

Level the Field

Inclusive Sports Activities Toolkit

A practical guide to inclusive sport and play for youth workers



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2025-1-PT02-KA153-YOU-000303944



 ERASMUS+ TRAINING COURSE · FUNCHAL, PORTUGAL

Level the Field

Inclusive Sports Activities Toolkit

A practical resource for youth workers, educators, trainers, and community leaders seeking to use sport as a powerful tool for social inclusion, active citizenship, and youth empowerment. Developed during a 9-day Erasmus+ Training Course bringing together participants from 7 European countries in Funchal, Madeira.

7 Countries

International teams from across Europe collaborated to build this toolkit.

7 Activities

Tested with real children aged 7–10 at Colégio do Marítimo in Madeira.

Non-Formal Education

Every activity uses experiential, inclusive, and participatory methodologies.

Fully Adaptable

All games are adaptable to different ages, abilities, and group sizes.

Where It All Began

The Training Course

"Level the Field" was a 9-day Erasmus+ Training Course that brought together youth workers from 7 European countries in Funchal, Madeira (Portugal). The course explored how sport can serve as a powerful tool for social inclusion, participation, active citizenship, and youth empowerment.

Using non-formal education methodologies, experiential learning, sports-based activities, and intercultural exchange, participants developed practical tools and inclusive games designed to engage children and young people from diverse backgrounds throughout Europe and beyond.

Tested in the Real World

The activities were tested with children aged 7 to 10 from **Colégio do Marítimo** in Madeira, allowing participants to apply their methodologies in a real educational context. This real-world testing phase enabled teams to adapt activities to different ages, abilities, and participation needs.

Throughout the course, participants worked collaboratively in international teams to create, test, and refine inclusive sports activities that promote teamwork, communication, empathy, leadership, creativity, resilience, cooperation, and equal participation.

Who Is This Toolkit For?

- Youth workers and community leaders
- Teachers, trainers, and sports coaches
- Non-formal education facilitators
- Anyone working with diverse young people

What We Set Out to Achieve

The "Level the Field" project was built on a clear set of objectives centred on the belief that sport and play can become accessible and inclusive tools for social change, intercultural dialogue, and community development across Europe.



Social Inclusion

Promote social inclusion through sports and non-formal education methodologies that reach young people from all backgrounds.



Practical Methodologies

Equip youth workers with hands-on, inclusive methodologies they can immediately apply in their professional contexts.



Intercultural Dialogue

Encourage intercultural dialogue and active citizenship among young people across European communities.



Empathy & Cooperation

Foster teamwork, empathy, and cooperation among young people through shared physical and creative experiences.



Adaptable Activities

Develop inclusive activities that can be adapted to different contexts, abilities, and educational needs.



European Cooperation

Strengthen European cooperation in youth work and sports-based education through shared learning and practice.



Our Methodological Approach

Every activity in this toolkit is grounded in a set of shared methodological principles drawn from non-formal education, youth work practice, and inclusive sport facilitation. These principles shape the structure, facilitation style, and adaptation possibilities of each game. Whether you are working with a small community group or a large school class, the following foundations will guide your facilitation.

1 Non-Formal Education

Activities are structured around NFE principles — voluntary participation, group reflection, and learning through experience rather than instruction.

2 Experiential Learning

Young people learn best by doing. Each game places participants at the centre of their own learning journey.

3 Active Participation

Every activity is designed so that all participants are involved. No one sits on the sidelines.

4 Inclusion & Diversity

Games are designed with inclusion at their core, welcoming participants of different abilities, backgrounds, and experiences.

5 Reflection & Peer Learning

Debrief moments and peer feedback are built into facilitation, turning play into deeper learning and self-awareness.

 Each activity can be adapted according to age group, physical abilities, group size, educational context, and specific inclusion needs. The inclusion adaptations listed in each activity card are a starting point. Trust your professional judgement and the needs of your group.

Giant Tic-Tac-Toe

A high-energy team game that takes the classic pen-and-paper strategy game and brings it to life in an open space. This activity builds strategic thinking and communication in a physically engaging format that children find immediately exciting and accessible.

How to Play

Children are divided into two teams and stand in separate lines. One player from each team runs to place a bib inside one of the spaces of the giant tic-tac-toe field. The objective is to align three bibs of the same team horizontally, vertically, or diagonally — just like the classic game, but with your whole body.

Players cannot move the opponent's bibs. After all three bibs have been placed, players may move one of their own bibs during each turn to create a winning alignment. The game continues in rounds, with players rotating turns.

What You Need

- Ground marked with 6 spaces (tape, cones, or ropes)
- 6 sports bibs or shirts (3 of each colour)
- Minimum 6 children (3 per team)

Learning Outcomes

→ Team Cooperation

Players must communicate and plan together to succeed.

→ Strategic Thinking

Anticipating the opponent's moves develops critical reasoning skills.

→ Fair Play

Rules encourage respect and sportsmanship throughout.

Inclusion Adaptations

- Reduce running distance or allow walking instead
- Use visual or verbal support for younger participants
- Create mixed-ability teams to encourage peer support

Giant Tic-Tac-Toe



Mystery Shapes & Animal Island

ACTIVITY 02

Mystery Shapes

Objective: Develop non-verbal communication, empathy, cooperation, and group interaction. Suitable for 6 to 20 or more participants.

Each child receives a shape (circle, square, star, triangle, rectangle) attached to their forehead but cannot see their own shape. Without speaking, participants use only gestures, facial expressions, and body language to discover their shape and group themselves with others who share it. The activity ends when all participants are correctly grouped.

Learning Outcomes

- Non-verbal communication
- Active observation and social interaction
- Cooperation and inclusion

Inclusion Adaptations

- Use colours or symbols for participants with learning difficulties
- Reduce the number of shapes for younger groups
- Allow support from facilitators if necessary

ACTIVITY 03

Animal Island

Objective: Stimulate imagination, body expression, listening skills, and participation through movement. Suitable for 6 to 20 participants in an open space.

Children imagine they are living on a mysterious island. When the facilitator claps once, all participants run into the island and "sleep" on the floor. When the facilitator claps again, they wake up and imitate an animal announced by the facilitator — a slow turtle, a fast fish, a sideways-walking crab, or a jumping frog. The game continues with different animals and movement styles.

Learning Outcomes

- Creativity and body expression
- Listening and coordination skills
- Joyful participation for all

Inclusion Adaptations

- Allow seated movements if necessary
- Use simpler animals for younger children
- Encourage collaborative animal movements in pairs

Mystery Shapes



Animal Island



Team Balance Challenge & Feeding the Monkeys

ACTIVITY 04

Team Balance Challenge

Objective: Encourage teamwork, creativity, coordination, and problem-solving in a physically safe and playful way. Suitable for 6 to 20 participants.

Participants move freely around the space. The facilitator asks them to form groups of different sizes. Once groups are formed, a challenge is given — only a certain number of body parts may touch the floor. For example: only 4 feet on the floor; only 2 hands and 2 knees; no feet touching at all. Participants must cooperate creatively and safely to complete each challenge.

Learning Outcomes

- Teamwork and physical coordination
- Creativity and problem-solving
- Communication under pressure



Inclusion Adaptations

- Adapt physical difficulty levels as needed
- Allow support between participants
- Use simplified challenges for mixed-ability groups

ACTIVITY 05

Feeding the Monkeys

Objective: Promote teamwork, coordination, attention, and cooperation. Suitable for 10 to 25 participants with multiple active roles.

Participants form a circle. The facilitator ("banana tree") throws a ball into the air and calls a name — that participant catches it and shouts "BANANA!", freezing all others. The group must then pass the ball to feed the "hungry monkeys" outside the circle, while "playful monkeys" try to steal the bananas. Roles rotate to ensure full participation throughout.

Roles in the Game

- 1 facilitator — the "banana tree"
- 3 hungry monkeys (outside the circle)
- 2 playful monkeys (interceptors)
- Remaining participants form the circle



Inclusion Adaptations

- Use softer balls and reduce movement complexity
- Allow walking instead of running

Team Balance Challenge



Feeding the Monkeys



Preparing for Winter & Mozambique Ball Game

ACTIVITY 06

Preparing for Winter

Objective: Strengthen cooperation, balance, communication, and coordination through a paired movement challenge. Suitable for a minimum of 6 participants.

Participants work in pairs. Each pair transports a "banana" (a ball or soft object) between their backs, shoulders, or hips — without using their hands. They must cross a defined path together without dropping the object. If the object falls, they return to the start. The objective is to transport as many bananas as possible within a set time. The race element adds energy and motivation.

Learning Outcomes

- Cooperation and trust-building
- Balance and physical coordination
- Communication between partners

Inclusion Adaptations

- Shorten the path for accessibility
- Allow participants to choose object position
- Adapt movement pace to the pair's needs

ACTIVITY 07

Mozambique Ball Game

Objective: Develop attention, reaction speed, teamwork, and coordination in a fast-paced circle game. Suitable for 6 to 15 participants.

Participants form a circle around a marked area. One player stands in the centre holding the ball and begins by throwing it into the air whilst calling another participant's name. That person must catch the ball before it touches the ground. Players then pass the ball quickly between teammates until it reaches the player closest to the target — who attempts to score by throwing it into a basket or bucket. Games are short, energetic, and highly social.

Learning Outcomes

- Fast reaction and coordination
- Teamwork and communication
- Attention and group dynamics

Inclusion Adaptations

- Use larger or softer balls
- Reduce passing distance for younger groups
- Adapt target difficulty or height

Preparing for Winter



Mozambique Ball Game



What This Project Achieved

Beyond the individual games, "Level the Field" generated a profound learning experience for all participants. Youth workers from across Europe left Madeira with expanded facilitation skills, a toolkit of tested inclusive activities, and a renewed belief in the transformative power of sport. The training course demonstrated that when sport is approached with intention, creativity, and a commitment to inclusion, it becomes a vehicle for genuine social change.

7

Countries Represented

Youth workers from Portugal, Spain, Croatia, Finland, Estonia, Romania, and Türkiye.

9

Days of Training

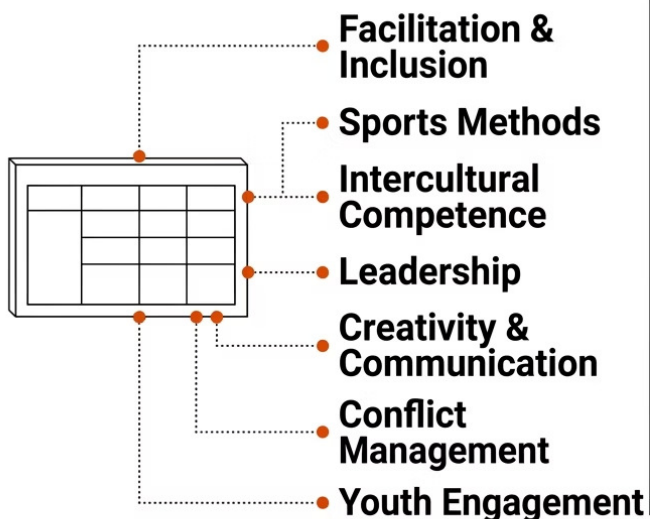
Nine intensive days of experiential learning, co-creation, and intercultural exchange.

7

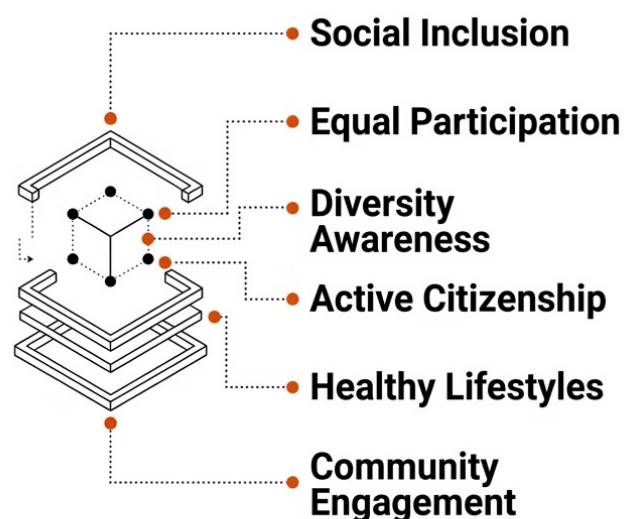
Inclusive Activities

All tested with real children aged 7–10 in a live educational context in Madeira.

Participant Skills Developed



Social Impact Promoted



• Level the Field Outcomes •

- ✓ The project promoted the core belief that sport and play can become accessible and inclusive tools for social change, intercultural dialogue, and community development — for every child, in every context.

Project Partners

This toolkit was made possible through the dedication, creativity, and collaborative spirit of partner organisations from across Europe. Each partner brought unique expertise, local context, and professional experience that enriched the training course and the activities contained in this toolkit. We are grateful to every participant, facilitator, and host who contributed to making "Level the Field" a reality.

 **Portugal**

Fundação Marítimo
Centenário

 **Spain**

Ayuntamiento Rafelguaraf

 **Croatia**

Čisteći Medvjedići

 **Finland**

Kolmen Kampuksen
Urheiluopisto Oy

 **Estonia**

Youth Senate Tallinn

 **Romania**

Super Tineri ASIRYS

 **Türkiye**

Aktif Nesil Spor Kulübü

To protect the identity and privacy of the children involved in the activities, we decided not to use real photographs from the sessions. Instead, illustrative images were generated using artificial intelligence based on the written descriptions of each activity. As a result, some visual elements may not fully correspond to the exact reality of the activities carried out, serving instead as creative representations of the educational environment, objectives, and dynamics implemented during the project.

This toolkit was developed within the framework of the **Erasmus+ Programme** under the **KA153 – Mobility of Youth Workers** action. The project promoted international cooperation, non-formal education, inclusion, and sports-based methodologies for youth empowerment and social inclusion across Europe. Grant Agreement number 2025-1-PT02-KA153-YOU-000303944



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