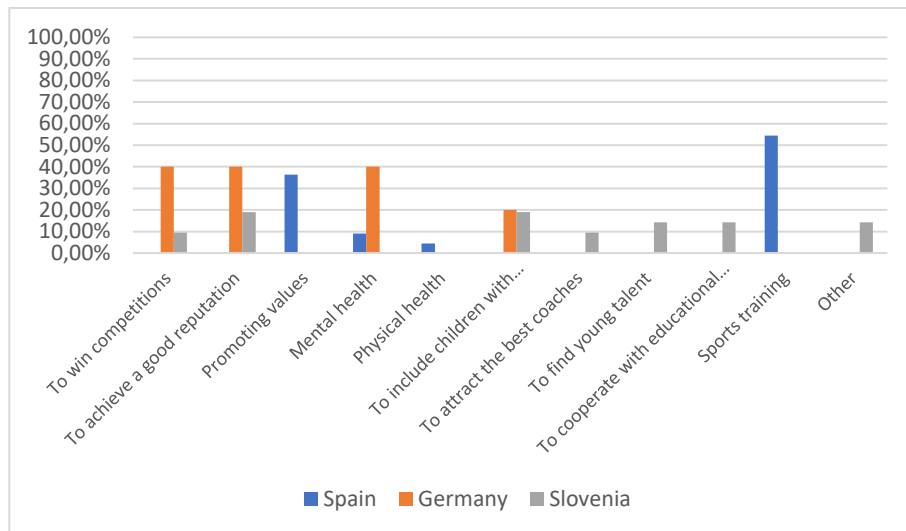


Figure 6: Present goals of clubs (%)

The main goals of the club now for managers are sports training and promoting values in Spain; to achieve a good reputation, to win competitions and to promote mental health in Germany; and to achieve a good reputation and include children with disabilities in Slovenia (see Figure 6).

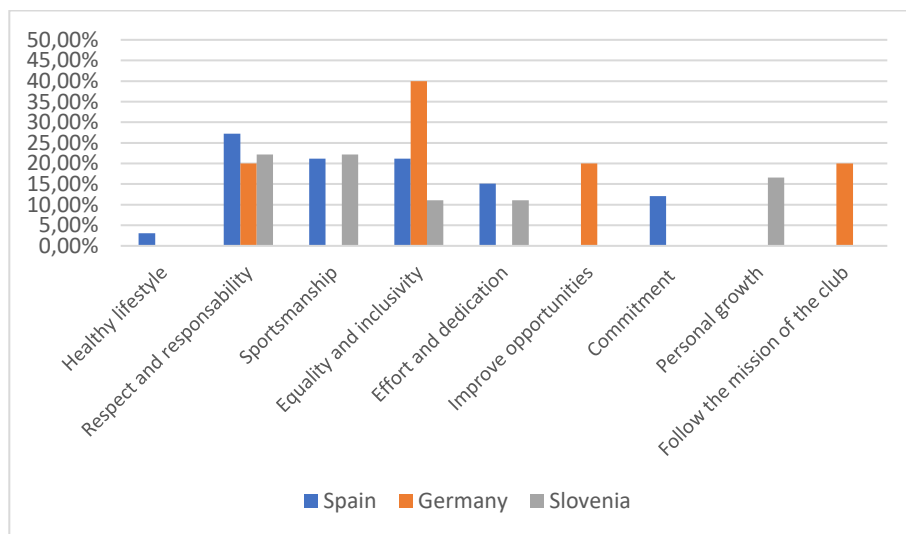


Figure 7: Values to transmit in the club (%)

Concerning the values that the managers want to transmit in the club, Spain underlines the importance of respect and responsibility, sportsmanship and equality and inclusivity. Germany highlights equality and inclusivity, followed by respect and responsibility, improve opportunities, and follow the mission of the club. Respect and responsibility as well as sportsmanship are the main values that Slovenian managers want to transmit, followed by personal growth (see Figure 7).

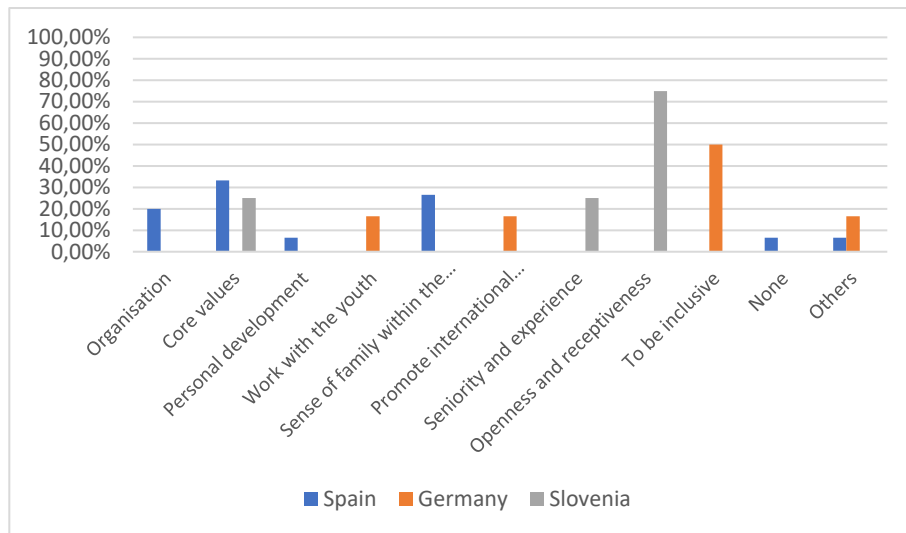


Figure 8: Club's positive aspects that are different from other clubs (%)

When asked about in what ways they think their club is different from other clubs, Spain's most common answers were the core values that the club represents and the sense of family within the club. Germany highlighted the inclusivity of the clubs followed by the work with the youth and the promotion of international cooperation. Slovenia addressed the openness and receptiveness of the club, followed by the core values and seniority and experience of the club as positive aspects that outstands from other clubs (see Figure 8).

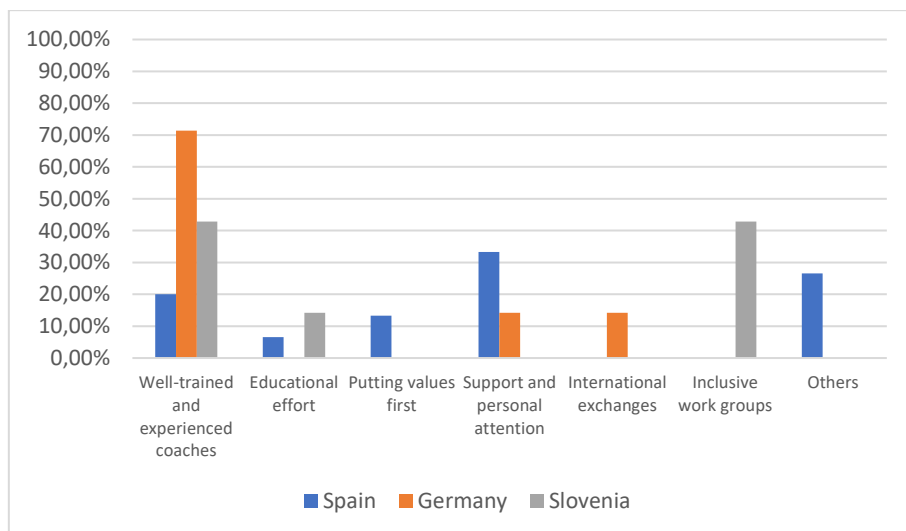


Figure 9: Club's perceived quality of educational training for athletes (%)

The main strengths in terms of education training for athletes are the support and personal attention and well-trained and experienced coaches in Spain; the well-trained and experienced coaches and international exchanges in Germany; and the inclusive work groups and well-trained and experienced coaches in Slovenia as well (see Figure 9).

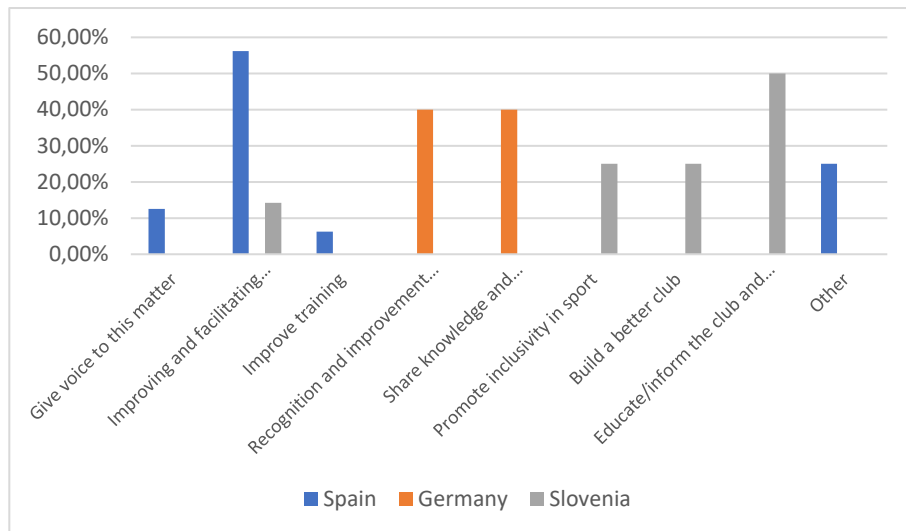


Figure 10: Club's perceived benefit from participation in this European inclusive project (%)

The club's perceived benefit from the participation in this inclusive project is improving and facilitating integration in sport in Spain; the recognition and improvement of the image as well as sharing knowledge and experience in Germany and educating and information the club and themselves on the importance of inclusion in Slovenia (see Figure 10).

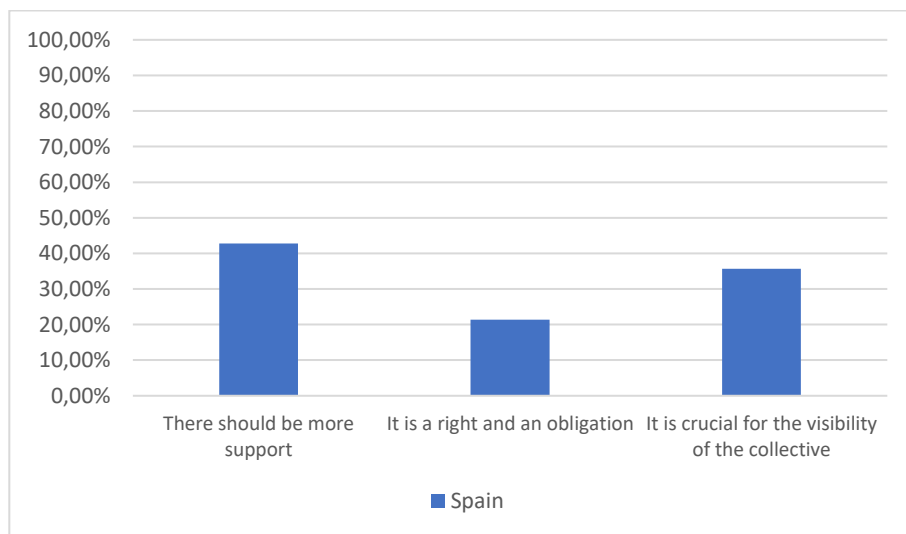


Figure 11: View on the inclusion of athletes with disabilities in sport (%)

When asked about their opinion on the inclusion of athletes with disabilities in sport, 40% of the managers in Spain said there should be more support, 35% answered it is crucial for the visibility of the collective and 20% stated that it is a right and an obligation (see Figure 11). (The majority of other results present three countries)

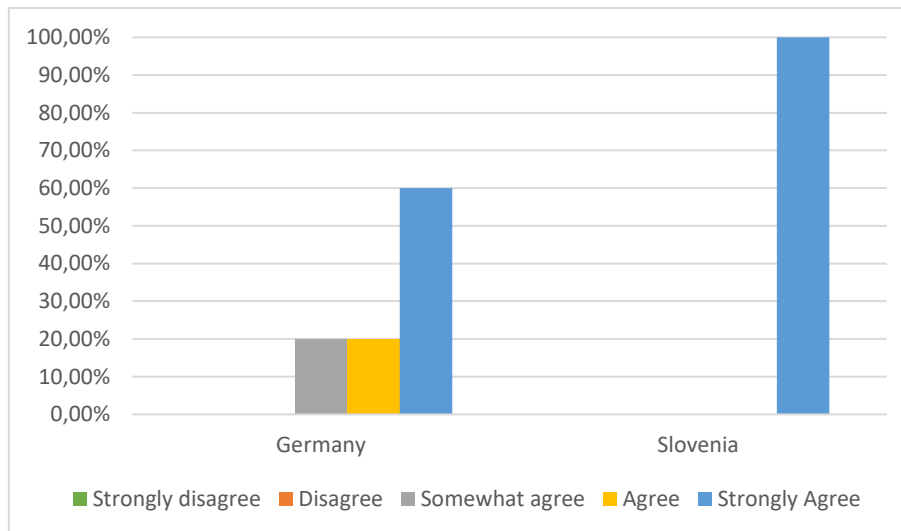


Figure 12: Agreement with the statement: “*sports clubs should actively try to involve athletes with disabilities?*” (%)

100% of managers in Slovenia strongly agrees with the statement, while Germany only strongly agrees 60%. Of the remaining 40%, 20% agrees and the other 20% agrees to a certain extent (see Figure 12).

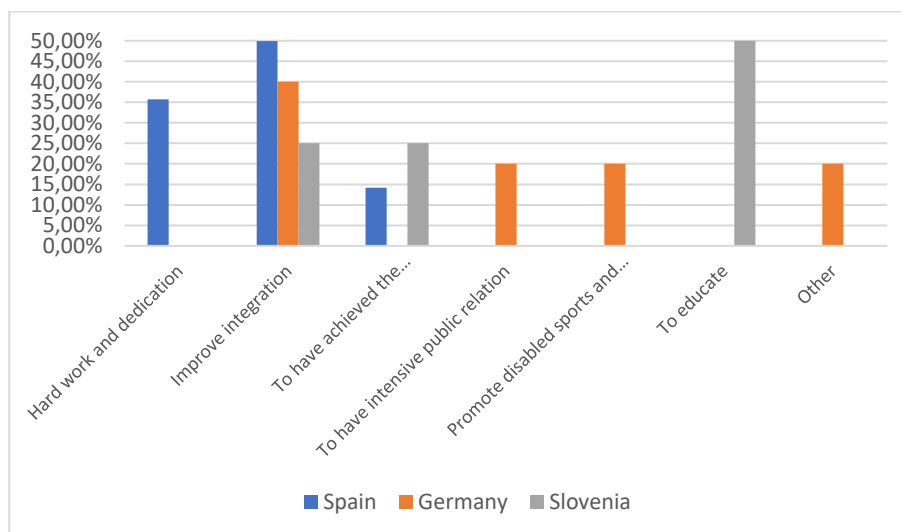


Figure 13: Imagine that the DITEAM12 project has been completed and your Club receives an award as the most inclusive club. What have you, as a club, done to achieve this? (%)

To attain an award from the DITEAM12 project, in Spain they would have improved integration through hard work and dedication. In Germany, they would have improved integration and have promoted disabled sports and high-performance sports. In Slovenia, they would have educated, and they would have achieved the goals of the project (see Figure 13).

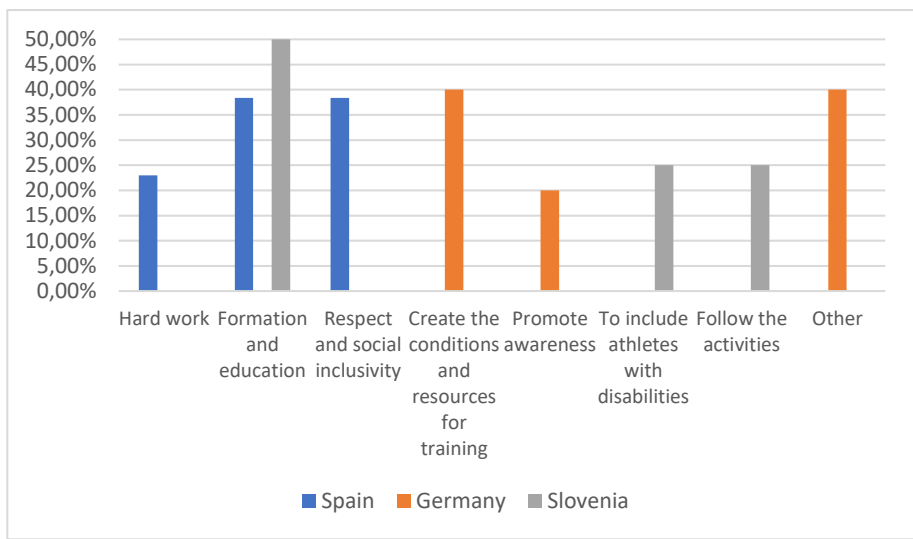


Figure 14: Priorities within the action above and which ones to achieve first (%)

The main priorities within the action above would be formation and education as well as respect and social inclusivity in Spain; create the conditions and resources for training and promote awareness in Germany, and formation and education and to include athletes with disabilities in Slovenia (see Figure 14).

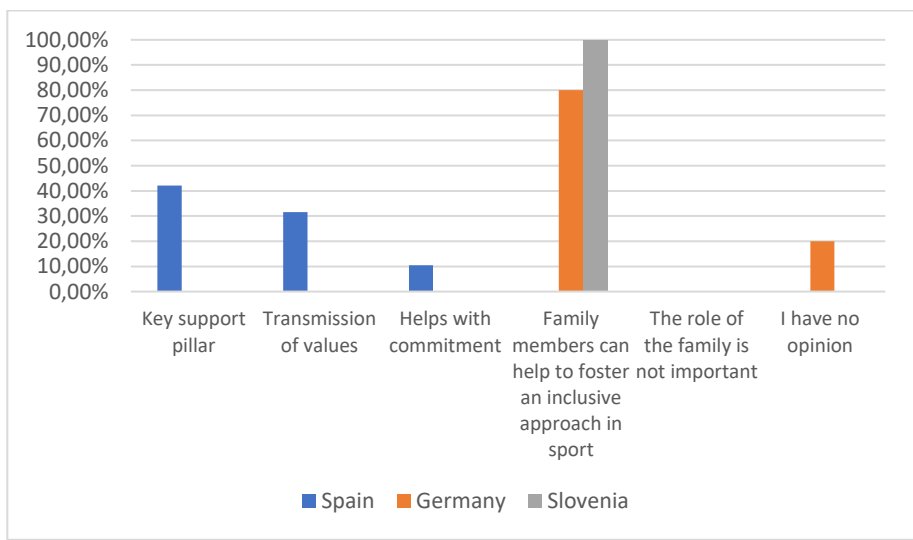


Figure 15: Importance of the role of family members when fostering an inclusive approach within the club (%)

Managers from Slovenia and Germany most common answer when asking about the role of the family members when fostering an inclusive approach within the club is that family members can help to foster an inclusive approach in sport; while Spain states that they are a key support pillar, and they transmit values (see Figure 15).

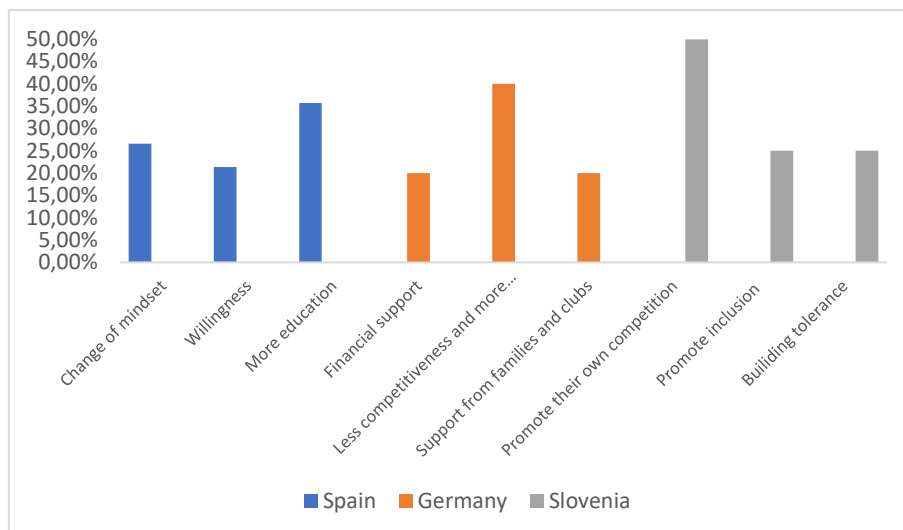


Figure 16: What would have to happen in the world of sport to have children with an intellectual disability train and compete along with children without a disability? (%)

The most common answers when asked what would have to happen in the world of sport to have children with an intellectual disability train and compete along with children without a disability were more education (Spain), less competitiveness and more participation (Germany) and promote their own competition (Slovenia) (see Figure 16).

Country's stage of inclusivity

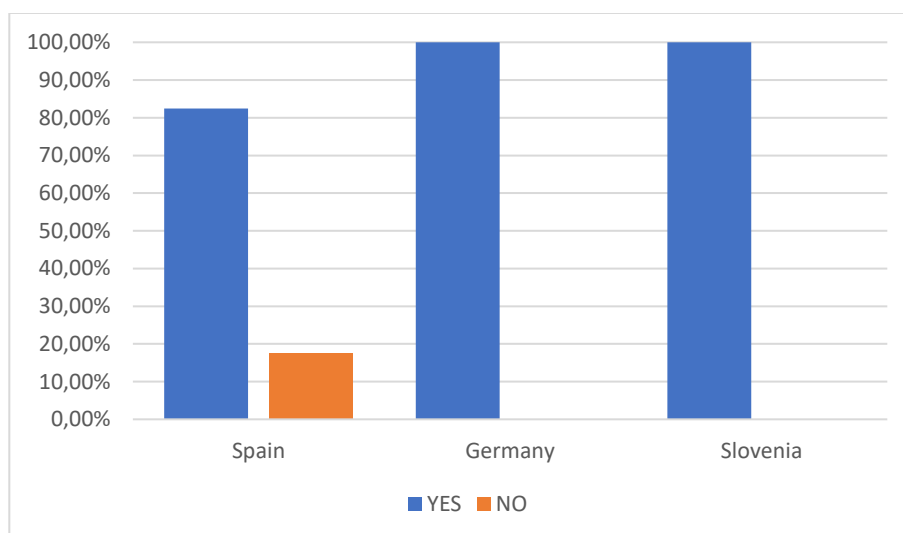


Figure 17: Existence of a federated competition in the country of a certain sport discipline (%)

More than 80% of all the clubs confirm the existence of federated competitions for the sports the club plays (see Figure 17).

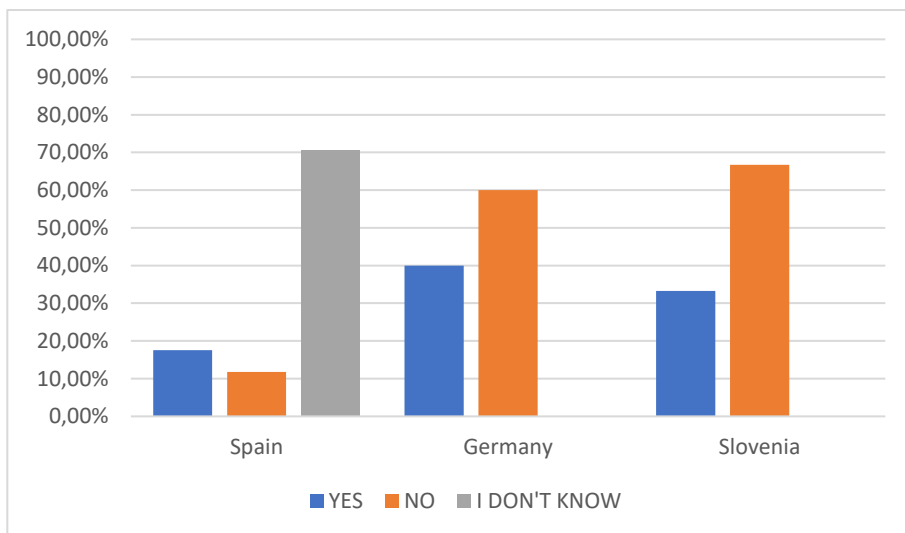


Figure 18: Ability for federated competition to host athletes with disabilities (%)

More than half of the managers state that these competitions cannot host athletes with disabilities or do not know if they can (see Figure 18).

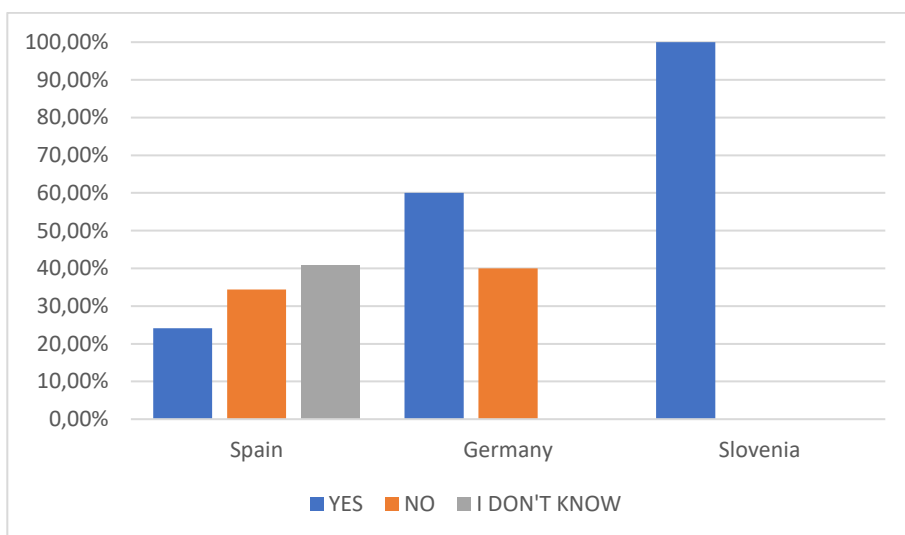


Figure 19: Participation of athletes with disabilities in competitions (%)

24% of the managers from the sports clubs in Spain state that there are athletes with disabilities who participate in competitions, whereas 60% of German managers and all managers from Slovenia indicate the same (see Figure 8).

In Slovenia and Germany, an exclusive competition for athletes with disabilities exists in all the sports the participating clubs engage in, while in Spain the majority claims (64,70%) it exists, while one-third (29,40%) do not know if it exists and some claim it does not (5,90%) (this is seen in Figure 19).

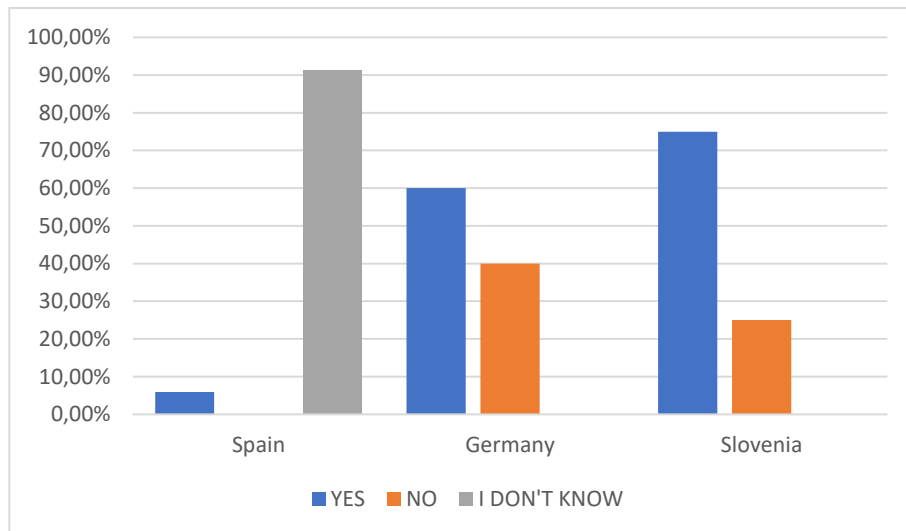


Figure 20: Existence of an official course in the region for coaches to learn about training people with disabilities (%)

Over half of clubs from Spain are not aware of the existence of an official course in their region for coaches to learn about training people with disabilities. In Slovenia and Germany, 60% or more managers' report there is an official course for coaches in their region (see Figure 20).

2.2.2 Coaches

In this chapter, we will present results regarding the background of the coaches, such as their educational background on athletes with disabilities, their previous working experience, and the region's accessibility to education courses. Likewise, we include the coach's perspective on the club's inclusiveness.

Background of the coaches

The background information of the coaches concerns their previous education or work with athletes with disabilities, the existence of and need for additional training courses.

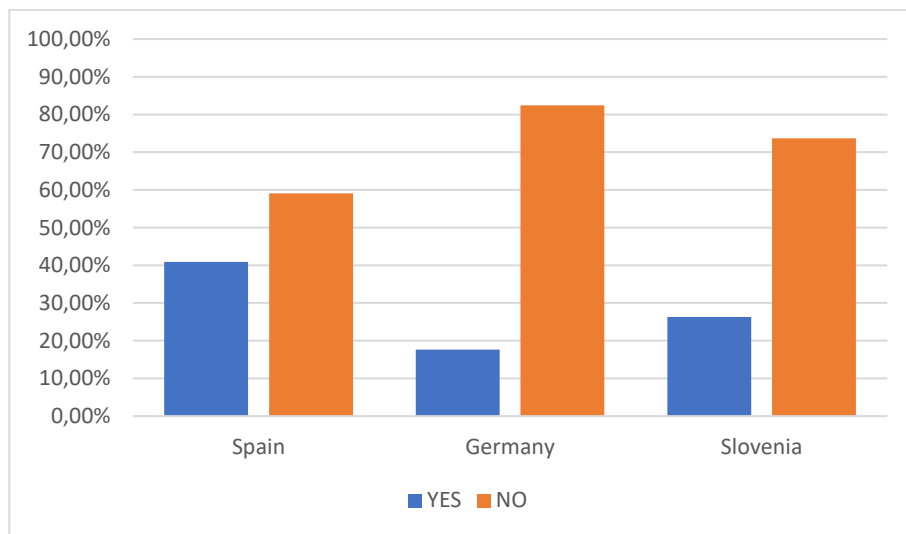


Figure 21: Percentage of coaches who have worked previously with a sport psychologist.

More than half of the coaches have not worked with a sport psychologist (see Figure 21).

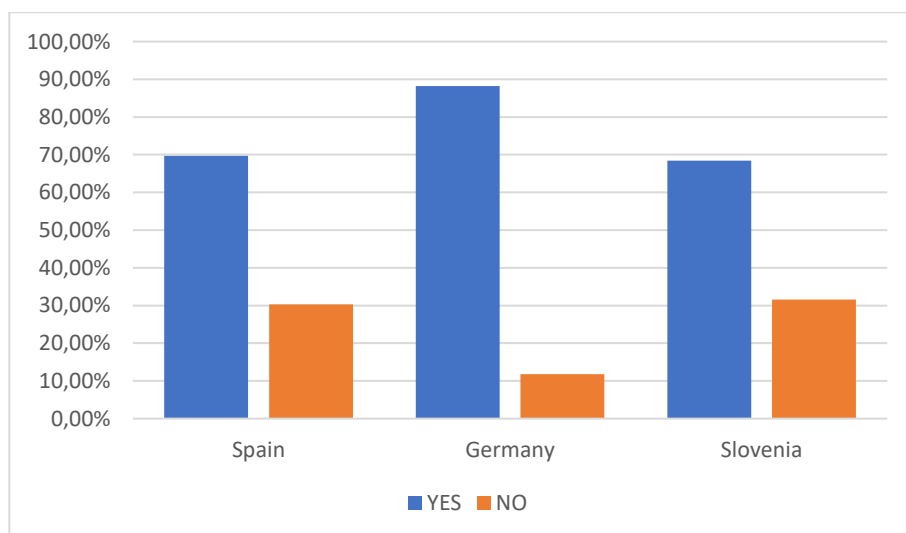


Figure 22: Previous or current experiences working with athletes with disabilities (%)

Over half of coaches have experience in the work with athletes with disabilities (see Figure 22).

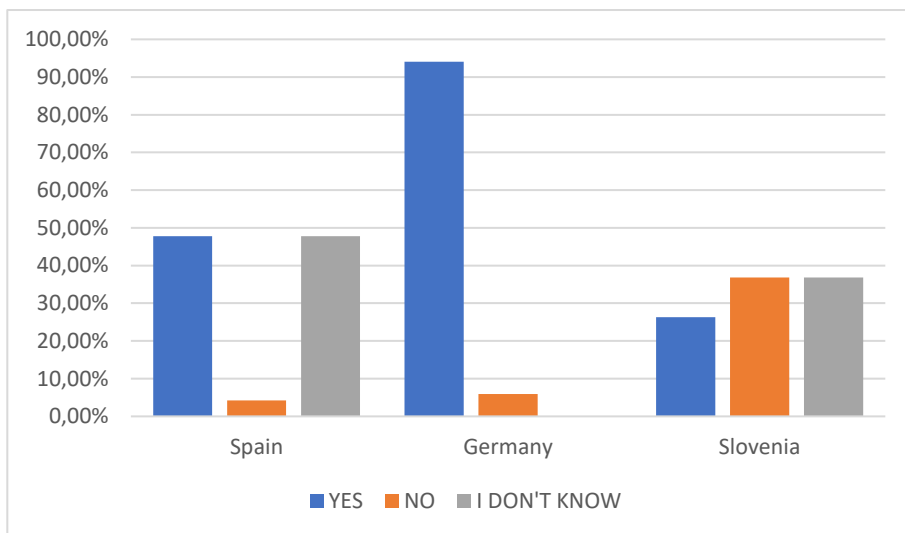


Figure 23: Existence of an educational course about training people with disabilities in the country (%)

Almost all coaches from Germany (94%) assure the existence of educational courses in their region about training athletes with disabilities. In comparison, 26% of the coaches from Slovenia and 47% of coaches in Spain report about such educational courses (see Figure 23).

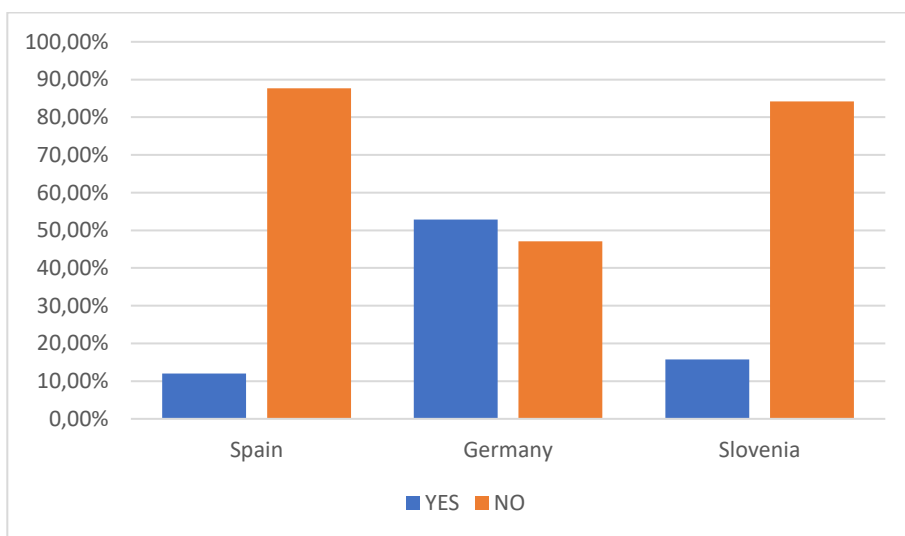


Figure 24: Educational background of the coaches (%)

Over three-fourths (more than 80%) of coaches from Spain and Slovenia do not have an educational background in training athletes with disabilities, while more than half of the coaches from Germany have received training to coach athletes with disabilities (see Figure 24).

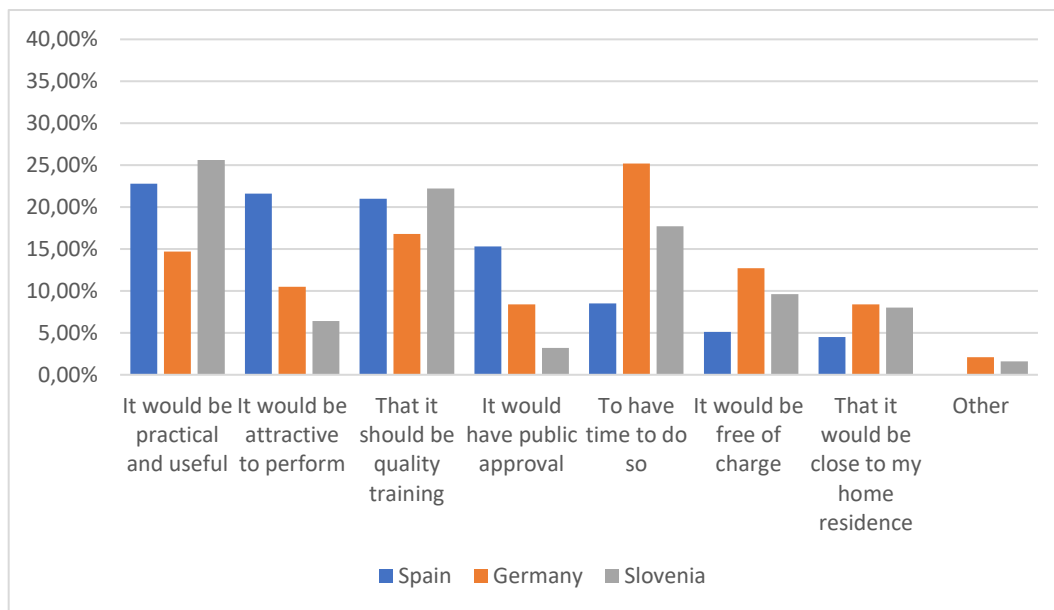


Figure 25: Reasons for taking a course to train athletes with disabilities (%)

Notes: Answer format: multiple responses possible.

The most chosen reasons to participate in a course to train athletes with disabilities were the quality of the training (17% or more) and its usefulness and practicality (14,70% and more). The latter was the most chosen reason both in Spain (22,80%) and Slovenia (25,60%), while coaches from Germany state as the most important reason the time to do so (25%). Other reasons were less represented, 21,60% or less reporting attractiveness to perform the training being important and less than 8% indicating that it should be close to their home residence (see Figure 25).

Inclusiveness in sports on the national and club level

We were interested in gathering data concerning the coach's perspective on the club's state of inclusiveness, the reasons and benefits of including athletes with disabilities in the club and competitions.

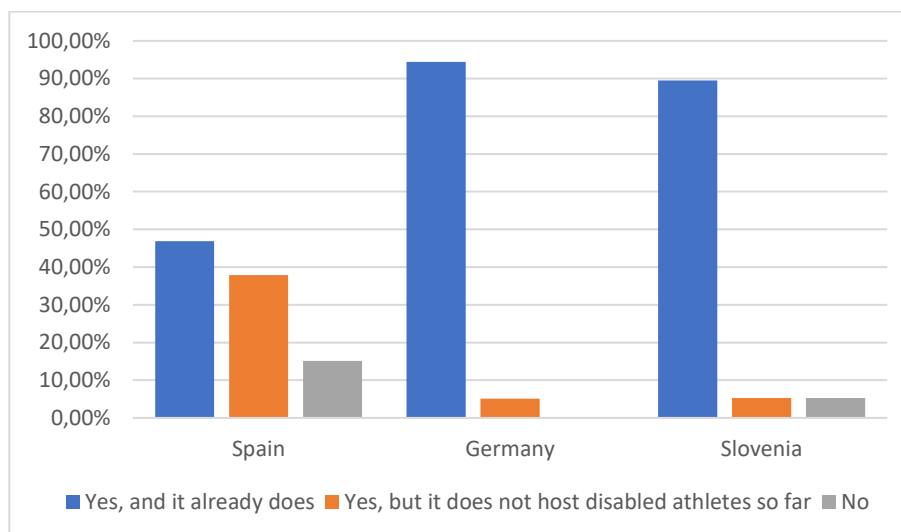


Figure 26: Ability of the club to host athletes with disabilities (%)

Many coaches from clubs in Germany and Slovenia state that their club can host athletes with disabilities and already does, while less than 50% of coaches in Spain claim the same. Furthermore, almost the same percent (a bit less than 40%) of coaches' report that they have the means to host athletes with disabilities, but they do not have them included in the club (see Figure 26).

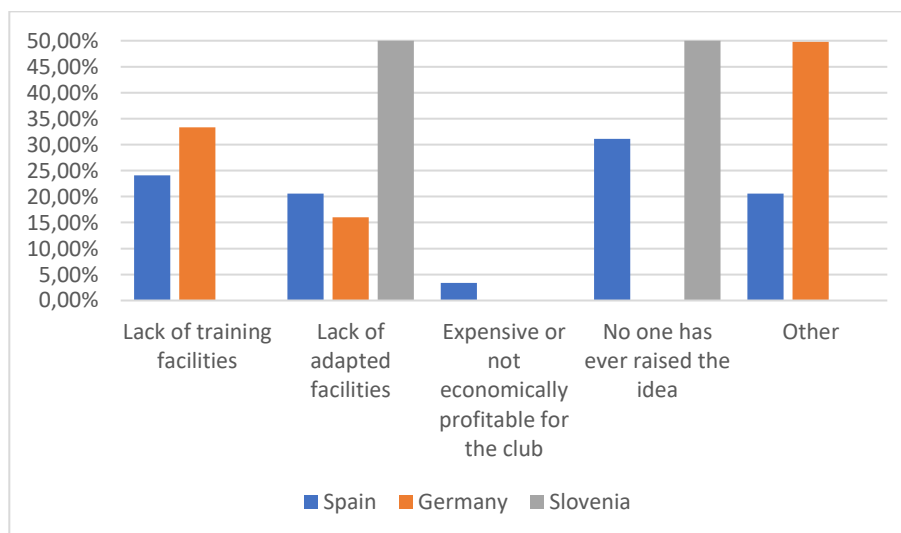


Figure 27: Reasons for the club for not hosting athletes with disabilities (%)

The common reason for the sports club's not hosting athletes with disabilities in all three countries is the lack of adapted facilities. Moreover, lack of training facilities was recognized in Germany and Spain; and "no one has ever raised the idea" was prominent in Spain and

Slovenia. It seems that a lot of other reasons are also applicable to why clubs do not host athletes with disabilities in Germany and Spain (see Figure 27).

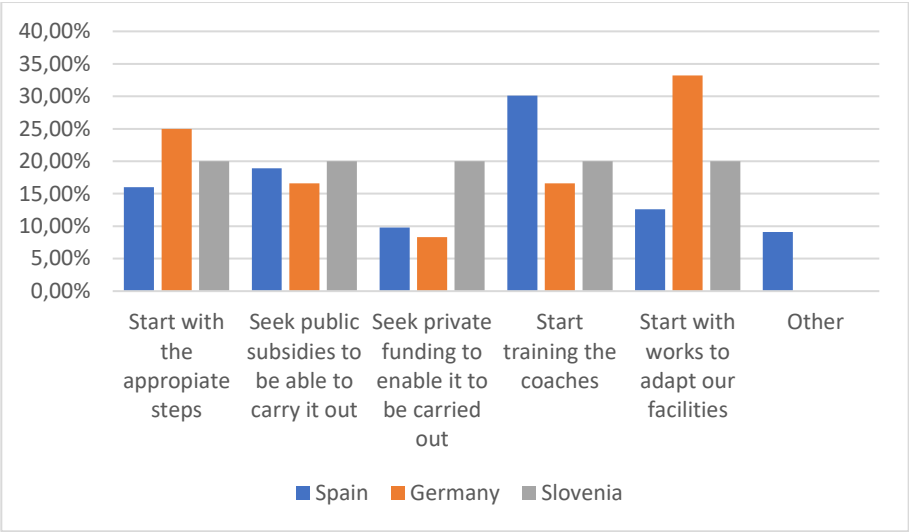


Figure 28: Predispositions to incorporate athletes with disabilities in clubs (%)

Notes: Answer format: multiple responses possible.

It seems that, as the starting point for incorporating athletes with disabilities in the sports clubs in participating countries, all items were recognized as important (in Slovenia, all were equally selected), as the percentage of coaches selecting each item ranged from 8% to 33%. For example, 16% and more of the coaches believe that the club should start with the appropriate steps to incorporate athletes with disabilities. As each answer is selected equally in Slovenia, in other countries, some items stand out. Most coaches in Spain, think that the club should start with training the coaches, while coaches from Germany recognize adaptation of the facilities as the starting point (see Figure 28).

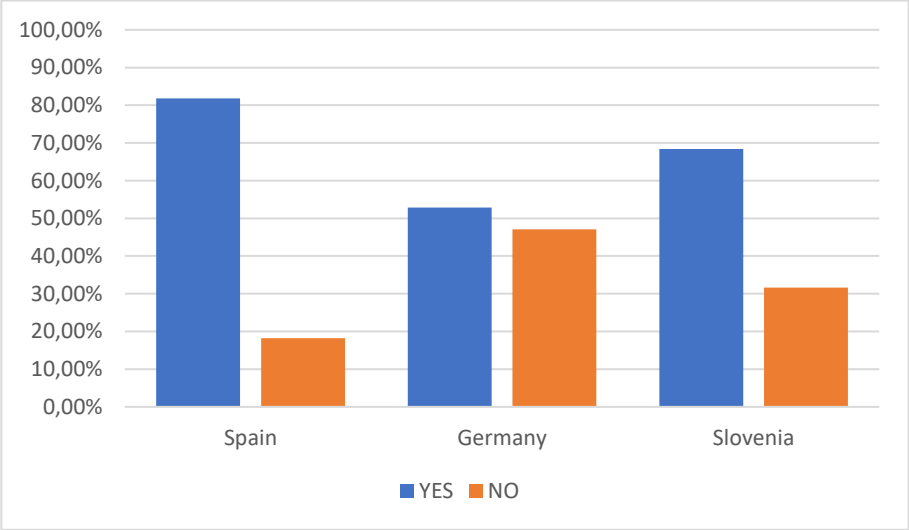


Figure 29: Inclusion of athletes with disabilities in competitions (%)

More than half of the coaches in all three countries believe athletes with disabilities could be included in competitions where athletes without disabilities compete (see Figure 29).

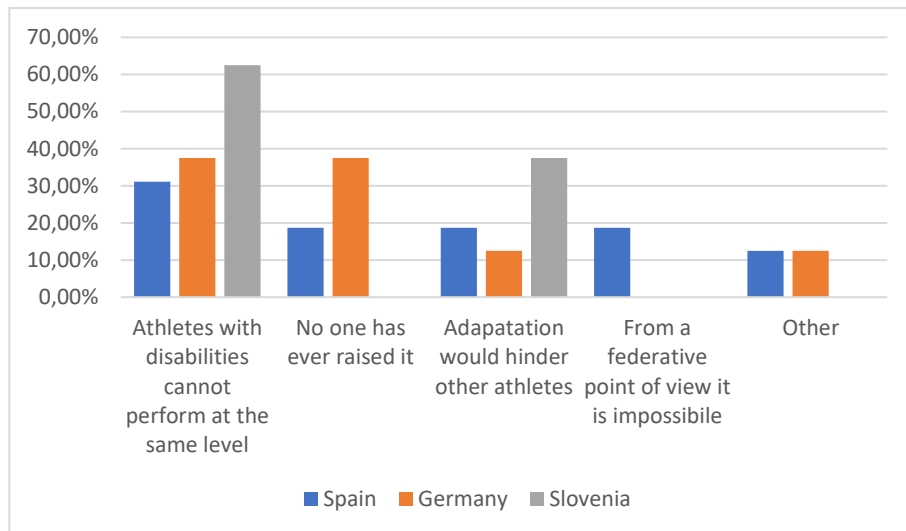


Figure 30: Reasons not to include athletes with disabilities in competitions (%)

31,1% or more of the coaches think that athletes with disabilities could not perform at the same level as athletes without. Between 12,5 and 38% believe that the inclusion of athletes with disabilities would hinder other athletes (see Figure 30).

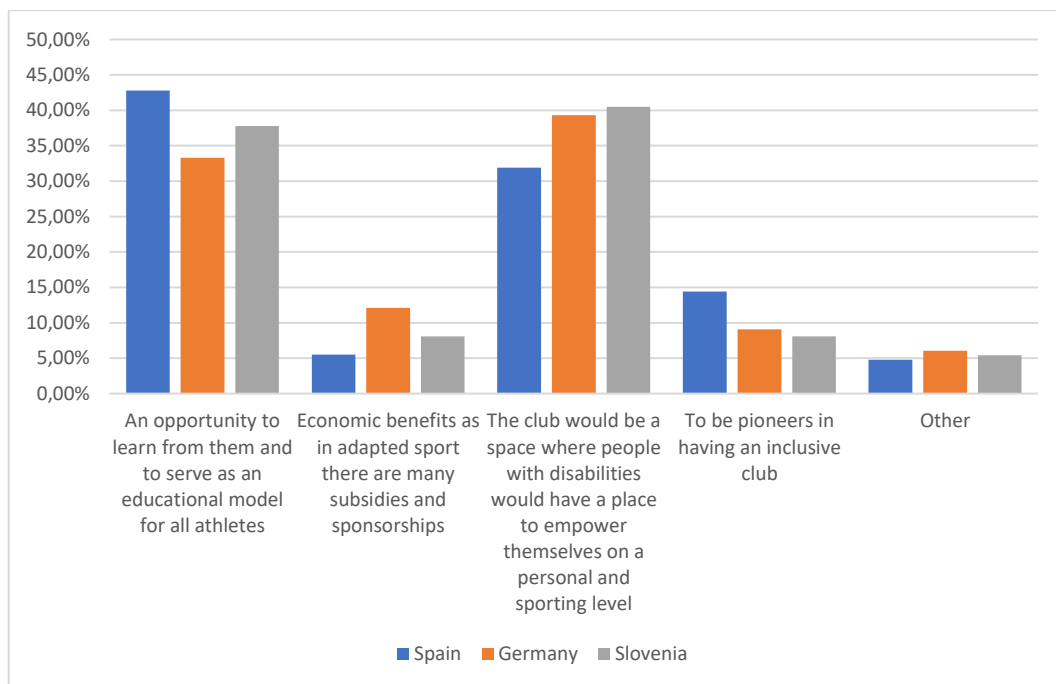


Figure 31: Benefits of having athletes with disabilities in the club (%)

31.90% and more of the coaches believe that the club would be a space where people with disabilities could empower themselves on a personal and sporting level. More than 33% of the coaches think that it would be an opportunity to learn from athletes with a disability and to serve as an educational model for all athletes (see Figure 31).

Perception of coaches

In the following section, we present the data involving the coaches' views on the DITEAM12 project, competition, inclusive sports activities, coach's skills, and their opinions on the club's inclusiveness. Coaches assessed their agreement with the statements presenting the above-mentioned themes with the use of a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). We present the average answers per item (M) for each country.

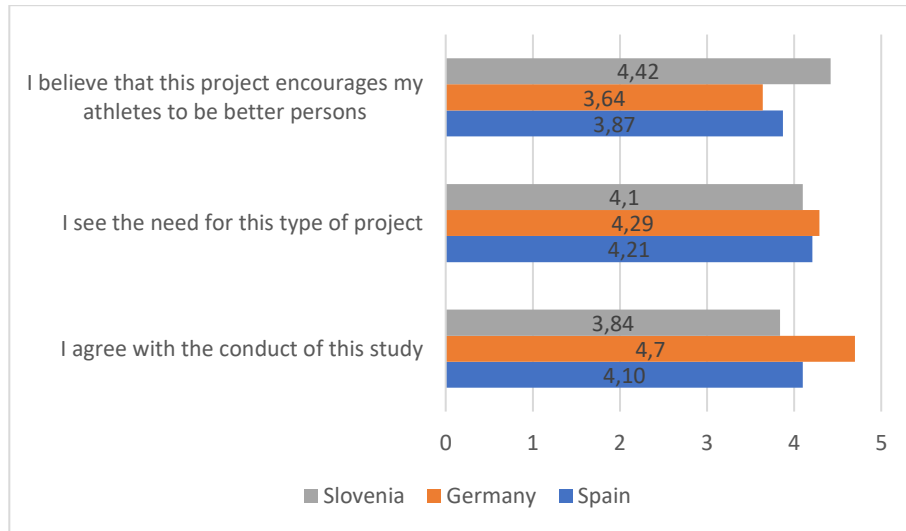


Figure 32: Perceptions connected to the project DITEAM12 (M)

Most coaches agree that this project encourages their athletes to be better persons (in Slovenia, this was adapted to “more emphatic and tolerant persons”) and they see the need for this type of project. In general, they agree or strongly agree with the conduct of this study (see Figure 32).

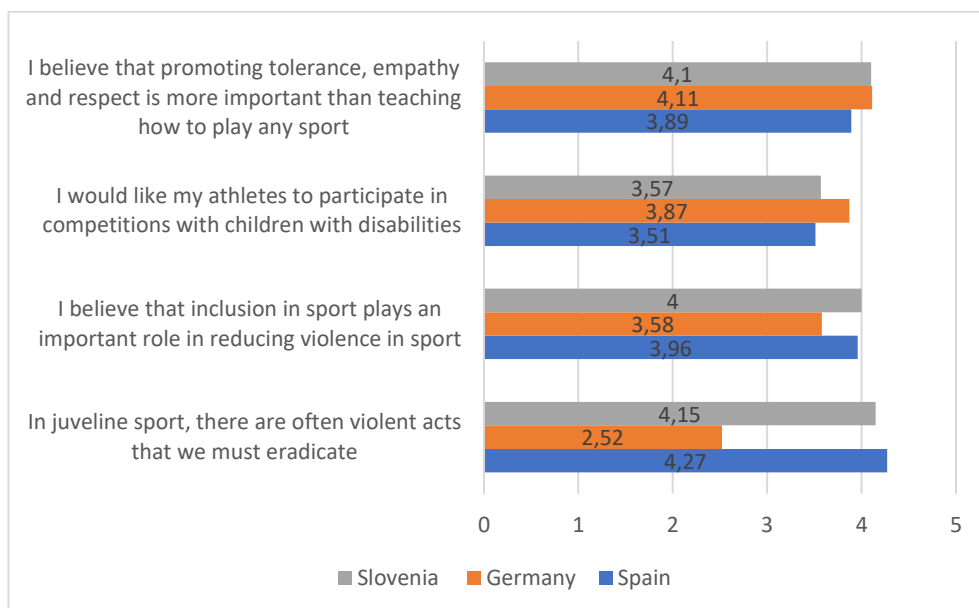


Figure 33: Perceptions connected to competition (M)

Coaches agree that promoting tolerance, empathy, and respect for one another is more important than teaching how to play any sport and agree that inclusion in sport plays an important role in reducing violence. They also agree that they would like their athletes to participate in competitions with children with disabilities. In Slovenia and Spain, they also agree that in juvenile sport there are often violent acts that must be eradicated, while coaches from Germany on average neither agree nor disagree with this statement (see Figure 33).

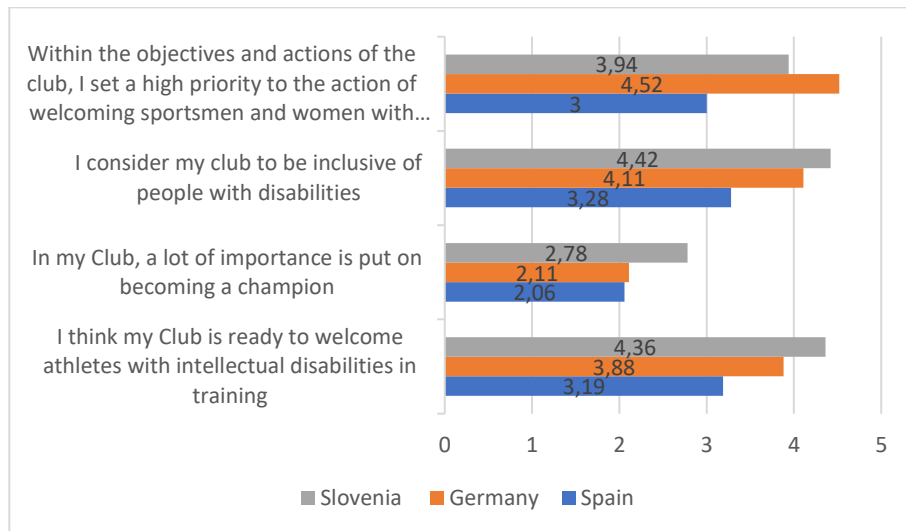


Figure 34: Perceptions connected to the sports club (*M*)

Coaches agree or strongly agree that the goals and actions of the club should welcome athletes with disabilities. They agree or somewhat agree to consider their club to be inclusive. They disagree or somewhat agree that their club puts a lot of importance on becoming a champion. While coaches from Spain somewhat agree that their club is ready to welcome athletes with disabilities, in Slovenia, they are quite sure the club is ready (as all clubs are inclusive already) (see Figure 34).

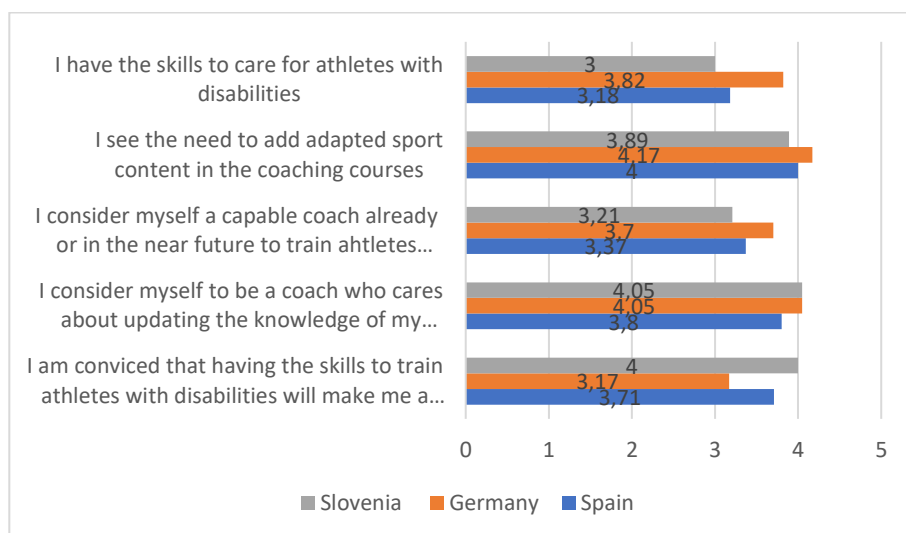


Figure 35: Perceptions of the coach's skills (*M*)

Coaches somewhat agree or agree that they have the skills to care for athletes with disabilities. They agree to see the need to add adapted sports content in coaching courses. They somewhat agree to see themselves as capable coaches to train athletes with disabilities and agree to care about updating the knowledge of their coaching skills. They agree or agree to some extent that having the skills to train athletes with disabilities will make them better persons (in Slovenia, this was adapted to “better coach” (see Figure 35).

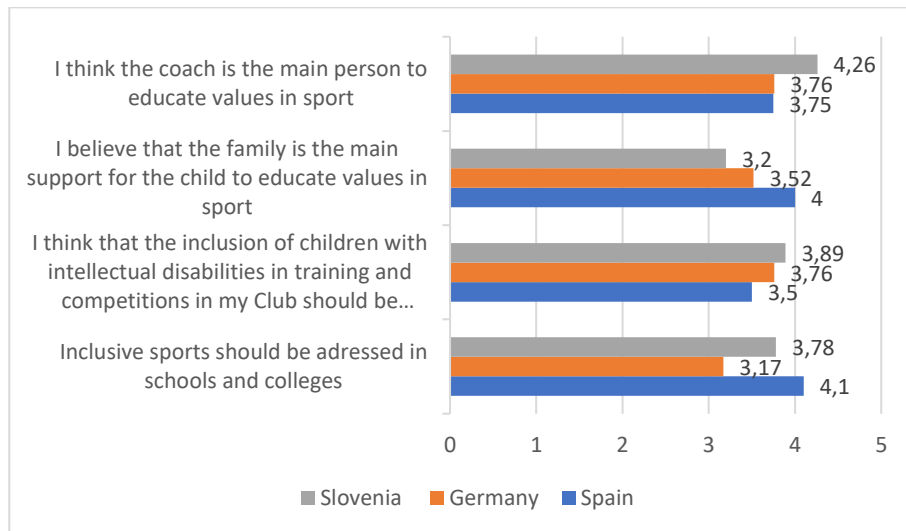


Figure 36: Perceptions connected to inclusive sports activities (*M*)

Coaches from all three countries agree that the main person to educate values in sports is themselves (the coaches). They agree or agree to some extent that the family is the main support for the child to educate values in sport. Coaches agree that the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in training and competitions in their clubs should be mandatory. They also agree that inclusive sports should be addressed in schools and colleges (see Figure 36).

2.2.3 Parents

We present the results from the parents or guardians survey in three subchapters. First, we present the background of the families, followed by the recognised inclusiveness in sports clubs, mainly in the specific clubs the children are a part of, but also some information is gathered about the wider context. We conclude this section with parents' perceptions regarding inclusion, competition, coaches, etc.

Background of the parents or guardians

We were interested if the families in our sample have a child/children or other family members with disabilities, and if they know someone with a disability outside of their primary family. We were also interested, which are the reasons for their child's participation in sports.

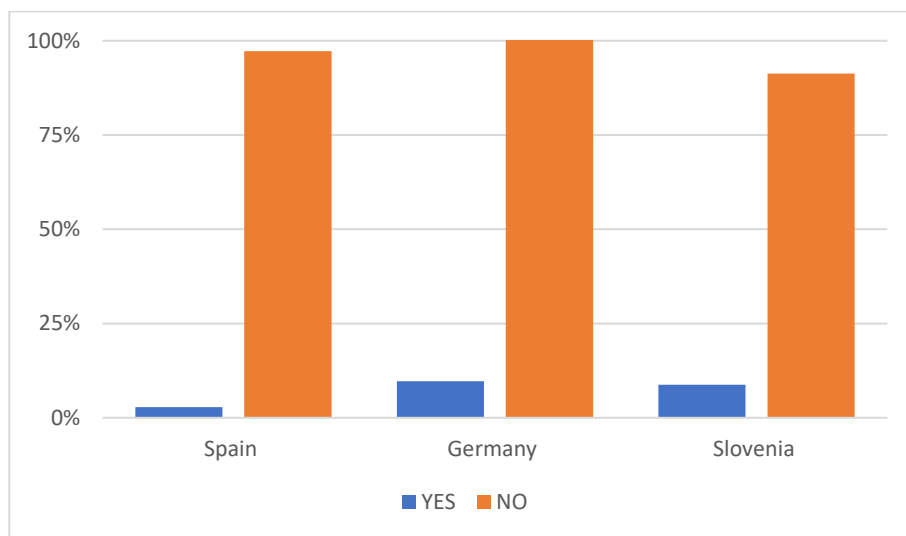


Figure 37: Percentage of families with (yes) and without (no) a child/children with a (physical or intellectual) disability

The majority of participating families (more than 90% in all countries) do not have a child with a physical or intellectual disability (see Figure 37).

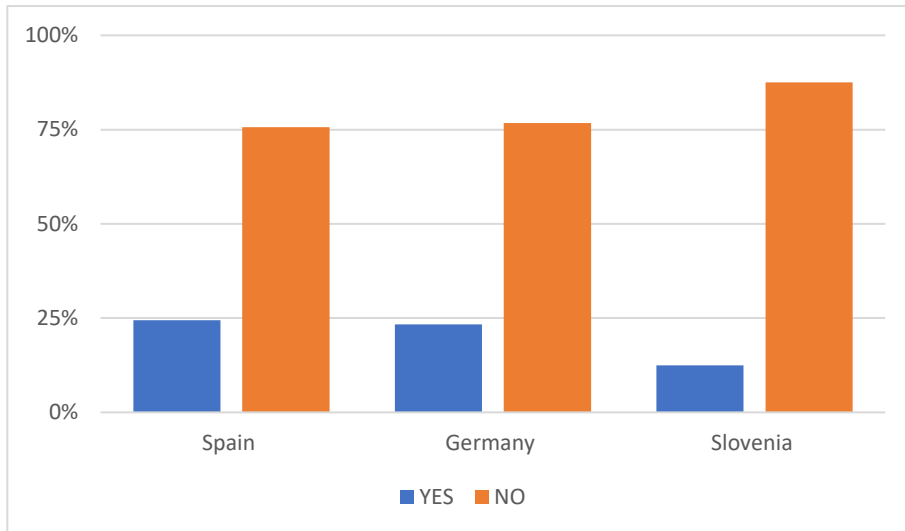


Figure 38: Families with a person with disabilities (%)

More than 70% of families do not have a person with disabilities in their family (see Figure 38).

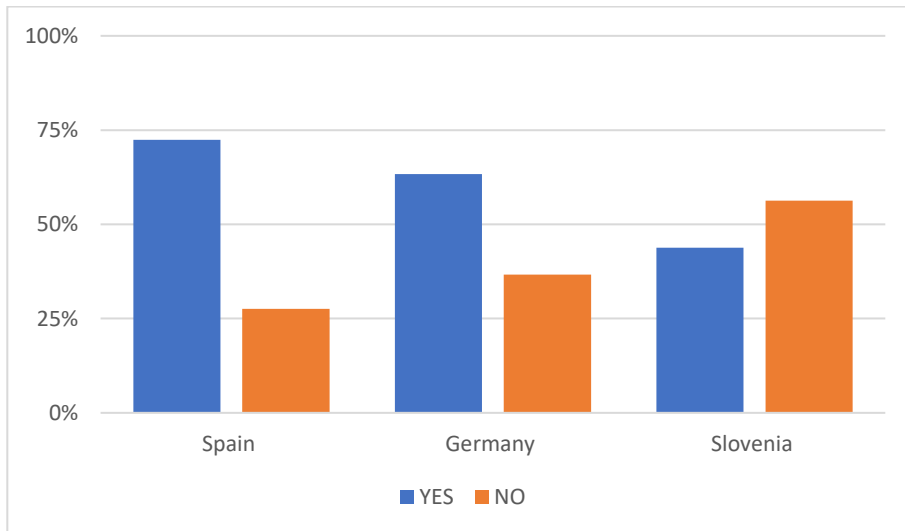


Figure 39: Contact with a family with a disabled member (%)

In all countries, more than 40% of the respondents' report that they know a family that has a family member with a disability (see Figure 39).

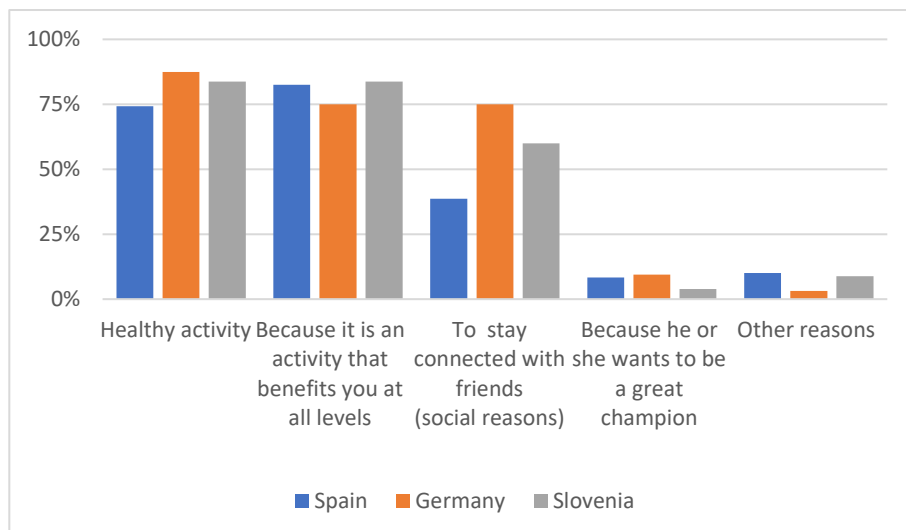


Figure 40: Reasons to involve children in sport's activity (%)

Notes: Answer format: multiple responses possible.

More than 70% of parents/guardians' state that involving children in sports for health benefits is the main reason that benefits them at all levels. It is also important to them for social reasons (see Figure 40).

Inclusiveness in sports on the national and club level

We examined the participation of athletes with disabilities in federated competitions, as well as their involvement in the sports clubs, the level of accommodation of the clubs and the different needs to adapt to athletes with disabilities. Furthermore, we asked for the level of training and experience of the coaches and the family's contribution to inclusion.

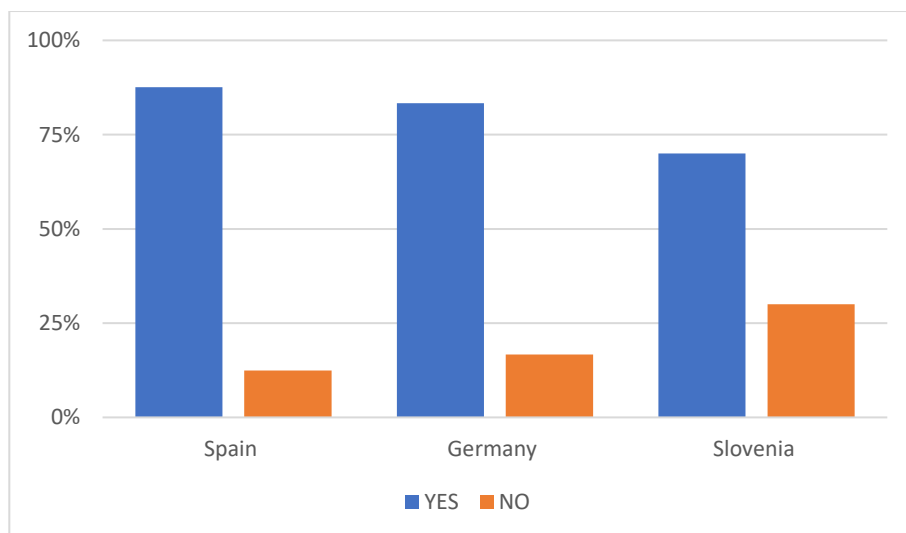


Figure 41: Possibilities of participation of athletes with and without disabilities in the same competition (%)

70% or more of the parents/guardians' report that children with disabilities could participate in the same competition as children without disabilities (see Figure 41).

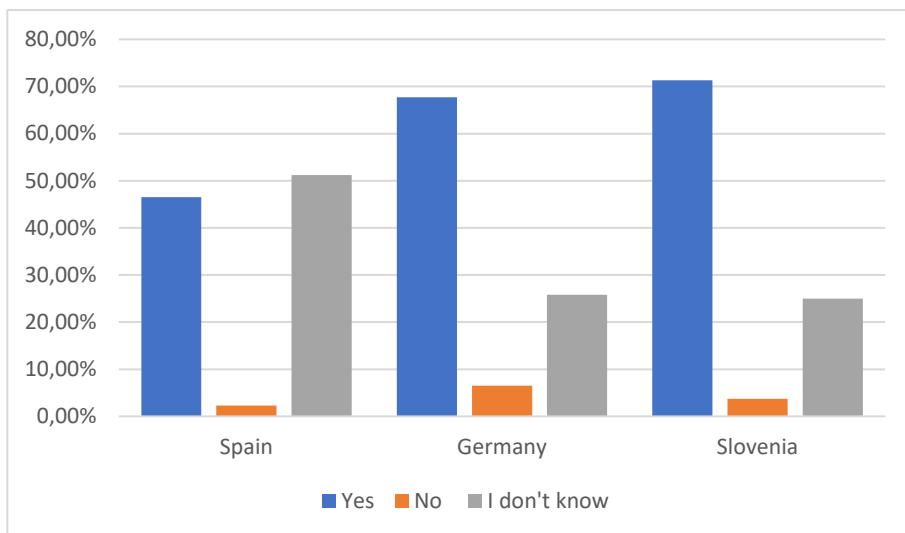


Figure 42: Facilities accommodation to athletes with disabilities (%)

46% and more believe that their club is adapted to accommodate athletes with disabilities (see Figure 42).

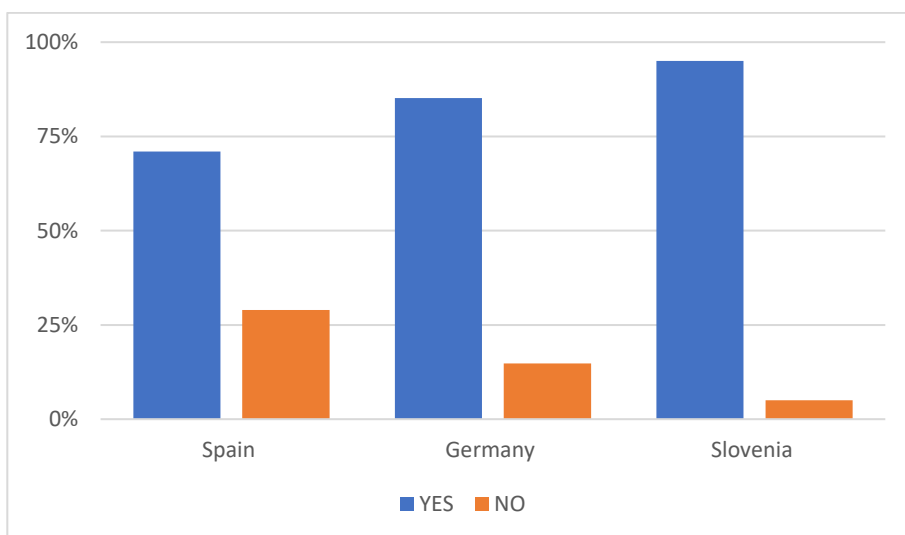


Figure 43: Sufficient experience of coaches for adapting the training to athletes with disabilities (%)

Most parents (more than 70%) consider that the coaches have sufficient experience for working and training athletes with disabilities (see Figure 43).

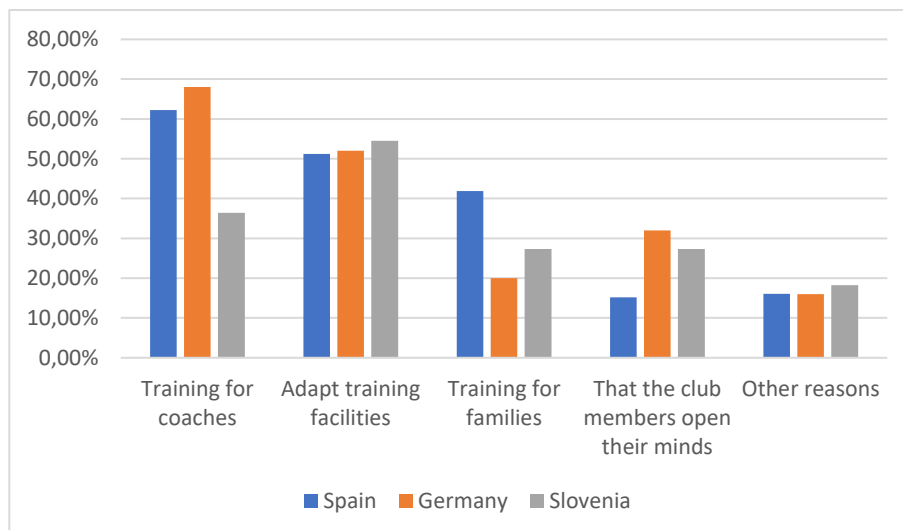


Figure 44: The clubs' needs for adapting training to athletes with disabilities (%)

Notes: Answer format: multiple responses possible.

More than 50% of parents stated that it is necessary for the clubs to adapt their training facilities, and (with 36% and more) to train their coaches for people with disabilities (see Figure 44).

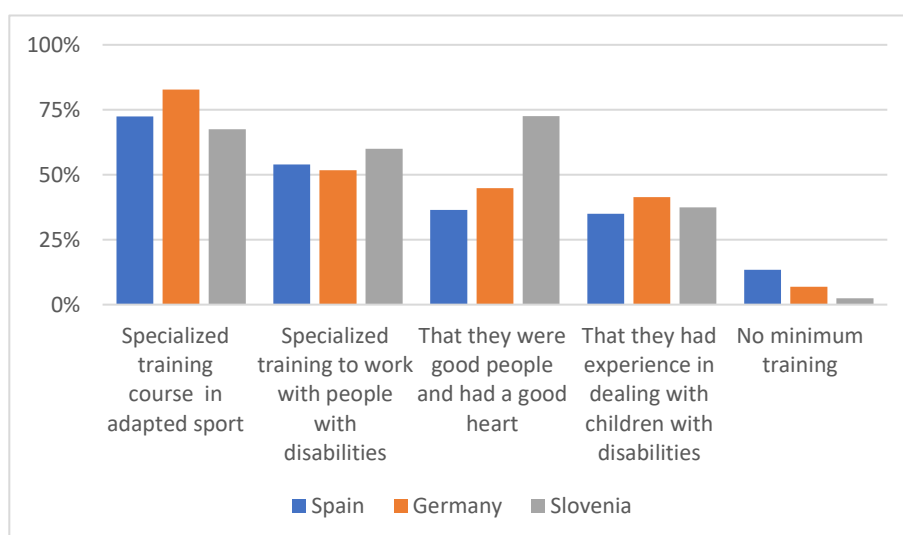


Figure 45: Minimum training requirements for training young people with disabilities (%)

Notes: Answer format: multiple responses possible.

67% or more believe that specialized training courses in adapted sport should be a requirement for training young people with disabilities. In Slovenia, 72.5% believe that the coaches need to be open and empathetic persons (item “good people and had a good heart” was changed in Slovenia) (see Figure 45).

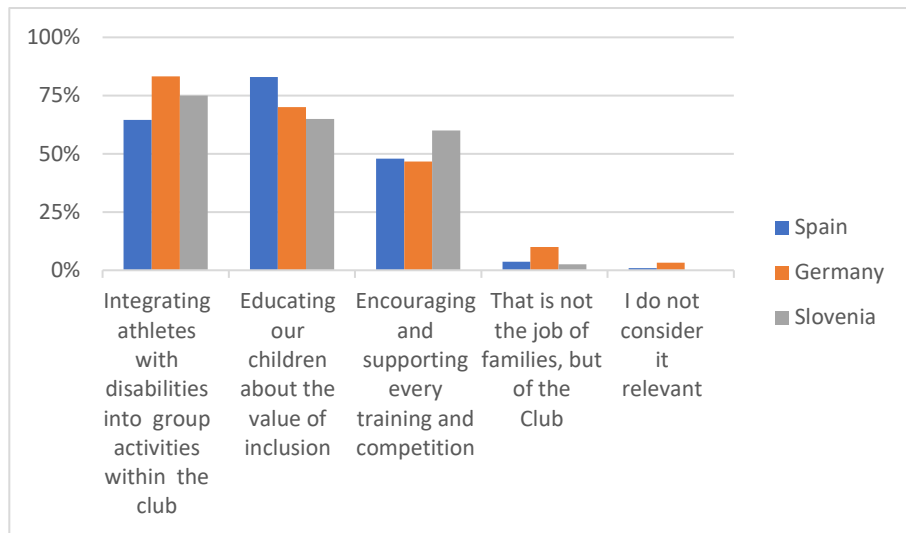


Figure 46: Families contribution to open clubs to athletes with disabilities

Notes: Answer format: multiple responses possible.

When answering what can families do to help get the sports club more inclusive, more than half of the parents (65% and more) think that they could educate children about the value of inclusion and that they could try integrating athletes with disabilities into group activities within the club (see Figure 46).

Parent's perceptions

We present the parent's perceptions on different matters involving competitions, the coaches, the club, and the DITEAM 12 project. The following figures display statements that were rated by the parents/guardians between 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (somewhat agree) 4 (agree) and 5 (strongly agree). The figures display the mean values of the sample by country.

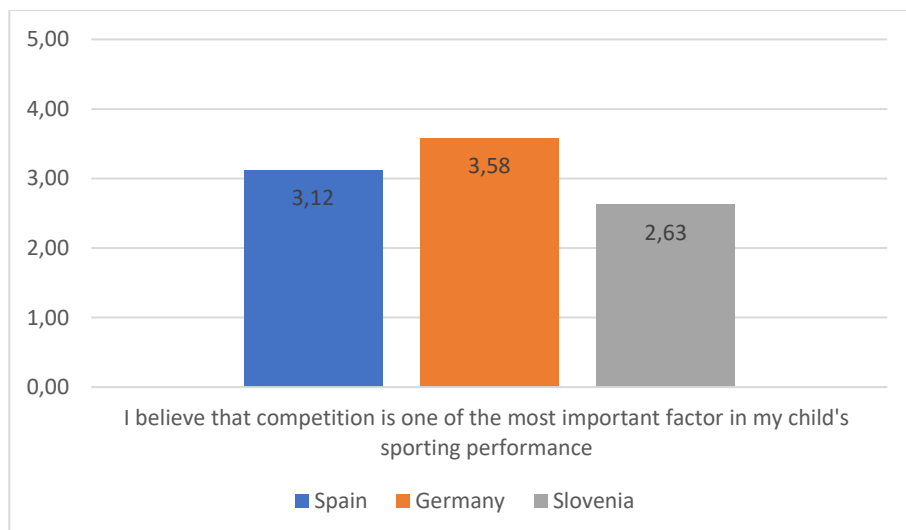


Figure 47: Perceptions connected to the competition (*M*)

Several families somewhat agree (3 stands for neither agree nor disagree) with the statement that competition is one of the most important factors in their children’s sporting performance (see Figure 47).

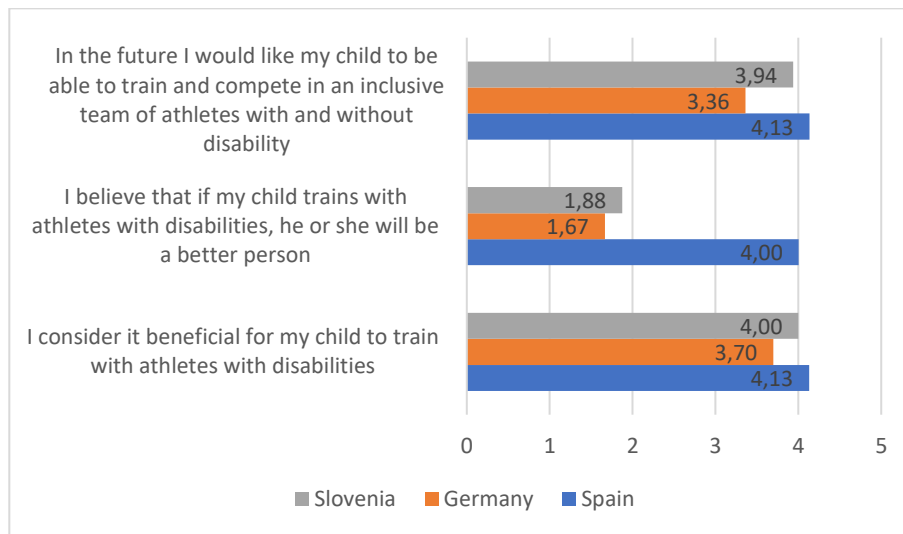


Figure 48: Beliefs connected to inclusive sports activities (*M*)

Most families agree that they would like their children to compete in an inclusive team and they consider it beneficial for their children to train with athletes with disabilities. Furthermore, parents from Spain believe that this would lead to their children being better persons, which is not the case for parents from Germany and Slovenia (where this item was adapted to “a more empathetic and tolerant person” instead of a better person) (see Figure 48).

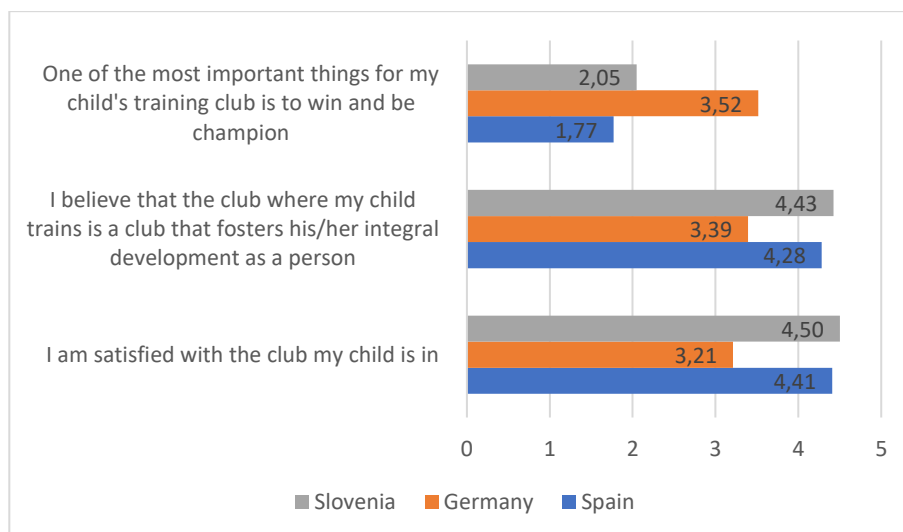


Figure 49: Beliefs connected to the sports club the child is currently in (*M*)

Parents from all countries disagree or somewhat agree that one of the most important things for their child’s club is to win and be champions. Parents agree and strongly agree with the belief that the club fosters the children's integral development as a person and are satisfied with the club their child is in (see Figure 49).

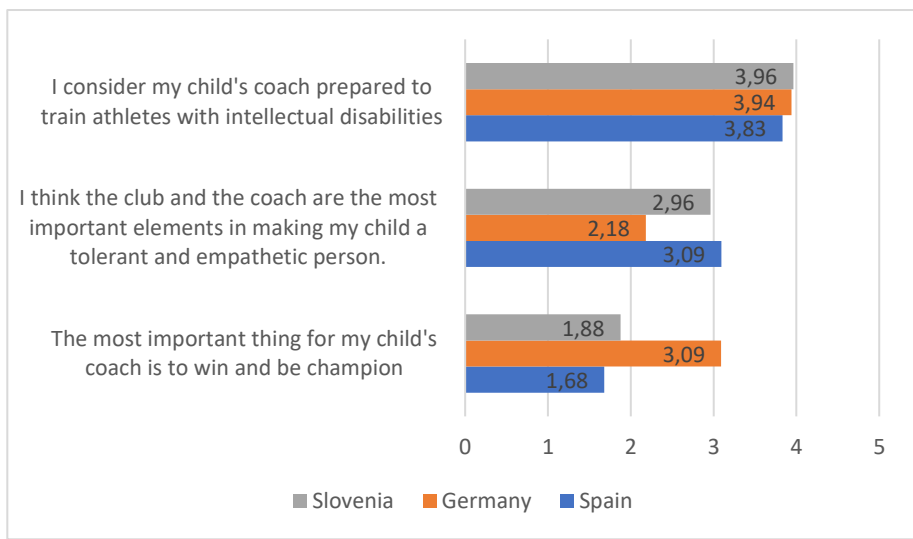


Figure 50: Perceptions connected to the sports coach (*M*)

Families consider their child’s coach to be prepared to train athletes with intellectual disabilities and somewhat agree that the club and the coach are the most important elements in making a child tolerant and empathetic. In Slovenia and Spain, parents/guardians disagree with the affirmation that the most important thing for their children is to win and be a champion, while parents from Germany somewhat agree with the statement (see Figure 50).

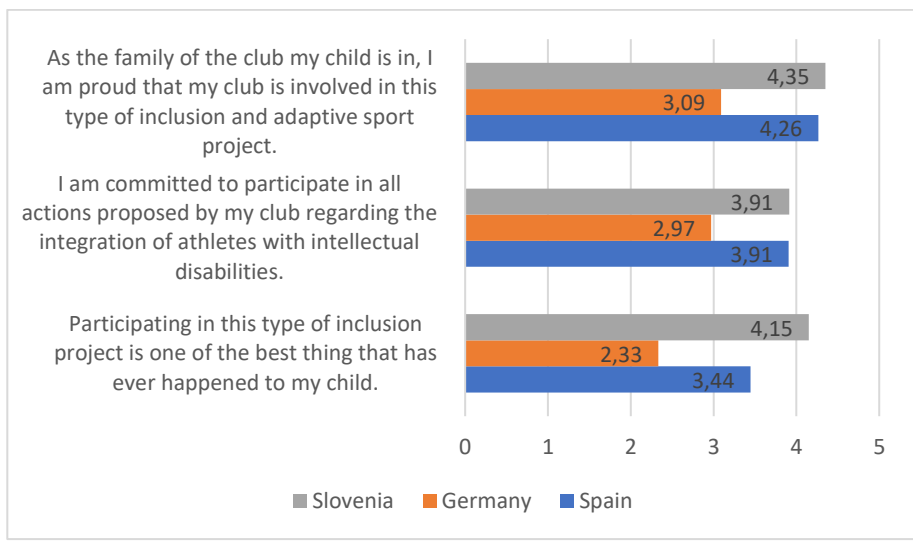


Figure 51: Beliefs connected to the project DITEAM12 (*M*)

Families agree (in Germany, somewhat agree) they are proud of the club’s involvement in inclusion and adaptive sports project and agree (in Germany, somewhat agree) with the commitment to participate in the action proposed by their club regarding inclusion. They also agree (in Germany, somewhat agree) that participating in this type of project is one of the best things that has happened to their children (see Figure 51).

2.2.4 Czech Republic

The Czech Republic conducted a different survey, which gathered similar information discussed in the previous part of the results. The questions were formulated in a different manner and the multiple-choice questions were more prevalent than in the survey from Spain, Germany, Austria, and Slovenia. For this reason, the data from the Czech environment are presented separately. There were two surveys implemented; the first directed to coaches and the second to the parents of the children. The scale presented below is based on the number of participants.

Coaches Survey

We present answers from 5 coaches who answered the questions (10), designed to answer subjects such as the values and competencies of the club, the priorities of the club or the different ways to strengthen inclusion within the club.

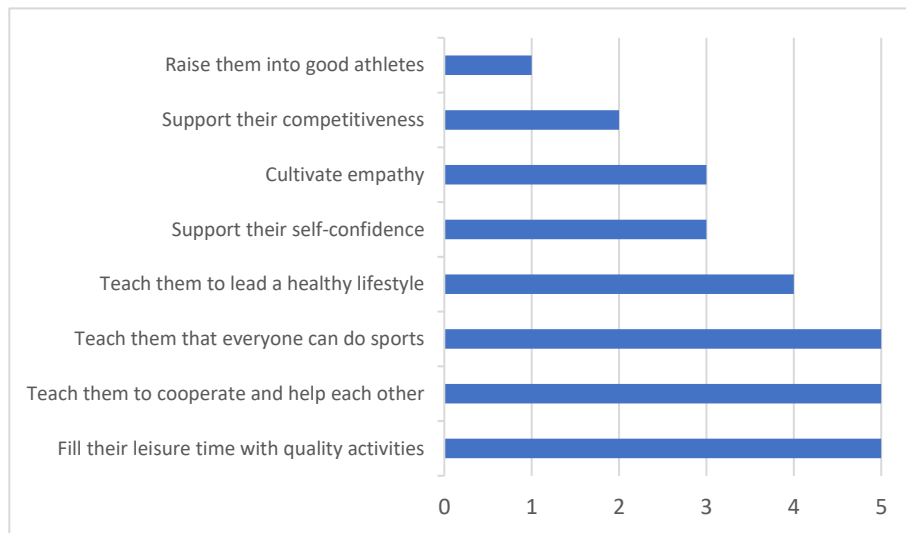


Figure 52: Competencies and values to transfer to the children of your club (*f*)

Notes: Answer format: multiple responses possible.

The main competencies and values that should be transmitted according to the coaches from the Czech Republic are to teach children to cooperate and help each other, to fill their leisure time with quality activities, and to teach them that everyone can do sports (see Figure 52).

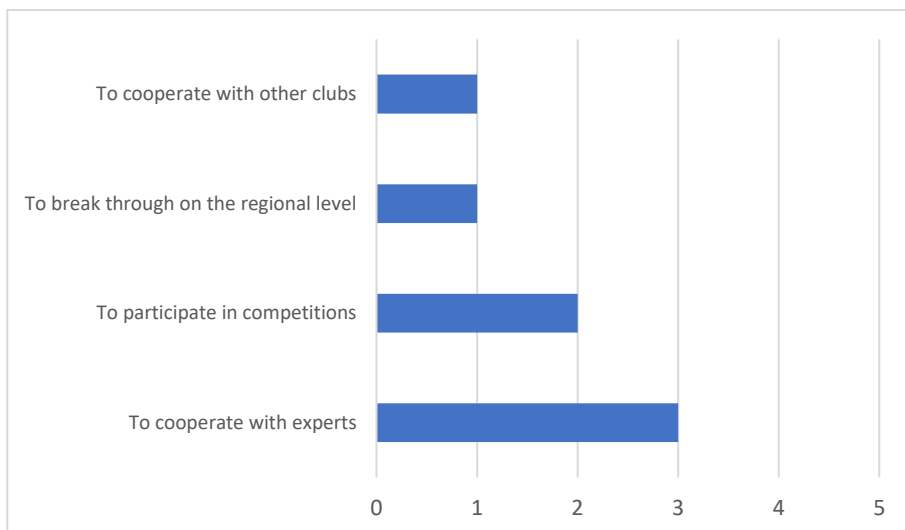


Figure 53: Club's present priorities (*f*)

The coaches believe the main priorities of the club are to cooperate with experts and to participate in competitions. No one recognized involving children with disabilities in their club as a priority (see Figure 53).

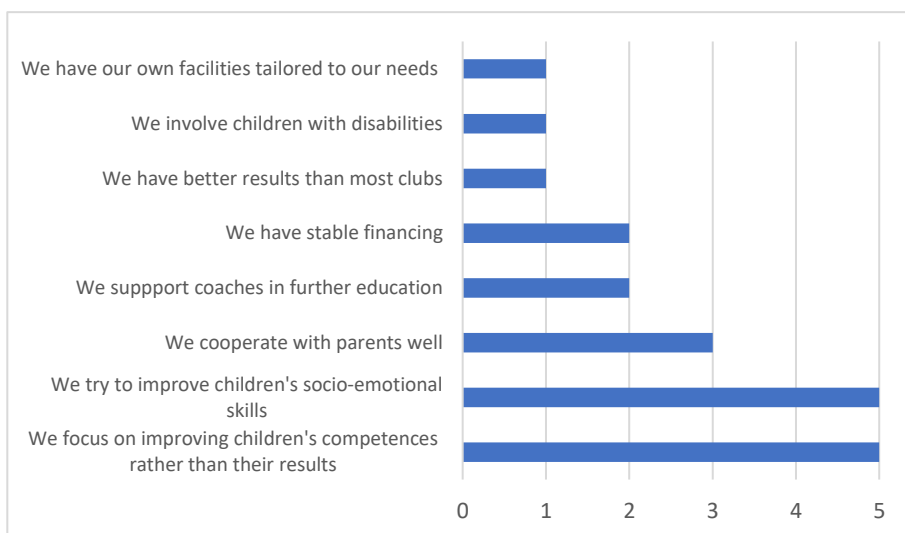


Figure 54: Difference between your club and other clubs (*f*)

Notes: Answer format: multiple responses possible

Coaches perceive that the main differences between their club and other clubs are that their club improves their children's socio-emotional skills and that they focus on improving children's competencies rather than their results (see Figure 54).

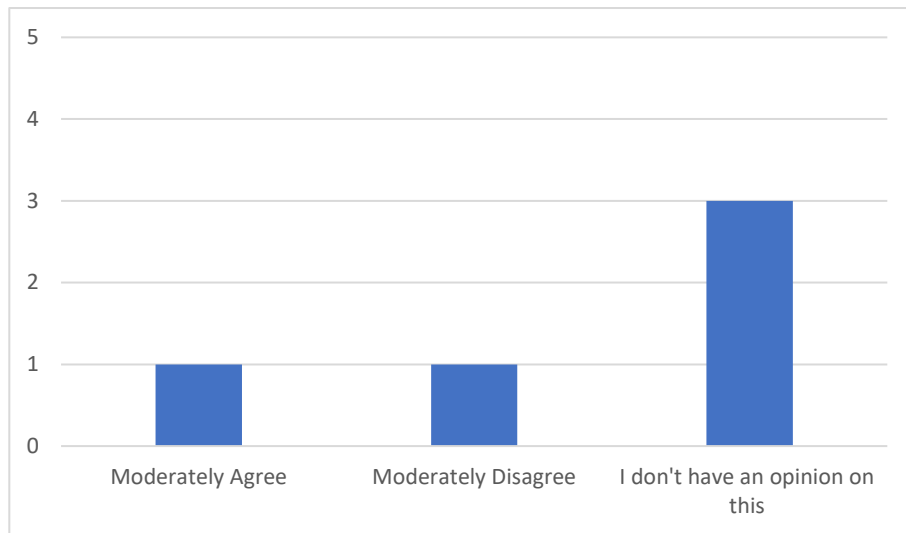


Figure 55: Agreement with the statement: ‘Sports clubs should actively try to involve children with disabilities’? (*f*)

Most coaches are undecided on the obligation of clubs to involve children with disabilities in their clubs (see Figure 55).

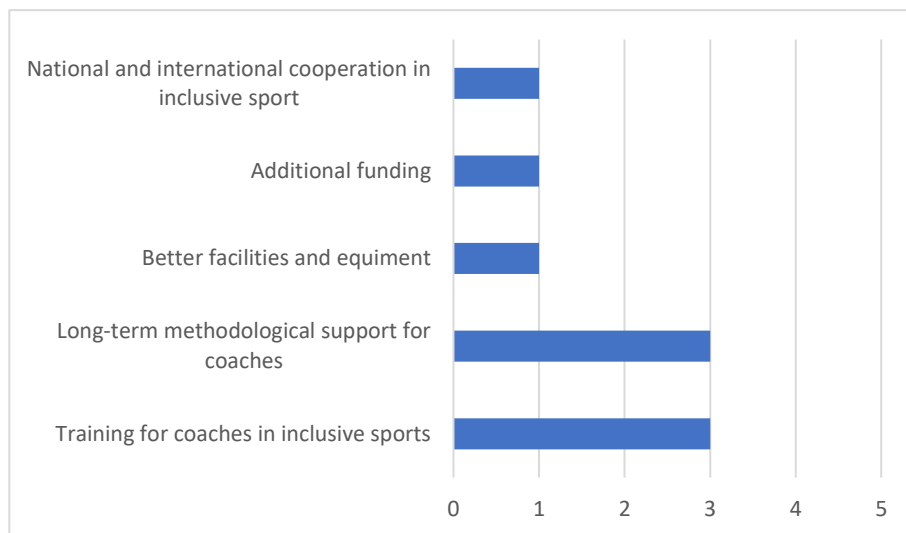


Figure 56: The recognized contributors for coaches to strengthen an inclusive approach in their club (*f*)

Most coaches perceive that long-term methodological support for coaches and training for coaches in inclusive sports would help strengthen an inclusive approach in their club (see Figure 56).

Parents Survey

Results from the parents' survey, which is similar to the coaches' survey (the questions asked were the same) are presented below. Below is the presentation of the results.

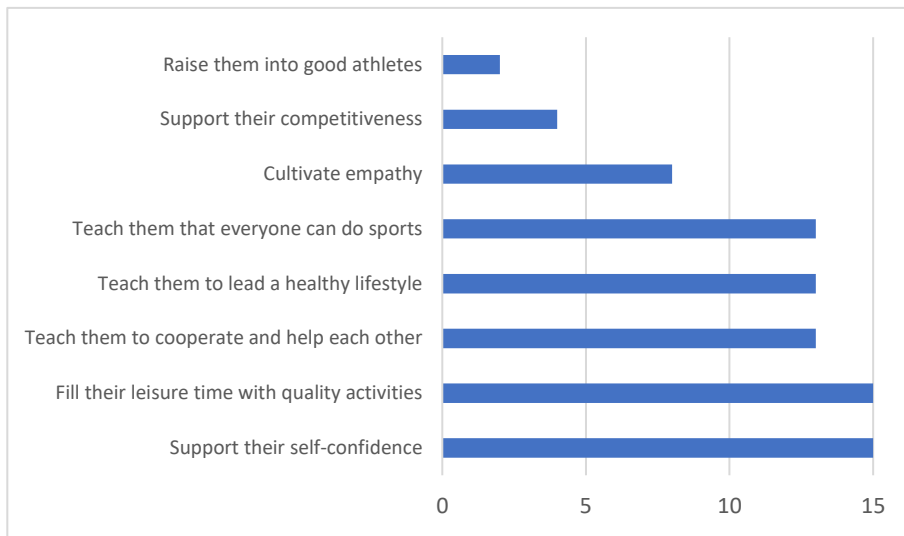


Figure 57: Competencies and values to transfer to the children of your club (f)

Notes: Answer format: multiple responses possible.

The main competencies and values that parents want to transfer to their children are to fill their leisure time with quality activities and to support their self-confidence. Many parents also recognized other important competencies and values, such as teaching the children that anyone can do sports, how to lead a healthy lifestyle and how to cooperate and help each other (see Figure 57).

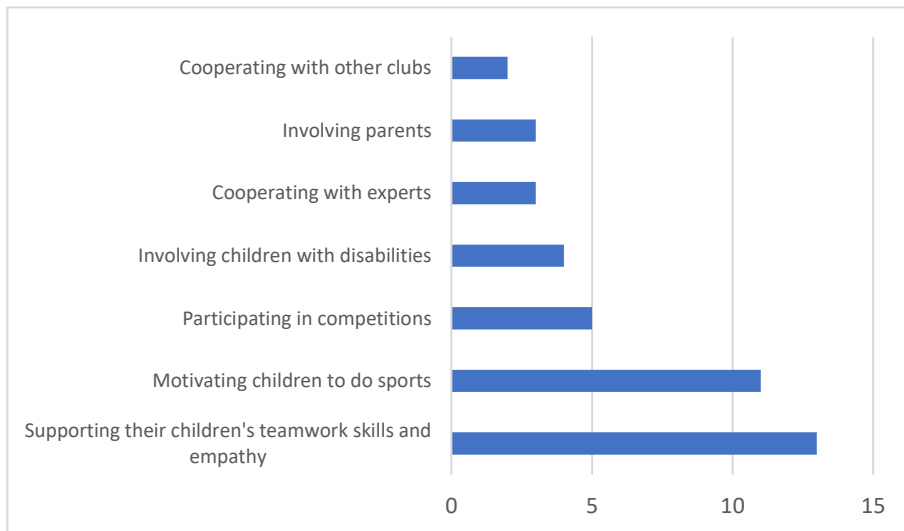


Figure 58: Club's priorities at the moment (f)

Notes: Answer format: multiple responses possible.

Parents perceive their club should focus on supporting their children's teamwork skills and empathy and motivating their children to participate in competitions (see Figure 58).

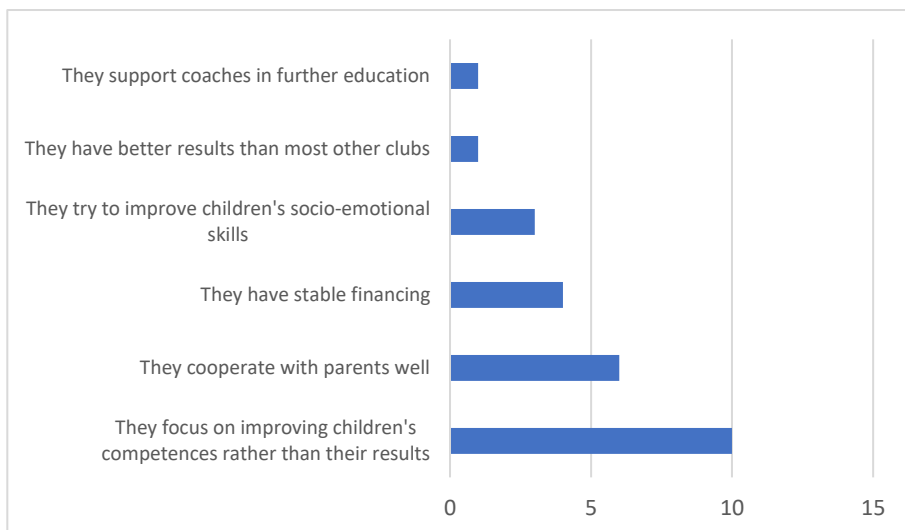


Figure 59: Difference between the child's club and other clubs (*f*)

Notes: Answer format: multiple responses possible.

The difference is that the club focuses on improving children's competencies rather than their results (see Figure 59).

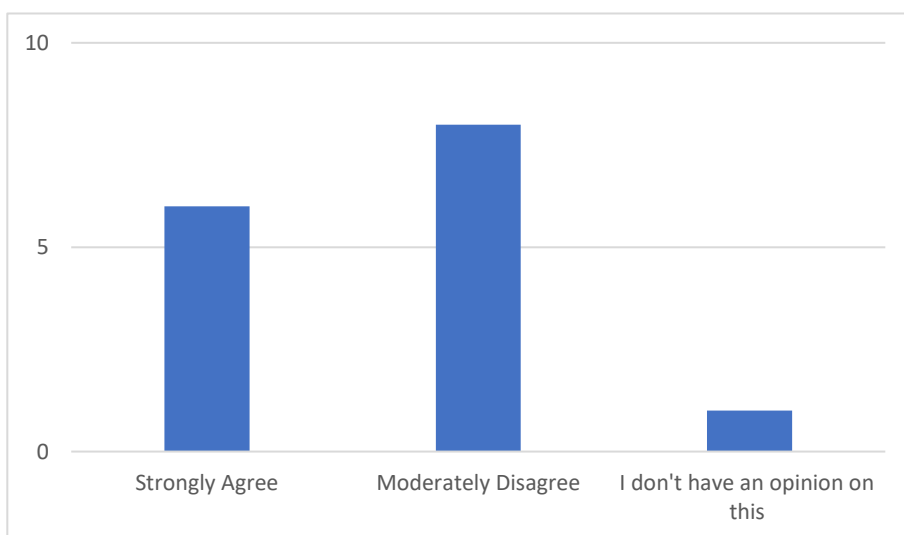


Figure 60: Agreement with the statement: "Sports clubs should actively try to involve children with disabilities" (*f*)

Most parents moderately disagree that sports clubs should actively try to involve children with disabilities (see Figure 60).

2.3 Discussion

In this section, we summarize our findings from the surveys (implemented in Spain, Slovenia, Austria, Germany, and the Czech Republic) and explain how they serve to meet our goals to identify the barriers, strengths, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and practices towards inclusion in the sports clubs (including directors/managers, coaches, and parents) for children under 12 years of age.

When interpreting these results, we must consider that the results are based on a small sample that may not be representative of the whole country. For instance, the sample of Slovenia is composed of only five clubs, which already are pro-inclusion clubs. Thus, this sample may be misleading, since the actual level of inclusion in Slovenia is lower on a national scale. This is also a factor to keep in mind not only when interpreting Slovenia's results, but also results from other countries. As we mentioned in the introduction, the countries participating in the DITEAM12 project have different starting points towards establishing inclusion (athletes with and without disabilities), as well as the clubs themselves differ (e.g., some are already striving to be inclusive, some are just beginning the journey towards more inclusive settings). Generalization of results is not possible but provides us with directionality for further investigation.

In terms of the inclusiveness and adaptation of the sports clubs we can say that although the participation of disabled athletes is at a low level (see Figure 1), there is an interest of athletes with disabilities in becoming part of the clubs (see Figure 4).

The main goals of the clubs according to different managers can be seen in Figure 6. Both the goals and the values vary among the respondents, which indicates a great difference among club managers in terms of their perspective. Goals vary from winning competitions to promoting mental health. As for values, we observe a great range of responses. The most prevalent values, however (figure 7) are equality and inclusivity, followed by respect and responsibility. Values such as equality and inclusivity are promoted and transmitted within the club and are indicators of positive pro-inclusivity behaviour within the club.

The main positive aspects of the clubs educational training for athletes to promote inclusiveness within the club are the support and attention to individuals as well as the existence of trained coaches.

Most managers responded positively to the benefits the club will have from participating in an inclusive project. This shows the many positive effects of fostering inclusiveness in sports environments, not only for the club, but for society to be better educated on issues such as inclusiveness in sports to give voice to this issue (see Figure 10).

We can also observe that both parents/guardians (see Figure 42) and managers (see Figure 3) perceive their facilities are ready to take athletes with disabilities, which indicates a general confidence among the participants in the capacity of their clubs to incorporate athletes with disabilities. Coaches mostly perceive their club can host athletes with disabilities and already do (see Figure 26) but the number is still low, with most clubs only hosting less than 10 athletes with disabilities (see Figure 1).

When asking about the participation in federated competitions, almost all managers of the clubs (more than 80%) have indicated active participation in competitions hosted by a sports federation. Only one-quarter of the athletes with disabilities participate in competitions in Spain and 91% of clubs in Spain do not know about the existence of an official course in the region for coaches to learn about training people with disabilities (see Figure 20). In contrast, in Slovenia, and Germany 60% or more managers' report there is an official course for coaches in their region.

In relation to the coaches' background, more than half have declared not having worked with a sport psychologist (see Figure 21). Many coaches have had previous experience working with disabled athletes (see Figure 22). Most of them do not, however, have an educational background concerning training athletes with disabilities (see Figure 24), and the main reasons to take a course to train athletes with disabilities are that the course should be practical and useful and that it should be quality training (see Figure 25).

The causes of not being included to host athletes with disabilities according to the coaches are the lack of training facilities and the lack of adapted facilities (see Figure 27). To begin inclusion in the club, it would be necessary to start with training the coaches (see Figure 28). Figure 30 shows that 31% of coaches or more think that athletes with disabilities cannot perform at the same level as athletes without disabilities.

Some of the beliefs connected to the coaches indicate that working with athletes with disabilities will make them better persons, and they see the need to adapt sports content in the coaching courses (see Figure 35).

Over 90% of the participating parents/guardians indicated that they do not have a child with a physical or intellectual disability (see Figure 37). However, more than 40% declare that they have a close family member with a disability (see Figure 39). In contrast to the coaches, 70% of the parents/guardians believe that athletes with and without disabilities could participate in the same level competition (see Figure 41).

Parents/guardians see the need to train coaches to adapt the training for people with disabilities, and that training courses in adapted sport should be a requirement for training young people with disabilities (see Figure 44 and 45). Amongst their contributions to clubs, parents/guardians identified the education about the value of inclusion and integrating athletes with disabilities into group activities as their main tasks to open the clubs (see Figure 46).

The parents'/guardians' views connected to inclusive sports activities show they agree that the participation of their children in an inclusive team would be beneficial and that child will become a better person (see Figure 48)

Coaches and parents/guardians were asked about their view on the DITEAM12 project. Almost all agree with the conduct of this study and feel proud to be involved in this type of inclusion and adaptive sports project (see Figure 32 and 51).

The Czech Republic survey involving parents and coaches revealed similar results. The main competencies and values that coaches and parents want to transmit to the children in their club

are to teach them to cooperate, to fill their leisure time with quality training, and to support their self-confidence (see Figure 52 and 57). Parents believe the club should focus on supporting their children's teamwork skills and empathy and motivating their children to do sport (see Figure 58), whereas the coaches believe the main priorities of the clubs are to cooperate with experts and to participate in competitions (see Figure 53).

Coaches believe that the main difference between their club and others is that they improve their children's socio-emotional skills. Both parents and coaches agree that the club focuses on improving children's competencies rather than their results (see Figure 54 and 59).

Similarly, to managers, coaches point out that inclusion is an opportunity to learn from athletes with disabilities as they are model of education for other athletes. It is also a space for athletes with disabilities to empower themselves on both a personal and a sport level. Most participants believe that clubs should actively involve athletes with disabilities.

These findings indicate that there are significant positive attitudes concerning the inclusion of athletes with disabilities among managers, family members and coaches. The results show that the large majority sees inclusion as something of benefit within the club.

Nevertheless, despite the great support that exists, the findings show a lack of resources to include these athletes within the clubs. This is aggravated by the lack of official training for coaches to train athletes with disabilities. While the great majority of coaches have previously worked or are working with athletes with disabilities, many of them do not adequately train athletes with disabilities.

Despite the positive consequences of incorporating athletes with disabilities into clubs, the results reflect the reasons why many clubs are not able to accommodate these athletes. We found that the lack of adapted training facilities is the main reason. Even so, some coaches are still sceptical about integrating athletes with disabilities and non-disabled athletes into the same competition, believing that they cannot perform at the same level and that this would slow down other athletes. In contrast, families do believe that the participation of athletes with and without disabilities in the same competition is achievable.

Parents consider that coaches should have a minimum training requirement to train athletes with disabilities, and the best way to include them is through joint activities with athletes without disabilities at their clubs.

The results have helped us to further explore the views, attitudes and conduct that families, coaches and managers have in their approach to the inclusion of athletes with disabilities. In terms of the families, the research indicates that the families believe that inclusion is not only part of the club, but also it is their responsibility to educate their children on the value of inclusion. Furthermore, they feel that inclusion is helpful to their children in many aspects. Thus, managers, coaches and parents think about inclusion as something positive in all aspects, leaving the competition in the background. Competitiveness becomes less of a priority in sport when children with disabilities are included in a club.

Taking into account the theoretical framework we have worked with, the results are similar in terms of the needs, constituents, and benefits of proposing inclusion in sport, and especially in the setting of children under 12 years of age. As a whole, the surveys have given access to new data about the challenges presented in the first section and reported by various authors. The results, therefore, provide additional insight into the theme of inclusion in sport clubs for children under 12 years of age, and help us to have a broader understanding of the state of inclusiveness in the included countries at the present time.

3.0 Interview Study

3.1 Method

3.1.1 Participants

Seven experts in the field of inclusion participated in this study: two university professors, an NGO director, a general manager and vice president, a psychologist, a coach, and an inclusion coordinator. Three interviews were conducted in Germany, three in Slovenia, and one in the Czech Republic.

3.1.2 Instruments

The interviews were prepared beforehand and included 11 to 13 questions. All the questions were asked in the languages of the consortium and can be seen in the Appendix.

3.1.3 Procedure

In Slovenia, interviews were implemented via Zoom (a videoconferencing service) and lasted from 45 minutes to 90 minutes. Participants were invited by the project partners to engage in our study by telephone/email and were provided with the questions beforehand.

In Germany, interviews were implemented via BlueJeans (a videoconferencing service) and lasted from 25 minutes to 40 minutes. Participants were invited by the project partners to engage in our study by telephone/email. They received a project description before the interview.

In the Czech Republic, the experts were contacted via email. Limited time prevented us from conducting the interview via a videoconferencing service. The interview was conducted via email.

3.1.4 Data analysis

To analyse the interview data, we first organized the information from the interviews. By organizing the data by themes and topics, main concepts were established for use.

3.2 Results

To illustrate the results of the various interviews, we extracted the findings that were most relevant according to goals identified in the study, using some of the respondents' specific answers, by presenting some of the respondent's specific answers as well.

The issue of the meaning of inclusion in children's sports clubs was sorted. The main goal involved participation based upon each child's abilities, focusing on two principles: individualization and differentiation. In this sense, they answered, clubs need to allow people with special needs to participate in programs or a specific section of the club. The main goal is not achieving results but to participate according to each person's capabilities.

Considering the current state of inclusion in the children sports club, all 6 interviews revealed a lack of support and low prioritization of inclusivity. A coach from Slovenia pointed out: *"We cooperate a lot with judo clubs from other cities (which are inclusive as well). In other sports, I think there is not much focus on inclusion, because most sports disciplines are offered as part of regular schools, special education schools, and institutions."*

From the different experts' statements, it appears that inclusion is a matter needing improvement inclusion is a matter for countries to improve. Additional funding and the creation of a systematic approach to inclusion, one without emphasis on competition or achieving best results, is necessary.

Regarding the benefits that inclusion can bring to regular sport, experts have identified a broad spectrum of positives outcomes. Teamwork can arise from inclusion in sport. It can be beneficial in an educational way, instilling equal opportunities for all and improving the general competencies of children not just in sport but in life. Parents can benefit from inclusive sports clubs also. *"Parents also have the benefit of offering their children a chance to socialize with someone who is different compared to them."* a professor from Slovenia said.

When attempting to achieve inclusion, however, many obstacles can appear, making the process difficult to carry out. Lack of information about inclusion or access to the information could be a primary obstacle. Furthermore, lack of awareness from the club staff or directors also presents a problem. The different views on inclusion can result in limited or no inclusion. Knowledge is crucial. Lines of communication, training of coaches, and dependency of children on parents and/or family members appear to be an issue, as well as lack of financial support, parental fears, and/or inadequate education of coaches. Other obstacles can appear, such as lack of financial support and parent's fear or the inadequate education of coaches that can impede the children to participate.

In terms of the preparation and education of the coaches and club managers, there appears to be a tendency that younger coaches can be better trained in terms of inclusion because they may be more highly formally educated in inclusion. More experienced coaches could be without such formal background, making it difficult for clubs to improve their abilities without additional coach education programs.

With a lack of support, many coaches choose informal education to improve their knowledge on inclusion or opt to improve these skills within the club, attending to the specific needs of the children. For example, in Slovenia, experts have created a commission for judo that includes coaches from inclusive judo groups and discusses how to work with different types of special needs.

Among the competencies that coaches need to develop to foster an inclusive environment in the club, the necessity for developed social competencies, like socio-emotional competencies to identify the children's emotions, as well as other values like must be considered. There is a need for technical knowledge, knowledge about the children's needs and how to act accordingly to their needs. In the interview with the directress of an NGO, she pointed out that is also important to switch from the competitiveness approach to a cooperation approach and to *“learn to establish a partnership with parents so that coaches and parents could support each other's effort in helping children.”*

The survey results among coaches and managers have demonstrated that some of them think the inclusion of children with disabilities could hinder the other children from achieving the best results in sports. The experts were asked about this statement and their opinion on it. The answers varied; some experts put the emphasis on not achieving results but being beneficial for children to participate and socialize. A psychologist in sports from Slovenia states that *“Sports for children should focus on teaching them valuable life lessons. The most talented children usually train on their own after group training, so I don't think it would affect them if we work towards inclusion”*.

In contrast, a Coach at a Judo Club from Slovenia said that *“Some children with disabilities are older, but they get beaten by younger children in regular groups, because their abilities don't match. By including athletes with disabilities into regular groups you risk others not developing to their potential, as you must devote a lot of time to a person with special needs. So, there are pros and cons to including children in regular and special groups.”*

Parental engagement and involvement play important roles in inclusion, as they form important pillars as initial role models for children. The parents of the children should acquire many competencies that would help them on the path to inclusion. The most significant aptitudes that they can possess are knowing their children's limits and boundaries and being supportive. Parents of all children should actively participate in club activities. Many times, parents of those children with special needs fear being turned away. The first step for parents is to think more positive and to encourage inclusion. Parents who do not have children with special needs also play a crucial role by teaching their children empathy, compassion, and cooperation. To participate in the club and build relations within the club is going to allow better inclusion.

Experts reported that parents need several different competencies to help develop a (more) inclusive sports club. For example, they need to communicate their children's needs. Parents of children with special needs should reduce their fear, prejudice that their children will not be accepted. They also must be prepared to face many obstacles, since they might get negative feedback regarding their children's performances. Parents are more educated and proactive than

a few decades ago. Acceptance and encouragement of the parents is the key to more successful inclusion in sports clubs for children.

Coaches who are eager to work with children with disabilities might also face many challenges. They should keep close contact with the parents and communicate with them openly. They should continuously learn about inclusion and cooperate with other coaches. *“This is one of the most beautiful things. Sometimes coaches forget that this work is not easy and that it is necessary to know their (the children with special needs) needs well.”* a coach from Slovenia said.

In terms of the information campaign about children’s inclusion in sports, most of the experts agreed that there is a lack of information, which makes it more challenging to achieve the goals of successful inclusion. The national promotion of inclusive sports is insufficient, and the lack of a systematic approach makes it hard to be successful in creating inclusive environments. There were some social media campaigns, but they did not have the desired reach. Information campaigns should be made on a policy level.

Lastly, the experts were asked about what can be done to make inclusive sports a public interest. Experts recognised many actions that can be taken. For example, better involvement of the state, not just for funding but also to promote more competitions. Involving celebrities can be a way to increase the reach of the campaigns. It is also a matter of changing society’s mindset by creating an open dialogue and allowing them to contribute to the public debate. People should switch their mentality about sports and not focus on the results. *“Attitudes of people have to change, but that takes time.”* said a professor from Slovenia.

In general, three elements were identified in this study: 1. the need for a welcoming atmosphere, which is of major importance for delivering a sustainable sport offer 2. the coach’s education and understanding of working with children with a disability, and 3. the necessity for sufficient resources and capacities, having the appropriate coach to athlete ratio.

With this in mind, experts have stated some obstacles as well as competencies that can help to overcome them. Weak communication among and between parents, coaches, and managers was found to be a challenge. There should be a stronger network for communication when a child's needs are not met. Inclusion is sprinkled into the training of coaches, and many do not feel comfortable offering inclusive sport activities.

The children strongly depend on his/her parents. This dependency might be even stronger in children with disabilities, which emphasises the need to build a relationship of trust with the coach to involve the child in sports. This trust cannot be achieved if the parents do not participate in activities connected to the sports club.

The main competencies needed for coaches include creativity, building a healthy team atmosphere, and experiencing inclusive sport activities; for parents, having resilience when looking for a suitable and optimal sport for their child is of importance. Their participation in their child sport is crucial, for instance by doing volunteer work. Communication is also

essential, so the coaches can understand the needs and requirements, allowing them to act correctly and helping them improve.

Finally, a list of recommendations from a university professor and/or an inclusion coordinator when offering inclusive activities consists of, but is not limited to:

- Be patient, inclusion is a process that does not build up within one day.
- Cooperate with schools or institutes for the disabled and consider utilizing their facilities to avoid problems related to transportation or movement.
- Talk to the leaders of the clubs to give voice to problems that might appear.
- Coaches should experience first-hand by playing adapted sport as well. For example, wheelchair basketball to put in perspective and help to understand the disability better.
- All necessary information exists. The *index for inclusion* is a structured tool that could facilitate the process of inclusion.
- Start with the question “*How do we want to deal with the topic of inclusion?*”.
- The training of one person, who has the main responsibility, is one of the first steps toward success.
- Consulting with an expert in inclusion who delivers additional training can be beneficial rather than in-house training relative to inclusion.

3.3 Discussion

When describing the field of inclusion, many experts refer to it as an opportunity for socialization and participation rather than achieving results. This provides an environment that allows children to improve their mental and physical capabilities.

Our study puts into question the state of inclusiveness in children's sports club in several EU countries. Experts have identified the lack of inclusive sport activities in their countries. Although some sports clubs have incorporated inclusive programs and took an initiative to cooperate with institutions, clubs and other actors for better inclusion, most experts describe it as a topic that should be taken more into consideration, both by the national institutions and the sports clubs.

Indicators for the success of inclusive sport can be engagement and motivation and a positive attitude toward inclusion. Regarding obstacles, we identified the need to change the mindset about inclusion (e.g., The opinion that inclusion is limited and just feasible until a certain point, but not beyond), which in many cases hinders the implementation of inclusive activities. The lack of knowledge should be balanced with a profound education for teachers, coaches, and parents.

In this section we will discuss the most significant results for our report, we will present how the goals identified in this study correspond and if we have encountered any new outcomes apart from those already described in the background section.

First, the interviews have allowed us to gain more detailed and in-depth information from the standpoint of various experts in the field of inclusion.

In this regard, these experts have answered several questions regarding inclusion in the world of sport. The findings show that although a small number of clubs have initiative and offer inclusive activities, most clubs are not inclusive. It appears, therefore, that the offer of inclusive activities is generally limited, and in many cases is insufficient.

Results showed a difference of opinion among some experts, as some think that inclusion could slow down the results of other children in their activities and arguing that it could stop the rhythm of work of the whole group. On the contrary, another expert says it would not affect them since those children with more talent also train on their own, so it would not affect their sports performance and it is an activity that provides great life lessons.

Results also reveal that parents focus on their child's development at a sport level. They are the mainstay of children and their first role model. However, the results have shown that parents have difficulty in communicating their children's needs to the club coaches. A substantial change has been detected over the years in the most important role of parents, but still many parents are afraid of rejection of their children. We must create a supportive environment and promote acceptance so that these situations do not recur. Coaches are the channel of

communication for parents - this way the coach has access to better information about the child's needs.

There are still many actions to be carried out, both on personal and institutional levels. Among these actions we can highlight the need to change the perspective regarding inclusion - it is the first step for better funding and promotion through advertising campaigns, creating a constant open dialogue.

Some recommendations to improve inclusive activities have been found. We find that inclusion is a long process in which many individuals participate. Only if each one of them collaborates will it be possible to achieve it.

Potential solutions to challenges that arise can be solved through cooperation and mutual support. There must be clear lines of communication to bring these problems to the attention of club leaders. Having access to information is crucial to better understand disability.

Investigators found that the lack of a single, clear approach to inclusion and lack of support from governments and national institutions are limiting factors in success. Moreover, it is necessary to improve funding and promotion through advertising campaigns, creating a constant and targeted dialogue.

Lack of a single, clear approach to inclusion and lack of support from governments and national institutions can be improved with more inclusive policies and information campaigns relating to children's inclusion in sport are needed.

4.0. Conclusion

After a thorough perusal of the literature on inclusiveness to gain better insight into obstacles, benefits, practice in sport clubs, family participation, coaches, managers, and experts in the field, the state of inclusion differs in countries. Moreover, as this report presents results of clubs in different countries who vary in their level of inclusion and differ in their respective country context, a generalisation of the results cannot be made. The report does, however, provide substantial insight into clubs that participate in the DITEAM project.

We gained an overall view of what are the different levels of inclusion in a more in-depth approach through surveys and interviews. As a result, we collected data that allowed us to respond to our research goals. This investigation has proven that the state of inclusion, as well as the need for an improved and/or different approach to the concept, needs to be increasingly elevated in national and institutional discourse, with plans and activities that reflect the importance to European society.

5.0 Literature

Atchison, B.-J., & Goodwin, D. L. (2019). "My Child May Be Ready, but I Am Not": Parents' Experiences of Their Children's Transition to Inclusive Fitness Settings. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly: APAQ*, 36(2), 282–301. <https://doi.org/10.1123/apaq.2018-0101>

Bach, G. (2006). The Parents Association for Youth Sports. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 77(6), 16–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07303084.2006.10597888>

Collins, K., & Barcelona, R. (2018). Keep 'Em Playing: Strategies for Building Positive Sport Experiences. *Strategies - a Journal for Physical and Sport Educators*, 31(5), 8–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08924562.2018.1490231>

Cote, J., Strachan, L., & Fraser-Thomas, J. (2008). Participation, personal development, and performance through youth sport. In N. L. Holt (Ed.), *International studies in physical education and youth sport. Positive youth development through sport* (pp. 34–46). Routledge.

Curdts, W. (2018). Heterogenität und Differenz in integrativen Sportgruppen am Beispiel Special Olympics Unified Sports®. *Leipziger Sportwissenschaftliche Beiträge* (59(1), 195–208).

Daniels, A. M. (2007). Cooperation versus competition: Is there really such an issue? *New Directions for Youth Development* (115), 43-56. <https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.222>

Dumon, D., Friedrich, M., González Pineda, M. D., Medina, Y. F., Batista, F., De La Fuente Pastor, J. R., Havrdová, E., Bilanová, T., Veldin, M., Peras, I., & Kanfer, S. (2020). *Inclusion and diversity in grassroots sports teams for children: a systematic review. Report on the state of the art. Project: "Diverse and inclusive teams for children under 12"*. Available at: https://www.pei.si/wpcontent/uploads/2020/07/pregled_literature_DITEAM.pdf

Fenoglio, R., & Taylor, W. (2014). From winning-at-all-costs to Give Us Back Our Game: perspective transformation in youth sport coaches. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 19(2), 191–204. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2012.748737>

Greve, S., & Bechthold, A. (2019). Coaching im inklusiven Sportspiel. *German Journal of Exercise and Sport Research*, 49(4), 482–492. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12662-019-00613-1>

Lu, C., & Steele, K. (2014). Characteristics and conceptual framework of the Easy-Play Model. *European Physical Education Review*, 20(2), 229–243. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356336X14524861>

McConkey, R., Dowling, S., Hassan, D., & Menke, S. (2013). Promoting social inclusion through Unified Sports for youth with intellectual disabilities: A five-nation study. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research: JIDR*, 57(10), 923–935. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2788.2012.01587.x>

Pochstein, F., Mohr, J.-O., & Wegner, M. (2014). Die Initiative „FussballFREUNDE“: Zur Inklusion von Kindern und Jugendlichen mit einer geistigen Behinderung. In *Research*

Committee - Special Olympics Germany (Ed.), *Inklusion in Bewegung: Menschen mit und ohne Behinderung gemeinsam im Sport* (pp. 159–178). Sport-Thieme GmbH.

Spencer-Cavaliere, N., & Watkinson, E. J. (2010). Inclusion Understood from the Perspectives of Children with Disability. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly: APAQ* (27), 275–293.

Tiemann, H. (2013). Inklusiver Sportunterricht: Ansätze und Modelle. *Sportpädagogik*, 37(6), 47-50.

Tiemann, H. (2016). Bewegungs- und Sportspiele: Inklusiv dank Veränderung. *SportPraxis, Sonderheft 2016*, 35–38.

Witt, P. A., & Dangi, T. B. (2018). Helping Parents be Better Youth Sport Coaches and Spectators. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 36(3), 200–208. <https://doi.org/10.18666/JPra-2018-V36-I3-8619>

6.0 Appendix

Appendix A. Questionnaire conducted to the managers

1.) Gender:

- Male
- Female

2.) Age:

- Under 18
- From 18 to 25
- From 26 to 35
- From 36 to 45
- More than 45

3.) Country of birth:

4.) Country of residence:

5.) Name of the sports club you belong to:

6.) Years you have been in the Sports Club:

7.) Positions you hold in the sports Club:

8.) How many teams does your sports club currently have?

9.) How many athletes does your sports club currently have?

10.) Reasons that have led you to be coordinator/manager of the Club:

11.) What are the main objectives of the club at the moment?

- To win competitions
- To gain the prestige of the best club in the region
- To attract the best coaches
- To find and nurture young talent
- To strengthen cooperation with educational institutions
- To involve children with disabilities in sport
- Other

12.) What values do you want to transmit in the club:

13.) In what ways do you think your club stands out positively from others?

- 14.) What are your club's strengths in terms of educational training for athletes?**
- 15.) In what ways will your sport club benefit from the participation in this European inclusive sport project? What do you think?**
- 16.) To what extent do you agree with the following statement: sports clubs should actively try to involve athletes with disabilities? Selection:**
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
- 17.) Imagine that the DITEAM12 project has been completed and your Club receives an award as the most inclusive club. What have you, as a club, done to achieve this?**
- 18.) Where would you set the priorities within the actions above? What aspect would you want to achieve first?**
- 19.) In your opinion is the role of family members important when fostering an inclusive approach within the club?**
- Yes, family members can help to foster an inclusive approach in sport
 - The role of family members is not important in fostering an inclusive approach in sport
 - I have no opinion
- 20.) What would have to happen in the world of sport that children with an intellectual disability train and compete along with children without a disability?**
- 21.) Does your club have adapted means to train athletes with disabilities?**
- Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
- 22.) Have athletes with disabilities or your families shown their interest in the sports club and wanted to become part of it?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

23.) Does your club participate in competitions hosted by a sport federation?

- Yes
- No

24.) Is there currently a federated competition in your country for the sport your club plays?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

25.) (If yes) Can this competition host athletes with disabilities?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

26.) How many disabled athletes are there in your club?

27.) Do the disabled athletes participate in competitions?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

28.) If no: What would have to happen for your club to be able to let the disabled athletes participate in competitions?

29.) Is there, in your country, an exclusive competition for athletes with disabilities in your country?

- Yes
- No

30.) How many coaches in your club have professional qualifications to train athletes with disabilities?

- Nobody
- Between 1 and 5
- Between 6 and 10
- More than 10

31.) What would have to happen for the coaches of your Club to be fully qualified to train athletes with disabilities?

32.) Is there an official training course in your region for coaches to learn more about training people with disabilities?

Yes

No

33.) What is the minimum training certificate your club's coaches need to have in order to be eligible for coaching sport teams and athletes?

34.) What benefits would or does having athletes with disabilities have for the club?

Additional funding

Improved facilities

Methodological support

Collaboration with health professionals

Promote group diversity, tolerance, consideration, and empathy among children

Promote tolerance, consideration, and empathy among coaches

Promote tolerance, consideration, and empathy among parents

Promote teamwork

Promote the self-esteem of athletes with disabilities

Encourages participation of parents

Other

APPENDIX B. Questionnaire for the coaches

1.) Gender:

- Male
- Female

2.) Age:

- Under 18
- From 18 to 25
- From 26 to 30
- From 31 to 40
- More than 40

3.) Country of birth:

4.) Country of residence:

5.) Name of the sports club you belong to:

6.) Years you have been in the training in general:

7.) Years you have been a coach in the Club

8.) Positions you hold in the sports Club:

9.) Certified federal level of coach you have:

10.) Have you ever worked with a sports psychologist?

- Yes
- No

11.) Are you training or have you trained athletes with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

12.) Is there an educational course for coaches in your region learn more about training people with disabilities?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**13.) What reasons would lead you to decide to take a course to train athletes with disabilities?
(Several answers are possible)**

- It would be free of charge
- It had some kind of public approval
- It would be attractive to perform
- It would be practical and useful
- To have time to do so
- That it should be a quality training
- That it would be close to my home residence
- Other

14.) Have you undertaken or are you currently undertaking training to enable you to train athletes with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

15.) Could the club host athletes with disabilities?

- Yes, and it already does
- Yes, but it does not host disabled athletes so far
- No

16.) If not, why don't you have them so far?

- Lack of training for coaches
- Lack of adapted facilities
- Expensive or not economically profitable for the club
- No one has ever raised the idea
- Other

17.) What should happen or what are the reasons for the club to incorporate athletes with disabilities? (you can check several answers)

- Start with the appropriate steps
- Seek public subsidies to be able to carry it out
- Seek private funding to enable it to be carried out
- Start training the coaches

- Start with the works to adapt our facilities
- Other

18.) Do you think that disabled athletes could be included competitions in which your athletes compete?

- Yes
- No

19.) If not, why not?

- Athletes with disabilities cannot perform at the same level
- No one has ever raised it
- Adaptation would hinder other athletes
- Society would not accept it
- Other

20.) What benefits would having athletes with disabilities have for the club?

- An opportunity to learn from them and to serve as an educational model for all athletes
- Economic benefits as in adapted sport there are many subsidies and sponsorships
- The club would be a space where people with disabilities would have a place to empower themselves on a personal and sporting level.
- To be pioneers in having an inclusive club.
- Other

The scale is represented as follows:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Agree
5. I Strongly agree

21.) Do I agree with the conduct of this study?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

22.) Do I see a need for this type of project?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

23.) I have the skills to care for athletes with disabilities

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

24.) I consider my club to be inclusive of people with disabilities

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

25.) I see the need to add adapted sports content in the coaching courses

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

26.) In juvenile sport, there are often violent acts that we must eradicate

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

27.) I believe that inclusion in sport plays an important role in reducing violence in sport

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

28.) I think the coach is the main person to educate values in sport

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

29.) I believe that the family is the main support group for the child to educate values in sport

- 1
- 2

- 3
- 4
- 5

30.) In my Club, a lot of importance is put on becoming a champion

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

31.) I consider myself a capable coach already or in the near future to train athletes with disabilities

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

32.) I consider myself to be a coach who cares about updating the knowledge of my coaching skills

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

33.) I think that the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities in training and competitions in my Club should be mandatory

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

34.) I think my Club is ready to welcome athletes with intellectual disabilities in training

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

35.) Within the objectives and actions of the club, I set a high priority to the action of welcoming sportsmen and women with disabilities.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

36.) I would like my athletes to participate in competitions with children with disabilities

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

37.) I believe that this project encourages my athletes to be better person

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

38.) I believe that promoting tolerance, empathy and respect is more important than teaching how to play any sport

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

39.) I am convinced that having the skills to train athletes with disabilities will make me a better person

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

40.) Inclusive sport should be addressed in schools and colleges

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

APPENDIX C. Questionnaire for the parents or guardians

1.) Gender:

- Female
- Male

2.) Age:

- under 18
- from 18 to 25
- from 26 to 35
- from 36 to 45
- more than 45

3.) Country of birth

4.) Country of residence:

5.) Number of Children in the sport Club:

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more

6.) Name of the Club to which your child belongs:

7.) Years of your child training in the Club:

8.) Reasons for your child's sport (multiple-responses possible)

- Healthy activity
- To stay connected with friends (social reason)
- Because he or she wants to be a great champion
- Because I believe that it is an activity that benefits you at all levels
- Other reasons

9.) Does your child have a physical or intellectual disability?

- Yes
- No

10.) Could an athlete with a disability participate in the same competition as one without a disability?

- Yes
- No

11.) Is the club, in which your child plays sports, adapted to accommodate athletes with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

12.) What would the club need to adapt its training for athletes with disabilities?

(Several answers possible)

- Training for coaches
- Training for families
- Adapt training facilities
- That the club members opened their minds
- Other reasons

13.) Do you think the club's coaches have sufficient training to adapt their training to athletes with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

14.) What minimum training would you require for a coach to train young people with disabilities?

- Specialized training course in adapted sport
- Specialized training to work with people with disabilities
- That they had experience in dealing with children with disabilities
- That they were good people and had a good heart
- No minimum training

15.) Is there a specific competition for athletes with disabilities in your region?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

16.) Do you think that training partners are prepared to receive athletes with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

17.) How can families help the club to open it for athletes with disabilities?

- Encouraging and supporting every training and competition
- Integrating athletes with disabilities into group activities within the club

- That's not the job of families, but of the Club
- Educating our children about the value of inclusion
- I do not consider it relevant

18.) I have a person with a disability in my family

- Yes
- No

19.) I know a family close to me who have children or people with disabilities

- Yes
- No

Questionnaires for families:

The scale is represented as follows:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Agree
5. I Strongly agree.

20.) I consider it beneficial for my child to train with athletes with disabilities

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

21.) I believe that if my child trains with athletes with disabilities, he or she will be a better person

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

22.) I am satisfied with the club my child is in

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

23.) I believe that the club where my child trains is a club that fosters his/her integral development as a person

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

24.) I consider my child's coach prepared to train athletes with intellectual disabilities

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

25.) I believe that competition is one of the most important factor in my child's sporting performance

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

26.) One of the most important thing for my child's training club is to win and be champion

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

27.) The most important thing for my child's coach is to win and be champion

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

28.) I think the club and the coach are the most important elements in making my child a tolerant and empathetic person

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

5

29.) Participating in this type of inclusion project is one of the best thing that has ever happened to my child

1

2

3

4

5

30.) I am committed to participate in all actions proposed by my club regarding the integration of athletes with intellectual disabilities

1

2

3

4

5

31.) As the family of the club my child is in, I am proud that my club is involved in this type of inclusion and adaptive sport project

1

2

3

4

5

32.) In the future I would like my child to be able to train and compete in an inclusive team of athletes with and without disability

1

2

3

4

5

APPENDIX D. Questionnaire for coaches and parents or guardians from Czech Republic

Coaches Survey

1.) What are priorities of the club at the moment?

- To participate in competitions
- To break through on the regional level
- To cooperate with other clubs
- To cooperate with experts
- To involve children with disabilities

2.) What competences and values do you want to transfer to children in your club?

- To raise them into good athletes
- To support their competitiveness
- To support their self-confidence
- To provide children with a valuable way of spending their free time
- To teach children to cooperate and help each other
- To cultivate empathy
- To teach children to lead a healthy lifestyle
- To teach children that everyone can do sports, regardless of their physical ability

3.) How does your club differ from other clubs?

- We have better results than most other clubs
- We cooperate with parents well
- We support coaches in further education
- We have stable financing
- We involve children with disabilities
- We focus on improving children's competences rather their results
- We try to improve children's socio-emotional skills
- We have our own facilities tailored to our needs

4.) To what extent do you agree with the statement: 'Sport clubs should actively try to involve children with disabilities'?

- I don't have an opinion on this
- Moderately agree
- Moderately disagree

5.) What would help you strengthen an inclusive approach in your club?

- Better facilities and equipment
- Additional funding
- Training for coaches in inclusive sport
- Long-term methodological support for coaches
- National and international cooperation in inclusive sport

6.) What do you consider to be main advantages and disadvantages of involving children with disabilities in the activities of your club?

7.) What methodological support would you appreciate?

- Training for coaches in supporting the motivation of young athletes
- Methodological materials for supporting children's socio-emotional skills
- Methodological materials for supporting children's teamwork skills
- Personal development training for coaches
- Help with involving parents in the functioning of the club
- Help with communication, motivation, and leadership of children

Parents survey

1.) What competences and values should a children's sports club aim to develop?

- To raise children into good athletes
- To support their competitiveness
- To support their self-confidence
- To provide children with a valuable way of spending their free time
- To teach children to cooperate and help each other
- To cultivate empathy
- To teach children to lead a healthy lifestyle
- To teach children that everyone can do sports, regardless of their physical ability

2.) What should the club focus on?

- Participating in competitions
- Cooperating with other clubs
- Cooperating with experts
- Involving children with disabilities
- Motivating children to do sports
- Involving parents
- Supporting children's teamwork skills and empathy

3.) How does the club your child attends differ from other clubs?

- They have better results than most other clubs
- They cooperate with parents well
- They support coaches in further education
- They have stable financing
- They involve children with disabilities
- They focus on improving children's competences rather their results
- They try to improve children's socio-emotional skills

4.) To what extent do you agree with the statement: ‘Sport clubs should actively try to involve children with disabilities’?

Strongly agree

I don’t have an opinion on this

Moderately disagree

5.) What do you consider to be main advantages and disadvantages of involving children with disabilities in the activities of our club?

APPENDIX E. Interview Questions

Participant 1

Personal Background

Education: Psychologist (B.A in Psychology) PhD in Pedagogy; PhD dissertation: integration of children with special needs

Job position: University professor (teaching pedagogy and didactic subjects to future teachers and coaches who are enrolled in accredited bachelor and master programs).

Experience with inclusion: Doctoral dissertation; leading an evaluation study on the inclusion of children with special needs in primary school education; vast experience on the topic of inclusion in the professional career.

How do you understand the field of inclusion for children's sports clubs? Children of all backgrounds are together in all activities where it is possible. Sports clubs should tailor the program to the individual needs of a child (knowing what the child strengths and weaknesses are). In sports, inclusion doesn't mean every child trains the same way and by the same requirements. It means everyone has the chance to socialize under the leadership of the coach who follows two pedagogy principles: individualization and differentiation.

How would you describe the current state of inclusion in children's sports clubs in your country? It seems we don't think about inclusion in sports a lot, even though we should.

- 1.) **Do you think inclusion of disabled children into regular sports activities/clubs/centres is an issue in your country?**

It is difficult to generalize this question. In Slovenia, it seems that typically parents decide if the child trains sports. We do have some sports activities that are inclusive (e.g. organized for people with disabilities), but there is no systematic approach to including children with disabilities in regular sports. It is a case by case basis.

- 2.) **What are the benefits of inclusion of disabled children into regular sports activities/clubs/centres?**

The benefits are the same as benefits of inclusion (in education or on a wider scale): learning from each other, having diverse groups, equal opportunity for all children to improve, based on their individual skills and pace, and spontaneously learning competencies that otherwise wouldn't be learned. Parents also have the benefit of offering their children a chance to socialize with someone who is different compared to them.

- 3.) **What are the main obstacles of the successful inclusion of children with disabilities into the sports?**

Attitudes, points of view and knowledge of everyone involved (coaches, directors, parents). If a coach doesn't possess the required knowledge or skills, there won't be inclusion. Lack of

didactic knowledge of coaches (you have to know how to properly teach sports to children with disabilities, how to throw a ball in basketball). Lack of pedagogic competencies of coaches (e.g. not knowing how to form relationships with children and parents), and not finding what individual strengths and weaknesses a child has.

4.) Do you think coaches and club managers in your country are equipped with knowledge and skills to work with children with disabilities?

No. Most of them didn't complete a structured college program in this field, and those who did so had a very basic curricula on inclusion. Coaches are left on their own to gather knowledge about inclusion.

5.) Do you think there is an efficient support/education of coaches/sports managers on the issues of inclusive sports?

No. The college curricula offered to students studying to be coaches is not enough. However, when coaches apply for their national coaching license there are some subjects on inclusion but that is not enough to comprehensively learn about inclusion either. There is also a lack of informal education on inclusion for coaches.

6.) What do you think are the most important competencies that coaches need to develop in order to foster an inclusive environment in the club?

Social-emotional competencies, knowledge on forming relationships, basic knowledge of disabilities and special needs, and knowing didactic methods for a specific sport.

7.) Is there efficient support for coaches and directors in a sports club to overcome obstacles in inclusive sport?

We do not have a systematic approach. The most important support we have is the relationship between the parents and coaches. The parents know what their child needs are and how a coach can meet them, but also the coach has to ask the parents directly what the needs of the child are. Parents and coaches should support each other.

8.) The survey among coaches/managers have demonstrated that some of them think the integration of children with disabilities could hinder the other children achieving the best results in sports. What is your opinion on this?

A similar concern was raised when we started with inclusion in education. Inclusion in sports doesn't mean that everyone will compete in professional sport, but that everyone has the chance to participate and socialize. That's how we understand inclusion in education and how we should understand it in sports. Moreover, if a coach follows the principles of individualization and differentiation, then everyone will progress based on their initial abilities.

9.) What do you think are the most important competencies that parents need to develop to help create inclusive clubs?

Knowing how to work with coaches and building relationships with them. Parents also need to develop socio-emotional competencies.

10.) What would you recommend parents of disabled children eager to join regular sports activities/club/centre?

Communicate! Think if the coach can meet your child's needs and if they can foster inclusion. Parents need to express themselves, but also know how to receive information. A parent has to decide if both the sport and coach are a fit for their child.

11.) What would you recommend coaches and sport managers eager to work with disabled children?

Build relationships with parents! Talk to them before problems arise. Forming relationships is essential for inclusion

12.) Do you think the information campaign (if existing) regarding the inclusion in sports meets its ends?

We have some campaigns in the media with disabled athletes, however, we don't have systematic approaches or means of promoting inclusive sport on a national level.

13.) What do you think could be done to make the issue more public?

We have to talk about it openly. However, it is hard to achieve this because we are all so focused on results in sports. Attitudes of people have to change, but that takes time.

APPENDIX F. Interview questions

Participant 2

Personal Background

Education: Psychologist (B.A in Psychology)

Job position: Psychologist in sports, an independent contractor working on various projects (education of coaches, working with children, working with athletes).

Experience with inclusion: Indirectly by working with clubs as a psychologist in sports.

How do you understand the field of inclusion for children's sports clubs? Achieving results is not the main goal, but having everyone participate according to their capabilities

How would you describe the current state of inclusion in children's sports clubs in your country? It is not widespread. Out of 50 clubs I worked with, only 2 have been inclusive and even then, it was because the child was from one of the coaches.

1.) Do you think inclusion of disabled children into regular sports activities/clubs/centres is an issue in your country?

Not a lot of inclusion in Slovenia. Typically, the clubs are focused on achieving the best results and this is expected by both coaches and parents. There is little room for inclusion in the clubs I work. I work with children who are 10 years old or older and I always emphasize that competing is not the goal for children under 10 in sports.

2.) What are the benefits of inclusion of disabled children into regular sports activities/clubs/centres?

Enables all children to learn solidarity, teamwork, and tolerance. It shows the child with disabilities that he/she is equal to others. Enables parents to learn about solidarity and tolerance, and gives them the opportunity to include their child in sports.

3.) What are the main obstacles of the successful inclusion of children with disabilities into the sports?

For the coaches it's fear (examples: do they possess the skills for inclusion, how to coach inclusively, how to explain inclusion to all children in the club, how to adapt training so it doesn't hinder the progress of the most talented children). Another is inclusion and sports are usually two distinct categories in Slovenia. Parents can also be an obstacle: they are either too involved in coach's work or they are not present at all. They can also force the child to achieve the best results.

4.) Do you think coaches and club managers in your country are equipped with knowledge and skills to work with children with disabilities?

There is little support. Younger coaches (who have a college degree in Sports) are better equipped than older.

5.) Do you think there is an efficient support/education of coaches/sports managers on the issues of inclusive sports?

Too little support, unfortunately.

6.) What do you think are the most important competencies that coaches need to develop in order to foster an inclusive environment in the club?

Communication skills and emotional intelligence (knowing how to identify children's emotions and act accordingly)

7.) Is there efficient support for coaches and directors in a sports club to overcome obstacles in inclusive sport?

To my knowledge, there isn't. They try to find support individually.

8.) The survey among coaches/managers have demonstrated that some of them think the integration of children with disabilities could hinder the other children achieving the best results in sports. What is your opinion on this?

Inclusion can hinder achieving the best results, but achieving the best results shouldn't be the goal. Sports for children should focus on teaching them valuable life lessons. The most talented children usually train on their own after group training, so I don't think it would affect them if we work towards inclusion.

9.) What do you think are the most important competencies that parents need to develop to help create inclusive clubs?

Involving parents is a necessity for inclusion. Having solidarity is the most important competence parents should possess

10.) What would you recommend parents of disabled children eager to join regular sports activities/club/centre?

Be prepared for obstacles. The child won't be happy if he/she constantly gets feedback that he/she isn't good enough. They will have to face this daily.

11.) What would you recommend coaches and sport managers eager to work with disabled children?

Try your best to prepare and educate yourself on inclusion. Find support from someone you can ask questions when in doubt (about specific training or what happened during training). Know that you don't know everything and some situations can surprise you.

12.) Do you think the information campaign (if existing) regarding the inclusion in sports meets its ends?

I am not sure, but there seems to be some work done on the policy level – I have seen clubs having wheelchair access facilities and I think that is something they are required to put in place.

13.) What do you think could be done to make the issue more public?

The state should promote inclusion sports in schools – every school could get one presentation on inclusive sports per year. It doesn't hurt to include celebrities in any campaign, since they have reach.

APPENDIX G. Interview Questions

Participant 3

Personal Background

Education: MA in Pedagogy, BA in Sociology

Job position: Working in a judo club as a coach (Judo klub Železničar Maribor), training athletics and judo, a judge in athletics, founder of an inclusive judo section in the club.

Experience with inclusion: That the clubs allow people with special needs to join regular programs or an inclusive section of the club, so the children have the opportunity to participate normally in accordance with their abilities.

How do you understand the field of inclusion for children's sports clubs? That the clubs allow people with special needs to join regular programs or an inclusive section of the club, so the children have the opportunity to participate normally in accordance with their abilities.

How would you describe the current state of inclusion in children's sports clubs in your country? I have no contact with other sports, apart from what's going on in judo and athletics. We cooperate a lot with judo clubs from other cities (who are inclusive as well). In other sports, I think there isn't much focus on inclusion, because most sports disciplines are offered as part of regular schools, special education schools and institutions.

1.) **Do you think inclusion of disabled children into regular sports activities/clubs/centres is an issue in your country?**

It should not be a problem. But there are financial problems. We have free membership in the club for children with special needs. But we have trouble with access because we have stairs in the club leading to our facilities and toilets aren't adapted. I notice many parents of children with special needs do not show interest in joining.

2.) **What are the benefits of inclusion of disabled children into regular sports activities/clubs/centres?**

For children involved in regular groups; solidarity, compassion, empathy, overcoming fear. Children are also more motivated when they see a child with special needs doing an exercise (e.g. frog jumps), and they think "if he can, so will I". Children with special needs need to feel included, have a connection and support from other children. Parents of these children also report that their children are more confident. Parents of children without special needs report that their children have accepted children with special needs. As for coaches, they do not have the knowledge about special needs and they are afraid that an injury might occur. But they get involved.

3.) What are the main obstacles of the successful inclusion of children with disabilities into the sports?

Enough information and accessibility are extremely important. The financial aspect for parents of children with special needs (who require physiotherapy and that is an additional cost). There is no interest from parents of children with special needs. They get involved only based on information they receive from acquaintances. We cannot get to them through social media, they just don't sign up. Providing safety to all is another obstacle. If a child is aggressive and cannot tolerate physical contact (which is essential in judo), he/she cannot train (this includes all children).

4.) Do you think coaches and club managers in your country are equipped with knowledge and skills to work with children with disabilities?

It is difficult to generalize. As a coach, you use to didn't get that knowledge with your education. New education for coaches includes these skills a little more. I learned a bit about this at the university, because I pursued a degree related to inclusion. Informal education is also important, so I try to pass on my knowledge to other coaches through cooperation, and I also receive useful advice from other coaches as well, we talk a lot. To be a judo coach you listen to various judo content, e.g. about judging, basic readiness, techniques, preparation for the training process. Every year you have additional education, but there has never been such content (about inclusion), mostly the lectures are about techniques. The program is changing though, new licenses have stricter conditions, new content. I have recently attended an online course about the coaching of children with special needs (Special needs judo union, <https://snju.org/>) but it was not free of charge. So, there is some knowledge, but not enough.

5.) Do you think there is an efficient support/education of coaches/sports managers on the issues of inclusive sports?

No. In judo, we have a Commission that includes coaches from inclusive groups. In meetings, we talk and support each other. We would need to learn how to work with different types of special needs. More in terms of content, what needs to be paid attention to. For example, in cerebral paralysis, what can we strengthen, what can a child do. We need ideas of what to do with such a child. The contents could be based on developmental psychology, the system of rewarding and punishing, how to give instructions.

6.) What do you think are the most important competencies that coaches need to develop in order to foster an inclusive environment in the club?

Knowledge about the sport itself, about special needs, about disability. Empathy and communication, as aspects of personal development. So, you know how to adapt communication to children, parents, other coaches. It also depends on the flexibility of the individual, the dynamics of the group.

7.) The survey among coaches/managers have demonstrated that some of them think the integration of children with disabilities could hinder the other children achieving the best results in sports. What is your opinion on this?

We are unable to run a joint competition. With age, the differences increase. Some children with disabilities are older, but they get beaten by younger children in regular groups, because their abilities don't match. By including athletes with disabilities into regular groups you risk others not developing to their potential, as you have to devote a lot of time to a person with special needs. So, there are pros and cons to including children in regular and special groups.

8.) What do you think are the most important competencies that parents need to develop to help create inclusive clubs?

For parents who have a child with special needs, they should not demand more than the child can handle, within their ability, and they should drive the child to train regularly to establish a routine. Cooperation should take place in such a way that constant contact is established. Parents should know what their place is in the club (to support their children). For parents of children who do not have special needs, it would be necessary to develop compassion, empathy, positive values for cooperation, to raise their children for cooperation from an early age. Many parents sign up their child in our club precisely because we also have children with special needs. Parents of children with special needs should reduce their fear, prejudice that their children will not be accepted. These parents have more difficulty integrating into inclusive groups. It is necessary to develop empathy and not to take things so negatively. In our experience, these fears are not reality. The children in sports groups greet each other after each practice and develop friendships. We explained to them that some children have special needs, different needs than they do, communicate differently and inclusion works this way.

9.) What would you recommend parents of disabled children eager to join regular sports activities/club/centre?

They should not be afraid, have prejudices, they should judge the suitability of a certain sport, it is also about the safety of the child (are they comfortable with contact in judo).

10.) What would you recommend coaches and sport managers eager to work with disabled children?

This is one of the most beautiful things. Sometimes coaches forget that this work is not easy and that it is necessary to know their (the children with special needs) needs well

11.) Do you think the information campaign (if existing) regarding the inclusion in sports meets its ends?

There are individual sports, sports within schools, focusing on individuals. There is also a judo magazine (with articles on inclusion). Inclusion is not encouraged enough in general in my opinion.

12.) What do you think could be done to make the issue more public?

More posts, promotions and funding. There may be a problem if clubs include the children for this reason (funding). If you don't have an expert basis on special needs, and you only see funding, in terms of membership fees, that's not good. Ideally, there should be more competitions and achievements for these children, additional finances, that children are not isolated, that they are involved in all activities, that there is more socializing and joint fun.

APPENDIX H. Interview Questions

Participant 4

Interview with a university professor of sport didactics and movement pedagogy

1. Implemented actions regarding inclusion and sport

Implemented actions can be divided into actions that take place in the educational setting (school) and actions that take place in the extracurricular context, like in sport clubs. The school system in Saxony still has the so-called “Förderschulen” for children with special needs and/or learning difficulties. This kind of school system separates children with impairments from children without impairments. There are little or no structural approaches, based on scientific findings, to deal with the topic inclusion in both school systems.

Inclusive actions rely on single teachers and their motivation to include the topic inclusion in the schedule. On the other hand, inclusion and diversity is now a mandatory seminar in teacher’s university education (at Leipzig University).

In the sports setting, there are more structured initiatives, for example in sport clubs, federations, specific federations such as the Special Olympics and the National Paralympic Committee. There is also more engagement for the topic inclusion in general. The University of Leipzig had, for example, a cooperation with such a federation and offered an action day. The target group was not just students of teaching, but also sport science students, potential future employees in sport clubs or federations.

1.1 Indicators for success of inclusive sport offers

- Engagement and motivation;
- Positive attitude towards inclusion.

1.2 Barriers for inclusive sport activities and their solutions

- People have barriers in their mind, sometimes despite their engagement, that hinders the implementation of inclusive activities;
- The opinion that inclusion is limited and just feasible until a certain point, but not beyond;
- Lack of knowledge;

A better, profound education (e.g. for teachers, sport scientists) could remedy this lack of knowledge. An information and action day with sport clubs, demonstrating and explaining options and introducing sport activities for people with special needs (e.g. wheelchair basketball) created a better understanding of the topic, the interviewee reported. The student’s feedback was positive and the action day created a change of the student’s point of view, possibly not in a sustainable way, but the action day delivered input and impulses. Sensitisation, irritation, reflection und practical experiences should be integrated in the student’s education. We have all that we need for working inclusively. The index for inclusion is a road map, offering work materials, and delivering structures for implementation.

2. Competencies for coaches and parents

Coaches:

- Coaches should be a role model. The coach must be willing to represent her/his opinion during conversations with e.g. parents. The opinion must be based on sound knowledge. The coach must be able to verbalise what is important and why;
- Wanting, knowing, being able – those three blocks are needed to convince e.g. parents of the importance and role of inclusion;
- Coaches should have the competency to create an adaptive setting with adapted sport activities for specific needs. This is the fundament to convince others;
- Coaches need an all-around view – focus on ALL children, children with a special need and children who focus on performance.

Parents:

- Openness – being open for differences without weighting and judging if one is “better” (in the traditional sense that focusses on performance) than the other;
- Understanding that diversity can influence the whole group in a positive way. Diversity supports and promotes. All children will benefit from diversity.

3. Recommendations for sport clubs to offer inclusive activities

- All needed information exists. The index for inclusion is a structured tool that could facilitate the process of inclusion.
- A working group (sport club or school) should start with the question “How do we want to deal with the topic inclusion?”.
- The training of one person, who has the main responsibility, could be a first step.
- Consultancy with an external expert of the field inclusion, who delivers further training, could be more successful compared to internal training regarding inclusion.

4. Additional information

The topic inclusion was prioritised in education for many years. Now, it is gradually being replaced by the topics Digitalisation and Education in Democracy, mainly with regards to the education of future teachers. Inclusion is now one of three major topics. The aim should be to find the links between the three topics. One example for this is a seminar of the University of Leipzig, entitled: “Digital Media in Inclusive Sport Classes”. The shift towards other themes than inclusion is mirrored in the funding lines of grant applications. The challenge is now, to not think that the topic inclusion is “solved” or “finished” because several projects were already conducted. Inclusion is a process.

APPENDIX I. Interview Questions

Participant 5

Interview with the directress of an NGO focusing on inclusion

Do you think inclusion of disabled children into regular sport activities/clubs/centers is an issue in your country?

It is certainly a very important to raise this discussion in the Czech Republic, because disabled children have very limited opportunities to join sport activities together with healthy children. Therefore, children and parents feel excluded and have to seek special arrangements to enjoy sports and exercise.

What do you think could be done to make the issue more public?

It would be necessary to collect data on the inclusion of disabled children to the sport clubs and centres designed for all the children. Having this data in hand would enable to contribute to the public debate on how limited choices the children have.

Do you think the information campaign (if existing) regarding the inclusion in sports meets its ends?

As far as I know, there is no information campaign on this matter. The lack of inclusion in sports has not been made public.

What are the benefits of inclusion of disabled children into regular sport activities/clubs/centers?

The inclusion of disabled children provides them with more opportunities to socialize and exercise. Not only children, but also parents feel as equally valuable members of society. It provides new opportunities to make social contacts and feel welcomed. On the other hand, other children learn to respect diversity and be empathetic to each other.

What are the main obstacles of the successful inclusion of children with disabilities into the sports?

First of all, inadequate support for families with disabled children. Then, there is a lack of knowledge, methodological support and financial resources for coaches. Last but not least, there is a lack of discussion and support of general public for the inclusion of disabled children and parents.

Do you think coaches and club managers in your country are equipped with knowledge and skills to work with children with disabilities?

There are certainly very little training and methodological materials provided for coaches to improve their skills in integrating disabled children into sports.

Do you think there is an efficient support/education of coaches/sports managers on the issues of inclusive sports?

The issue of inclusion of children with disabilities or special education needs into formal education has become a part of political debate a few years ago, but there has been little support from the professionals and general public to make it work in practice. The measures introduced were not

meeting their goals and brought about administrative burden to schools. There has been very little information on the measures to support inclusive sport as a part of it.

The survey among coaches/managers have demonstrated that some of them think the integration of children with disabilities could hinder the other children achieving the best results in sports. What is your opinion on this?

I think that the methods of training children could vary, adjusting them to the individual needs of each child and therefore, should not prevent the high achievers from achieving the best results.

What do you think are the most important competences that coaches need to develop in order to foster an inclusive environment in the club?

Coaches should be equipped with different techniques to work with children of different capabilities. They should be equipped with knowledge and skills on how to positively motivate children, how to support friendships among different children, how to solve problems, help each other and be empathetic. The switch of approach from competitiveness to cooperation should prevail. The next important skill for coaches would be learning to establish partnership with parents, so that coaches and parents could support each other's effort in helping children.

What do you think are the most important competences that parents need to develop to help create inclusive clubs?

The important skill for parents is openness and willingness to cooperate with coaches and other parents.

What would you recommend parents of disabled children eager to join regular sports activities/club/center?

Parents should not be afraid to ask for help and discuss the possibilities with professionals.

What would you recommend coaches and sport managers eager to work with disabled children?

To have an open heart and mind and learn from the best existing practice from abroad.

APPENDIX J. Interview Questions

Participant 6

1. What position do you hold?

General Manager, Head Coach and Vice-President of the Board.

2. What actions are currently implemented in your club, federation, federal state and/or country regarding inclusive sport offers for children with a mental or physical disability? (club, federation, country depends on the interview partner)

Our club was founded in 2016 with bylaws enforcing the inclusion of people with impairments in our sports offer. Our trainers undergo education for disability sports and we have an integration policy, with all of our sports offers being open for children or adults with physical or mental impairments. The venue follows the country regulations for accessibility. The training equipment and training methods is adapted to the participants and their abilities.

3. What works well in implementing inclusive sport offers for children with a mental or physical disability in your club, federation, and/or country?

Having an open-door policy, allowing every person to participate in the club sports offer. Education of the trainers in regards to understanding the impairments and how to plan the workouts accordingly.

4. In your opinion, where are the obstacles for inclusive sport offers for children with a mental or physical disability at the moment?

Although some venues will have physical barriers limiting access to some of the sports people with impairments. The biggest obstacles are regarding awareness from the club staff or directors. The fact that it's sometimes more work without financial reward pushes many people away. Also important is the misconception that people with disabilities cannot keep up with the rest of the group.

5. What should/could be done to overcome these obstacles?

Sensibility Training, Awareness Initiatives, financial initiatives for the inclusion of people with disabilities. In more extreme approaches. Financial penalties for not including people with disabilities.

6. What would you advise a sport club, that wants to start implementing inclusive sport offers for children with a mental or physical disability? How could they start? What would be your advice?

"Don't be afraid". Advising the clubs to open their sports offer to everyone, independently of their ability. Try to educate themselves about the different impairment types and don't be afraid to accept the potential sportspeople in their clubs.

7. How do you feel inclusion is covered as a topic in the professional training of coaches in your club, federation, federal state and/or country?

Inclusion in sports comes too late in the national trainer education. The levels are usually D, C, B, A Trainer. A being the highest. Most people stop at C level “Instructor”. Para Sports and Inclusion modules only show up at level B.

8. In your opinion, what is the role of parents to promote and include inclusive sport offers for children in sport clubs? What do you expect from parents of children with and without a mental or physical disability?

The parents of children with impairments today, are more proactive than a few decades ago. Before they weren't aware of the sports offer and the reflected endemic misconceptions, sometimes having a feeling of shame or guilt for their children. Today they are more integrated and better educated in the opportunities available for their children. The parents of children without impairments are also more aware of disabilities and they accept and encourage the integration of children with disabilities in their child's activities.

9. What are the most important competencies that a coach needs to develop with regards to inclusive work?

Knowledge of different impairments and their limitations. Communication skills to work with the person who has an impairment.

10. What are the most important competencies that parents need to develop with regards to inclusion?

I don't understand the question. Parents of the children with disabilities or parents of the other kids?

11. Is there anything else about the topic inclusion of children with mental or physical disability in sport clubs, that you want to share with us?

Education is key and must be enforced. If governments or umbrella organizations like the Multi-sports Federations (whoever finances the clubs), mandates education on disability sports, the clubs would most likely change their mentality. Inclusion education should be right up there with First Aid Education, Safeguarding and Athletics Education.