



INCLUSIVE SPORTS



**PÅ
SAMMA
LINJE**

 **folkhälsan**



INCLUSION THROUGH SPORTS

Active involvement creates a sense of inclusion, of being part of a group. This sense of inclusion grows out of respectful treatment that can be promoted at various levels, including member recruitment, communications and finances, as well as with measures fostering performance and sense of community. Sports is more than just sport-specific training and competition; it also improves the development of social skills. Sports can create a sense of community, help form new friendships, and provide a sense of meaning to everyday life. This guide is for everyone interested in strengthening inclusive approach and increasing ethnic and cultural diversity in our society.

*This guide is written by the Luckan Association,
the FSI (Finlands Svenska Idrott) **På samma linje** project,
and Folkhälsan's **Hälsa i mångfald** project.*

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CONCEPTS



Integration

Integration means that an individual adapts to the group's situation. While a group allows the individual to join, the design of the group itself does not change.



Inclusion

Inclusion means that everyone is provided equal opportunity to participate within their individual abilities. Therefore, an individual changes the design of the group through their participation. Inclusion permits the individual to be themselves in the new context while allowing them to help the group grow through exchange of experiences.



Exclusion

Exclusion means excluding or rejecting one or more persons from a group. Exclusion can be deliberate or unintentional.

Discrimination

Discrimination means that a person is treated worse than others in a comparable situation. It is mostly based on one or more personal characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity or age.

Norms

Norms are unwritten rules that cause people within a group to, for instance, dress, speak or behave in a certain way. Norms create expectations for the group and are often subconscious until someone breaks them.



WHAT IS THE CURRENT SITUATION?

The purpose of the Finnish Non-Discrimination Act is to prevent discrimination and foster and safeguard equal treatment. It means that authorities, education providers, institutions and organisations are obliged to promote equal treatment in their activities. This also applies to sports clubs as they can serve as role models for the society at large.

According to the Swedish Research Council for Sport Science, young people with a foreign background thrive in sports, feeling like they are part of a group rather than standing out due to their background. On the other hand, these young athletes often feel that sports provide a space for racist attitudes in a way that is not allowed by the society at large.

Studies by the Swedish Sports Confederation indicate that girls born outside of Europe are least likely to participate in sports, that fewer immigrants are asked to serve as coaches or in a position of trust, and that restrictions for immigrants to compete at national team level still persist.

We therefore see a need to open doors and lower barriers so that more people can get involved in sports on equal terms.



STEPS FOR INCREASING DIVERSITY

1. Discuss your values
Why do we want to increase diversity?

2. Analyse the current situation
How does the situation look right now?

3. Highlight obstacles
What is lacking?

4. Set goals
What do we want to achieve?

5. Conduct long-term planning
How do we work strategically and practically?

6. Make efforts at all levels
How do we work together?

7. Evaluate the efforts
How have we succeeded in increasing diversity?



COMMUNICATION

Communication plays an essential role in any effort to improve inclusion. You should develop your communication at all levels – both internally and externally. Here are some tips:

- Use clear language with simple words and expressions in both your writing and your verbal communication.
- Ensure that diversity is reflected in images, brochures and other materials so that different genders, ethnicities and ages are represented.
- Set up a clear website available in different languages with up-to-date contact details.
- Use non-verbal communication to support your message, such as smiling and eye contact.

EFFORTS

An inclusive sports world requires work on several levels. Four of these levels are highlighted here, detailing ways for clubs, club officials, associations and municipalities to promote inclusion in sports.

What can you do as a club official?

- Highlight each member's individual strengths: everyone is good at something and we all can contribute in our own ways.
- Apply the same rules to everyone while acknowledging that everyone is different.
- Explain the meaning of rules that are necessarily not self-evident, for instance, why you should not be late for training.
- Remember to underline any unwritten rules that might be challenging for someone new to the group.
- Explain the meaning of different expressions and abbreviations to new members.
- Encourage participants to treat each other with respect by, for instance, letting everyone get involved in dialogue.

- Remember that as a club official you are a role model and your actions are reflected on the rest of the group.
- Involve parents in your activities in different ways, for instance, to serve as managers or assistant coaches.
- Think outside the box: parents who cannot drive their children to training can contribute in other ways, e.g. baking for an event or by updating the website.

What can be done at the club level?

- Take stock of your club's values and make sure they are reflected in all materials and marketing.
- Helpful questions: What does our club want to stand for? What does diversity mean to us? How are we going to attract new members to our club?
- Write up uncomplicated rules that detail the consequences for acting against club values. For instance, rules can dictate that a player be removed from a match if they behave inappropriately towards a member of the opposing team.
- A diverse board is a strength, both in terms of gaining new perspectives and recruiting new members.



- Visit various target groups to discuss the club's activities. Personal contact is more effective than a brochure.
- Ensure that information reaches all relevant parties, e.g. by appointing a communications officer for the club.
- Prepare a club welcome letter that can be tailored to each target group.
- Establish productive dialogue with parents at home and identify the most effective communications channels. Keep in mind that not everyone uses social media.
- Recruit members on a wide scale, by arranging events for trying out the sport, for instance.
- Appoint sponsors or tutors who ensure that new members receive all the necessary information.
- Hand out a checklist to members before travel or a match to help them prepare and pack everything they need.
- Consider alternative ways to pay for membership. Can someone who cannot pay compensate by working at a tournament or a club event?
- Cooperate with clubs that are different from yours. Do not hesitate to share members between clubs. This helps save resources in the long term.
- Adapt facilities and tools where necessary in cooperation with your participants.
- Establish a system where club members can donate equipment they have outgrown and reuse equipment donated by others.
- Make efforts to communicate with representatives of the municipality and provide them with tangible requests on how sports activities could be further developed through investments in sports facilities and public transport, for instance.



What can be done at the association level?

- It is important that diversity is reflected on the board of directors, with representation by different genders, ethnic backgrounds, ages, etc.
- Consider whether a social security number is needed when signing up and registering for events, as new arrivals do not yet necessarily have a Finnish social security number.
- Introduce lower fees for, for instance, competitor's licences.
- Inform new members where they can train on their own, in addition to coached training.

- Such places can include football fields, exercise tracks, or outdoor gyms.
- Cooperate with various organisations and departments, including municipal immigration integration units, parishes and voluntary organisations.

What can be done at the municipal level?

- Appoint a person whose duty is to communicate with clubs, such as a director of a leisure division.
- Prepare a multilingual information sheet describing sports opportunities the municipality offers.
- Invest in a library of sports where municipal residents can borrow sports equipment.
- It could be located inside a regular library, for instance.
- Create opportunities for engaging in spontaneous sports in the municipality, i.e. by increasing places where physical activities can take place outside a traditional club context.
- Collaborate with the municipality's various departments, for example with integration services and the leisure division.



RECIPE FOR INCLUSION

Work together Be clear

Listen carefully

Exchange experiences Respect

diversity

Look for solutions



SOURCES AND INSPIRATION

Information related to sports activities
Kotoutumisen tukena

Folkhälsan: Include everyone – for real! – working material for equality and equal treatment in sports for children and young people

Luckan Integration's FIKA Mentoring Programme guide for sports clubs

'Tredje sektorn som integrationsarena'

Svenska Österbottens Ungdomsförbund, 'Jämställd Förening' brochure

Monaliiku – Well-Being and Sports for Multicultural Women

InfoFinland Finnish Non-Discrimination Act 1325/2014

Swedish Sports Confederation (Sveriges Riksidrottsförbund, RF): *Inkluderande idrott*

C. Dartsch & J. Pihlblad, *Vem platsar i laget? – en antologi om idrott och etnisk mångfald*, 2012.

R. Bjuhr, *Idrott för alla? En fallstudie om inkludering i idrottsföreningar i Umeå*, 2012.



“Sports is one of the prime tools in order to promote social participation, health and well-being. Sports can also be a gateway into employment and to promote quality of life. In order to use sports to achieve goals, different kinds of expertise is needed.”

Christian Thibault,
Executive Director of Liikkukaa – Sports for all



“Sports is an efficient tool for the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups. It provides a unique opportunity to bring together people from different cultures.”

Claudia Nystrand,
Managing Director at Monaliiku



“Diversity is a strength.”
Admir Lukacevic,
founder of Idrott Utan Gränser

