

Everyone's Game: A Toolkit for Advancing Disability Inclusion in Sport-based Life Skills Programming

For organisations and coaches working to create more inclusive sport and life skills programmes for young women and girls*.

*When WW refers to girls and women, we include; all cis, trans, non-binary and all other underrepresented groups and communities such as black, indigenous, mestizas, people of colour, LGBTIQ+, refugees, and migrant girls and women with or without disabilities.



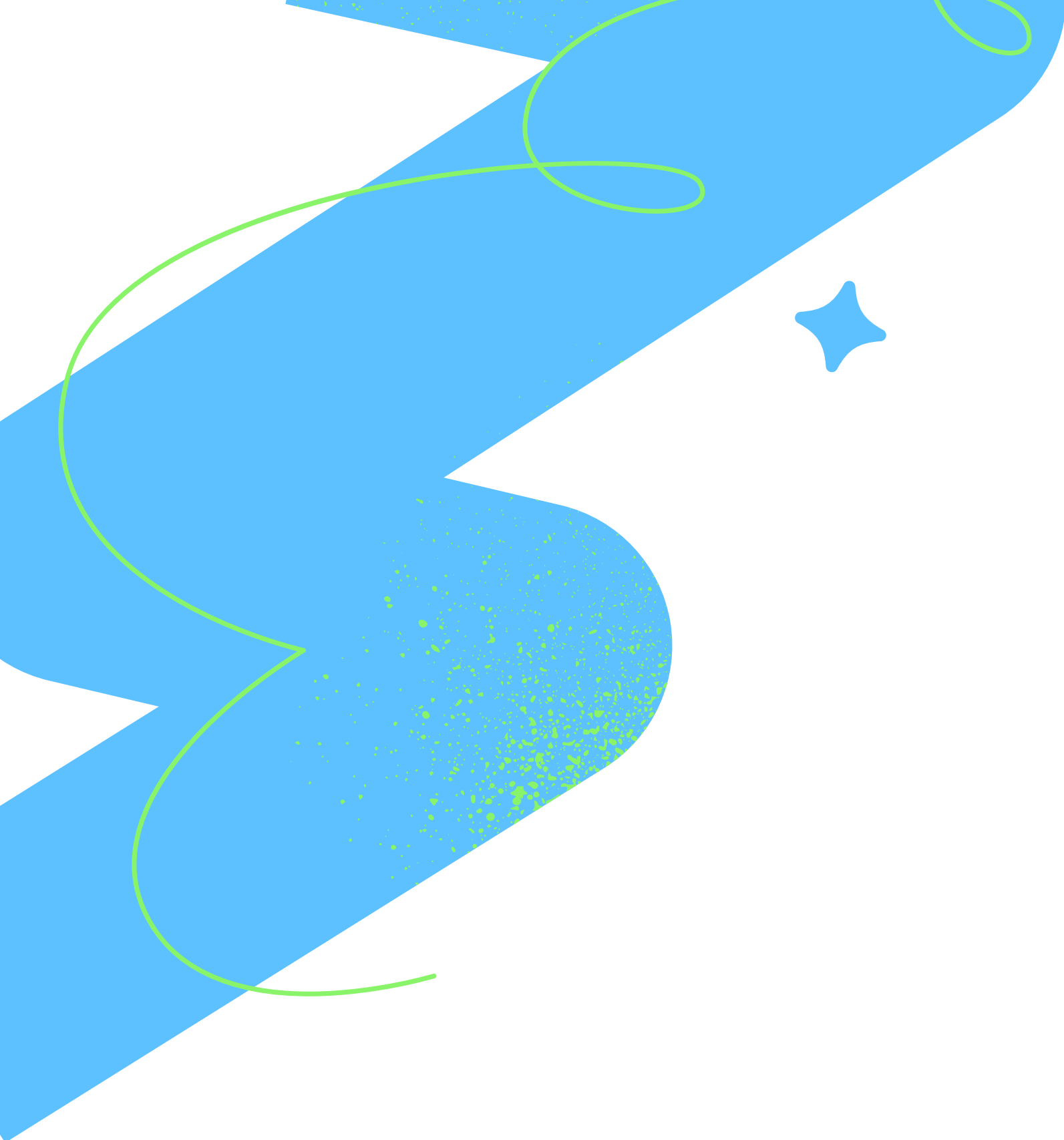


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1. Introduction

What is this resource?

Welcome! This resource is here to assist you in meaningfully including young women and girls with disabilities in your sports and life skills programmes. Targeting community-based initiatives involving both young women and girls with and without disabilities, it aims to equip you with the guidance and tools necessary to identify and address barriers to participation, enhance accessibility, and foster inclusive environments.

Who is it for?

This resource can be used by a range of audiences from programme staff to coaches, and anyone else interested in exploring the intersection between disability, gender, and sports. It's a helpful tool for setting disability inclusion priorities, planning sport and life skills activities/sessions, and exploring inclusive coaching techniques.

Why was it developed?

This resource directly responds to requests from Women Win's partners implementing the Goal programme, aimed at empowering young women and girls to become leaders through sports and life skills sessions. Partners recognised a pressing need for guidance and resources to effectively engage young women and girls with disabilities in their programmes. In response, Women Win collaborated with Goal implementing partners, disability experts, and most importantly, young women and girls with disabilities to create this resource.

What are its limitations?

Disability inclusion is not one-size-fits all. We want to recognise that the young women and girls you work with have their own unique experiences and identities, and this resource may not respond to their exact circumstances or needs. As such, it's important to compliment this resource with qualified advice from disability experts in your local context, and most importantly, through listening to the young women and girls with disabilities in your programmes. They're the experts on their own experiences.

Additionally, this resource focuses on building more inclusive programmes that engage both young women and girls with and without disabilities together. This approach was highlighted by partners for its ability to promote social inclusion, allow participants with and without disabilities to learn and grow together, and encourage young women and girls to celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes. We recognise, however, that for some groups and in certain contexts, creating spaces/programmes exclusively for young women and girls with disabilities can be the most empowering choice. Again, we encourage you to work directly with the young women and girls in your programmes and local experts to design the most appropriate programme for your context.

How is it structured?

There are 5 sections addressing different elements of disability inclusion.

1. Defining disability: This section introduces you to the intersection of gender and disability and provides a basic understanding of the social model of disability, including various forms of impairments, the barriers that lead to disability, and enablers that facilitate inclusion.

2. Introduction to disability-inclusive sport & life skills programming: This section outlines the benefits of sport and life skills programming for young women and girls with disabilities and supports you to use the knowledge and tools you'll gain from this resource to set organisational goals and priorities for your disability inclusion efforts.

3. Improving accessibility: This section provides key strategies and steps to ensuring that your programme is not only accessible but also empowering for young women and girls with disabilities.

4. Coaching for inclusion: This section focuses on the role of a coach in disability inclusion, the use of disability-inclusive language, and practical coaching strategies that enable all participants to benefit from and enjoy your programmes more fully.

5. Inclusive games & adaptive sports: This section provides a range of games and adaptive sports options to integrate into your programming.



2. Glossary

Communication - includes languages, display of text, Braille, tactile communication, large print, accessible multimedia as well as written, audio, plain-language, human-reader and augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, including accessible information and communication technology.¹

Disability - an evolving concept, whereby disability results from the interaction between persons with long-term impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.²

Gender - Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.³

Inclusion - Providing a range of options to cater for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, in the most appropriate manner possible. Inclusion also means fostering a sense of belonging created by intentional and proactive behaviours and actions that make sure people from all backgrounds, identities, and abilities feel welcome, respected, valued and able to participate equally.

Intersectionality - Intersectionality is a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power. Intersectionality is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and oppression and we must consider everything and anything that can marginalise people – gender, race, class, sexual orientation, physical ability, etc. Intersectionality is a tool for supporting equality. It rejects the ‘one-size fits’ all thinking.

Marginalised gender - an umbrella term to describe anyone who is not a cisgender man. This term points toward the ways cisgender women and LGBTQIA+ individuals, historically and currently, have experienced system inequities and greater regulation over their rights.

Reasonable accommodation - necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.⁴

Safeguarding – Measures taken to protect the health, safety, wellbeing and rights of individuals so that they might live free of discrimination, violence, abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation.

Universal design - the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. “Universal design” shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed.⁵

3. Defining disability

Before you can start working to make your programmes more inclusive for young women and girls with disabilities, it's important to understand what disability means and how it intersects with gender.

What does disability mean?

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) describes persons with disabilities as “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.⁶ This reflects the social model of disability, which recognises that impairments can cause real challenges for people, but that one's disability is largely shaped by barriers in society.

IMPAIRMENTS + BARRIERS = DISABILITY

visual impairment + no alternative reading option = disability

IMPAIRMENTS + ENABLERS = INCLUSION

visual impairment + braille = inclusion

Impairment = the functional limitations an individual might face (e.g. not being able to see).

Disability = The interaction between one's impairment(s) (e.g. not being able to see) and environmental and societal barriers (e.g. limited/no alternative reading options).

From this perspective, the way to address disability is to change the environment and society, rather than to 'fix' people with disabilities.



How do disability and gender intersect?

Truly understanding disability also requires recognising how gender, along with other factors like race, ethnicity, religion, income, education, refugee status, or sexual orientation shapes someone's experience of disability. This idea is called **intersectionality** - how all aspects of someone's identity come together and influence how they navigate the world and are treated. Gender and disability is a critical intersection.

Women and girls with disabilities make up about 60% of the world population with disabilities, and **three-quarters of persons with disabilities** in low and middle-income countries.⁸ These statistics reflect the reality that women are more likely than men to become disabled throughout the course of their lives. This is often because of gender-related risk factors. For example, lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services, gender-based violence and harmful practices, and unequal distribution of resources based on gender.⁹

Women and girls with disabilities are also more likely to experience **social isolation, poverty, inadequate services, and support systems that lack awareness, training and capacity** to address their unique needs and circumstances. This is often a result of **the additional barriers, stigma, stereotyping and discrimination they face in society** as compared to women and girls without disabilities and men with and without disabilities.¹⁰

For example, women and girls with disabilities **lack access to sexual and reproductive health and rights** and are often not enabled to make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care. They are **3X more likely to experience gender-based violence** compared to women without disabilities and are often targeted for their perceived powerlessness and vulnerability.¹¹

Gender-biases are also present in the way people with disabilities are supported. For example, men are often considered the norm and therefore assistive devices or accessible physical spaces are more likely to be modelled on the male physique or needs. Evidence also suggested that women and girls self-accommodated, (i.e., opt for or are pressured to provide their own accommodations).¹² Women and girls may also receive less information about the opportunities for and rights of reasonable accommodation than men with disabilities.

These are just a few examples of why your understanding of and work around disability and inclusion cannot be separated from gender. **Further discrimination and barriers are faced by those of additional intersecting and marginalised identities.**



What are the common forms of impairments?

The young women and girls you work with may experience a combination of impairments with varying degrees of severity. Don't worry, you don't have to be an expert - but knowing the basics is important! It can inform the type of support your participants may require.

Below are some of the basics:^{13, 14}

Impairments are often categorised into physical, sensory, intellectual, neurological, and psychosocial, and each category often includes a broad range of conditions or diagnoses.

- **Physical impairments** affect a part or parts of a person's body. It can limit their physical functioning, mobility, strength and/or dexterity. Some young women and girls are born with physical impairments. Other young women and girls may have become disabled throughout the course of their lives. This could be from injury, illness, accidents, ageing, or a medical condition's side effects.
- **Sensory impairments** are those affecting one's senses, often hearing or visual impairments.
 - **Hearing impairments** may range in their intensity. They can happen in one or both ears and can lead to difficulty hearing different sounds.
 - **'Hard of hearing'** refers to someone with hearing loss that ranges from mild to severe. People who are hard of hearing usually still communicate through spoken language and can benefit from hearing aids, cochlear implants, and other assistive devices as well as captioning on screens.
 - **Deaf persons** mostly have profound hearing loss, which implies very little or no hearing. They may use lip reading or sign language for communication.
 - **Visual impairments** refer to a long-term condition that affects a person's ability to see. Visual impairments include total blindness or partial vision loss. People who have visual impairments usually use aids/assistive devices to help with their communication, for example screen readers, magnifiers and verbal reporting.

It's important to know how gender impacts the way someone experiences an impairment.

For example, young women and girls are typically more marginalised than boys when it comes to testing and access to assistive products for sensory impairments. Young women and girls are less likely to be diagnosed with autism early as symptoms are often focused on behaviours more common in boys. Girls are also more likely to blame themselves for challenges they are experiencing. Young women and girls are generally at increased risk for mental health challenges. For example, anxiety and depression which can turn into longer term psychosocial disabilities. There is also a critical link between women and girls mental health and sport. See the Women Win Mental Health & Coaching Toolkit for more information specific to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young women and girls through sport

See women win's mental health toolkit: <https://womenwinlearninglab.thinkific.com/bundles/mentalhealthand-wellbeing-toolkit>

- **Intellectual impairments** are those where a person may require more time and support to understand information, to learn or to communicate. Some conditions include Down syndrome or autism spectrum disorder.
- **Neurological impairments** are those affecting the spinal cord and brain functions and include, but are not limited to, spinal cord injury, spina bifida, hydrocephalus and cerebral palsy.
- **Psychosocial impairments** are those linked to mental health or cognitive conditions. Mental health conditions refer to conditions that affect a person's thinking, feeling, behaviour or mood. It can include depression, anxiety, and psychosis. Young women and girls may self-identify as having a psychosocial disability due to high levels of distress that is deeply impacting everyday living. It may also affect the ability to relate to others.

Additional information on responding to specific forms of impairments can be found in **Annex 2: Responding to Different Impairments**.

*Be aware that legal categorisation and grouping of impairments vary from country to country.

What are the common barriers young women and girls with disabilities face?

As the social model of disability suggests, the inclusion of young women and girls with disabilities relies most heavily on your understanding and response to the barriers they experience in their physical and social environments. In both community programmes and broader society, women and girls often face attitudinal, physical/environmental, communication, financial and institutional barriers.

Attitudinal barriers: These are the things people think or believe about women and girls with disabilities. Women and girls tend to face harmful attitudes in their communities that can cause unfair treatment and harm. This is especially true for young women and girls from more marginalised backgrounds or identities. Harmful attitudes also contribute toward many of the other barriers experienced by young women and girls with disabilities and can significantly affect the realisation of their human rights. For example, parents often hide daughters with disabilities at home because they think that a daughter with a disability is a source of shame.

Physical/Environmental barriers: These are the physical obstacles in the natural and created environment that make it difficult for women and girls with disabilities to move around, interact with, or access spaces and resources. For example, only having steps to enter a building prevents someone in wheelchairs from entering the space. Changes to the environment and the design of assistive devices are also usually biased toward males, often neglecting the specific needs of women and girls.

Communication barriers: These are the barriers present for people who use different ways to communicate than how information is typically presented and received. Communication barriers are often experienced by women and girls who have impairments that affect hearing, speaking, reading, writing, and/or understanding. For example, the lack of sign language interpreters, or lack of knowledge of the local sign language known to women and girls being engaged.

Financial barriers: These are barriers resulting from the extra costs that a person with disabilities has to cover in order to participate in day-to-day life. Examples include assistive devices, sign language interpretation, and support personnel such as a carer, guide or education aide. There are severe gender-biases in how resources are allocated to support women and girls with disabilities.

Institutional barriers: These are the barriers resulting from policies, procedures, or situations that systematically disadvantage people with disabilities and other marginalised identities. For example, the lack of policies or structures to meaningfully include and safeguard young women and girls with disabilities, recognising and explicitly addressing issues of increased risk and additional accessibility requirements for safe participation.

It is critical to apply an intersectional lens to the attitudinal, environmental, communication, financial, and/or institutional barriers young women and girls with disabilities may face.

For example, how might a rural young woman from an ethnic minority with a physical impairment experience environmental and attitudinal barriers?

It may mean she faces harmful attitudes and discrimination in your programmes due to her disability and for her ethnicity.

She may experience additional environmental barriers such as a lack of safe and accessible transport from her rural community.

Disability inclusion relies on your understanding of the barriers women and girls with disabilities face, how they are experienced by different groups, and how they can be removed.



Enablers

Including young women and girls with disabilities means more than just removing obstacles or barriers. It is crucial to provide key enablers of inclusion.

This involves working with the young women and girls with disabilities to identify ways in which the environment (physical and otherwise) can be improved or modified to ensure they feel safe, comfortable, included, and can meaningfully participate.

Example enablers for gender-sensitive disability inclusion include:

Creating accessible environments: At the most basic level, ensuring accessible physical environments (e.g. facilities and venues). For example, venues that are close to where the young women and girls live to ensure safety travelling to and from sessions and to allow for their caring/home responsibilities the young women or girls may have. Or, providing menstrual products and accessible toilets.

Providing community sensitisation: Working to address harmful attitudes or stereotypes around women and girls with disabilities. For example, sensitising the community, parents, and caregivers on the benefits of girls' participation in sport and life skills education, and the additional benefit for those with disabilities, encouraging them to support their child to attend.

Information sharing: Making women and girls with disabilities aware of the opportunities available to them and making those opportunities appealing. For example, clearly sharing the accessibility options or limitations of your programming and ensuring a point person for accessibility needs who is a relatable and trusted person for the young women and girls and their support networks.

It is critical to think about the specific enablers for gender and disability inclusion.

Providing suitable equipment: Providing access to assistive products or adaptive equipment that make engagement in activities easier and more enjoyable and are built with young women and girls in mind.

Training coaches: Training coaches on gender and disability. For example, ensuring coaching communication styles cater to diverse needs and learning styles of the young women and girls in their sessions.

Providing life skills training: Supporting all participants to access key life skills and knowledge, including sexual and reproductive health and rights information, and ensuring information is presented in a variety of formats so everyone can understand.

Having representation: Prioritising the hiring and development of women coaches, especially those with disabilities to take on coaching and leadership positions, which are critical to representation, and make girls feel safe.



4. Introduction to disability-inclusive sport & life skills programming

This section introduces the benefits of sport & life skills programming for young women and girls with disabilities.

Why is sport important for young women and girls with disabilities?

Sports can provide women and girls with disabilities with **opportunities for physical activity**, and to acquire **vital transferable life skills** like communication, agency, and a **greater sense and respect of self**. This is especially important for women and girls with disabilities, who often have high self-blame and shame emotions.

Sports can also help women and girls with disabilities to build **support networks**, develop more independence, improve their ability to ask for what they need or want, and help them **express their thoughts and feelings** to others. This is critical as young women and girls can be one of the most isolated groups which can lead to a lack of meaningful, supportive connections that are essential for both emotional and physical wellbeing.

Being involved in a sport programme can also **increase the visibility of women and girls with disabilities**, helping to combat harmful stereotypes and stigmas. It gives a platform to **become leaders in the community**, addressing the lack of visible role models for young women and girls with disabilities and improving aspirations and self & community perception.

Sport is one of the most powerful everyday spaces where perceptions of disability and gender equality can be challenged and changed.



What are the benefits of engaging women and girls with and without disabilities together in sport?

Including women and girls with and without disabilities together in sport can bring people together in a unique and positive way, challenging assumptions about what young women and girls with disabilities can do and are capable of. It gives a space for young women and girls with disabilities to highlight their talents and skills, and to foster friendships that might not occur in other contexts. It can improve the understanding of disabilities by those without disabilities and increase the social support for those with disabilities.

Case Study

The Goal Programme's Impact on a Young Woman with Disabilities in Uganda

In Kampala, Uganda, the Goal Programme was a transformative force in the life of a young woman with physical disabilities. Initially as the sole participant with a disability in the group, she grappled with self-doubt. However, after engaging in the sport and life skills programme she came to more fully accept herself. "I learnt that I have to first accept who I am before others accept me. I thought that even if I have a disability, I do what any other person without a disability can do. When I realised that, I made up my mind to stand up for myself." The confidence she gained from taking part in sports and scoring goals cascaded into her everyday life, and later, she participated in entrepreneurship skills training. She now has a Facebook page, where she encourages other women with disabilities to see their potential.

Case Study

Community cohesion, safeguarding and solidarity through netball and football in Tanzania

BRAC Tanzania has a community-based sport and skills development programme engaging in school- and out-of-school adolescent girls in marginalised areas. Those not in school are limited by poverty, lack of support by parents, early teen pregnancies, family feuds, peer pressure and displacement. A number have vision, speech, hearing impairments, mobility challenges and autism. They use netball and football to bring the community together, and to channel learning and skills development among the girls. Some are spectators and supporters - not everyone has to perform on the pitch. Their sports team model is to integrate the girls, the caregivers, parents, street leaders, government officials and community leaders. This has created awareness on the strengths and rights of the girls, abled and disabled across the community. For example, sports participation has helped reduce stigma, towards albinism for example, which was regarded as a curse by some communities previously; girls with albinism were always hidden away at home, but this programme has increased their visibility and participation.

The inclusion of participants with and without disabilities benefits all participants! It creates new friendships and understanding among people, leading to more thriving communities.

Volleyball changes lives of young girls, their families and community in Vanuatu

Volley4Change has had a transformative impact on the lives of girls with disabilities in Vanuatu. Many of the participants were ashamed of having a disability and rarely left the house, but the offer of a new adaptive sport gave them an opportunity. Initially, the girls were very shy and hesitant, but after a few weeks there was a clear increase in confidence. Seated volleyball is now accepted in the community, where initially community members thought the girls would not play due to their disability. One parent noted, "We never thought that Margaret could play volleyball because she had a disability but now, here is a sport she can play, and she is so happy now. She is playing every week and it is making her happier and more enthusiastic at home."

What are the barriers women and girls with disabilities face in sport?

Generally, young women and girls already face significant barriers to participation in sport. In addition to these gender-based barriers, women and girls with disabilities face additional disability-related barriers that can deepen the extent of their exclusion, especially those with more marginalised backgrounds.

For example, young women and girls with disabilities are often left out of sports programmes due to:¹⁶

- Physically inaccessible facilities, venues and equipment
- Gender & disability related misconceptions about capabilities
- Unwelcoming attitudes by other participants, staff, coaches, and the general public
- Lack of knowledge on how to adapt coaching styles to help them take part in enjoyable, fulfilling activities

These barriers mean they are not only excluded from accessing the traditional benefits of sport, but they are also not given the opportunities sports provide to challenge perceptions of disabilities.

It is in this context that it's important for you and your organisation to be proactive and thoughtful in identifying and removing the barriers to participation and improving the inclusion of young women and girls with disabilities in sport and life-skills programmes.

How do you create more disability inclusive programmes?

Disability inclusion requires deliberate efforts to ensure that young women and girls from a wide range of identities and with various impairments are not just included but can meaningfully participate and benefit from your programme. Here are some of the basics.

Improving Accessibility

Can I access and participate in the programme? Accessibility is the gateway to meaningful participation. Ensuring that people can access your programmes and spaces is the initial step toward meaningful participation and inclusion and addressing many of the barriers listed in previous sections. This involves removing physical and other environmental barriers. It also requires making individual accommodations such as providing adaptive equipment, making activity adaptations, or providing communication support to respond to individual needs that enable equal and enjoyable participation in activities.

Fostering Inclusion

How am I treated when I'm there? Inclusion focuses on how individuals are treated and how they feel when they participate. It involves using gender and disability-inclusive language, fostering respectful interactions, building relationships, and understanding and responding to each young woman or girl's motivations and goals for being there. Creating an inclusive environment can transform mere presence into active and meaningful participation.

Case Study

Football for All in Vietnam

Football for Vietnam support football, badminton and tennis clubs in primary and secondary schools, engaging 6 to 15 year-old boys and girls, mainly from minority communities. A number have physical disabilities, Down Syndrome and hearing impairments. Using the Goal Curriculum, they embed their work within the Government education system, providing sports and life skills training for female teachers and coaches including those working with the Government. The government is a strategic stakeholder because they endorse inclusion policies: most of the disability schools fall within the government system and it's an opportunity for the organisation to initiate inclusion discussions with the government, and also international and national sports federations, who set the coaching curriculums in conjunction with government.

SERVE in Sri Lanka work within Government and semi-Government schools and are playing a key role in advising and receiving support from the Government in strategic adaptive communication linked to their Goal programme, as well as resources to improve accessibility and learning for hard-of-hearing and visually impaired learners.

Who can support you in your disability inclusion efforts?


To respond to the full diversity of your participants, it is critical to collaborate and learn from the following stakeholders:

- **Women & girls:** They are the experts of their own lived experiences and will support you to understand the barriers they face, and how they should be addressed. This involves listening to the voices and perspectives of diverse groups of women and girls with disabilities, such as conducting targeted consultations and discussions with young women and girls who belong to different intersecting marginalised identities.
- **Disability Experts:** Engage professionals with expertise in disability inclusion to complement direct engagement with the participants. Collaborating with these individuals is especially beneficial for cases involving more severe/complex impairments, ensuring that the programme is well-equipped to meet the diverse needs of all participants. Social workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, or sign language interpreters can also help to improve inclusivity and accessibility.
- **Parents & Caregivers:** Family is often a key gatekeeper for the participation of young women and girls with disabilities. It's critical to sensitise parents and caregivers on the benefits of their child's participation and the accessibility options available. They can also often support you to understand the unique accommodations their child may require to be meaningfully included. Note: It's important that you do not assume though that the parent or caregiver will be a person without a disability. They may also be a person with a disability and have their own accommodation needs.
- **Organisation of persons with disabilities (OPDs/ DPOs):** These organisations represent the voices and perspectives of persons with disabilities. They can act as a critical resource and ally in your inclusion efforts.
- **Community-based or civil society organisations (CSOs):** There are many CSOs dedicated to working with people with disabilities that can help identify how to best adapt your programme to meet the requirements of participants with disabilities. You may also want to consider partnerships with these organisations to support needs like transportation, specific services, adaptive equipment, and training.
- **Women's organisations:** Women's organisations that support the rights of women in all their diversity can be another excellent ally, network builder, and advocacy partner.
- **Media partners:** Media partners are key for promoting your programme, sharing successes, and helping to challenge negative norms around gender & disability in sport and society.
- **Sport federations or sport organisations:** Sports federations and organisations are helpful partners as they can support you to understand appropriate adaptive sport options, provide access to sport spaces, and train on/provide adaptive equipment.

How can you focus your efforts?

1 Stakeholder Engagement & Needs Assessment.


Engage with the key stakeholders mentioned above to understand your local disability context, and your programme's needs around disability-inclusion for young women and girls. Work with this group to understand and prioritise the accessibility and inclusion needs.

 2 **Set Clear Objectives.** Use the insights and priorities identified through your needs assessment to define specific and achievable goals that will help you make progress toward disability inclusion in your programmes. It's important to create tailored objectives that fit your specific programme's needs and the unique characteristics of your participants. Examples include:

- Provide training to coaches on inclusive coaching techniques, adaptive equipment usage, and effective communication with participants with disabilities.
- Identify and address any financial, transportation, or logistical barriers that may hinder young women and girls with disabilities from participating.


- Aim to recruit and retain a specific percentage increase in the number of young women and girls with disabilities participating in the programme.
- Ensure that facilities, equipment, and communication materials are fully accessible to individuals with various types of disabilities.
- Implement activities and initiatives that encourage positive interactions and friendships among participants with and without disabilities.
- Provide avenues for participants with disabilities to engage in competitive sports or events at their desired level, whether recreational or competitive.
- Conduct disability awareness workshops and educational sessions for the broader community, especially around the additional challenges that young women and girls with disabilities face, and the potential impact of their inclusion in sport programmes.
- Identify and work with disability inclusion champions in the community.
- Conduct a disability-inclusive safeguarding policy audit and make necessary changes.


Think about objectives that set you up for the sustainable and meaningful inclusion of young women and girls with disabilities in your programmes.

 3 **Create an Action Plan.** Develop a detailed plan with specific steps, responsibilities, milestones and timelines for implementation.

It is also vital to acknowledge that successful and sustainable disability inclusion is an ongoing process and takes time. When disability intersects with more socially marginalised identities, plan for longer. It is a process that should be done with care, and should not be rushed.

For example, one organisation consulted for this resource worked step-by-step with each young woman and their family individually as they were working in a community setting where trust-building takes time, girls with disabilities are hidden away, and there are wide linguistic diversity and cultural influences that needed to be understood and considered.

 4 **Allocate Resources & Get Buy-in.** Ensure you have the necessary financial and personnel resources to achieve your goals, and make sure everyone is on board!

 5 **Monitor Progress and Adapt.** Track progress, collect feedback, and be open to making adjustments to continually improve your inclusion efforts. Provide frequent updates on progress to key stakeholders and provide opportunities for the young women and girls, as well as their families and the community to hold you accountable.

Map it out

You can use the template below as a guide for mapping out your action plan.

GOALS	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES	SUPPORT	ENGAGEMENT	MILESTONES	REPOSIBLE
What goals do you have to make your programming more inclusive?	What activities will help you achieve this?	What resources do you have already? What other resources/support do you need?	Who might be able to help you reach your goal?	How will you reach out to these potential supporters?	What are the key milestones to reach your goal?	Who is responsible for driving this project?



5. Improving Accessibility

This section dives deeper into accessibility. It provides key strategies to ensure that your programme is not only accessible but also empowering for young women and girls with disabilities. The majority of the guidance in this section is sport-focused but translates to life skills activities as well.

“We are looking forward to a time where shame, a field to play, equipment and lack of finances will not be a hindrance in playing sports.”

– Teresia, Round Table Participant

How do you improve the accessibility of your programmes?

Below are some of the key actions you can take:

1. **Know your space:** understand the environmental barriers to participation.
2. **Know your participants:** understand your participants' unique motivations and accommodation needs.
3. **Know your equipment needs:** understand what equipment or modifications are needed.
4. **Know how to adapt your activities:** understand what adaptations are needed for more inclusive activities.
5. **Know your budget:** understand how to resource accessibility & individual accommodation requests.

1. Know your space

An accessible physical environment is fundamental to developing inclusive programming for young women and girls with disabilities.

Location: It is important to hold sessions close to where the young women and girls with disabilities live, or somewhere that is easily accessible by them. Proximity and safety plays a critical role in access to and sustained participation in the programme. This is because of the additional risk and barriers faced by young women and girls with disabilities when travelling to and from sessions. Some organisations provide free and accessible transportation to and from sessions as a key disability inclusion strategy. Work with your participants, their parents, and the community to identify the best location to hold sessions.

Venue: It is important to know how young women and girls with various impairments enter, move through, and experience the spaces in which sessions take place. Use an accessibility checklist to understand the accessibility of your venue (find an example accessibility checklist in **Annex 1: Accessibility Checklist**) and engage with participants directly to understand the physical barriers they face at your venue (see the ‘Environment Walk’ tool below). It’s important to note that you may not be able to make major infrastructure changes, for example, installing a lift at your venue. However, it would be reasonable for you to explore other more accessible venue options if you find there are too many physical barriers at your current venue.

Case Study

Wheelchair traditional dance and basketball is gender transformative in Nepal

The **National Indigenous Disabled Women Association of Nepal (NIDWAN)** is working with young indigenous women with disabilities linking sports and culture. They are aged between 18 and 35 years old, some are young mothers and all come from traditional, patriarchal and often remote mountain and valley communities. Many have spinal cord injuries and through honing their wheelchair basketball and wheelchair traditional dance skills they raise awareness and shift negative perceptions about marginalised women with disability from minority communities. Young mothers with disabilities in wheelchairs wearing traditional costumes is not a common sight in Nepal and increasing their visibility in the community has had a transformative effect. Families are invited as participants to national tournaments and festivals and see their determination in training and playing competitively. The women report new respect and trust, and it has even led to a fall in domestic violence.



Environment Walk

Facilitating an **Environment Walk**¹⁷ is a great way to include participants in identifying safety and accessibility needs. The purpose of this activity is to (1) orient participants to the space, and (2) identify and eliminate physical barriers to participation or safety concerns.

Environment Walk Activity

(adapted from Save the Children)

When to deliver?

- Ideally, this would be conducted early in the planning of a programme.
- However, this can also be done at the start of a programme or sessions where participants are shown or walked around the environment (showing the play area, toilets, rooms, equipment, place they will get water, etc).

Who to involve?

- Young women and girls with a range of impairments.
- You can also involve parents/ caregivers or teachers depending on the age of the young women and girls, their accessibility needs and what location is being assessed for accessibility and safety.

How to deliver?

1. The young women and girls should be put into pairs or groups and partnered with an adult or coach to conduct the environment walk with them.
2. Each group should be given a clipboard and paper and guided around the space by their facilitator.
3. Ask the participants to move around the space identifying things in the venue that:
 - a)are less safe for them
 - b)are harder to move around easily
 - c)make them feel uncomfortable
 - d)make them unable to fully participate
4. Also ask participants to identify things that make them feel:
 - a)safe
 - b)included
 - c)comfortable

After some time, bring participants back to the large group and ask them to share their feedback if they are comfortable.

Facilitation Tips

- This can be a short (1 hour) activity or made longer to provide more time to assess the space and facilitate discussion.
- A checklist can be provided, or it can be open-ended.
- Facilitators should be able to communicate effectively with the participant, e.g. able to use sign language.
- Young women or girls with visual impairments or blindness should be helped to move around the space or have it described to orient themselves.
- Any participant who needs help writing should have a facilitator acting as a scribe and recording their responses.
- An environment drawing exercise may be more appropriate for young women and girls with difficulties moving around.
- Probe around the ‘why?’ aspect to understand what different aspects of the physical space makes them feel and why.
- Discuss any proposed modifications.



Below is an example form to be completed during the environment walk. Participants and facilitators can note down their thoughts and experiences on the form as they move through the space.

Inside Spaces

Things that make me feel SAFE	Where was this?	Why did it make you feel that way?
The large windows in the gym.	Along one wall in the gym.	The windows let in a lot of light which means I can see better and feel safer moving around/playing and avoiding hazards.
Things that make me feel UNSAFE	Where was this?	Why did it make you feel that way?
Narrow doorways in the gymnasium.	At the entrance to the gym.	The narrow doorways restrict my access with my wheelchair, making it difficult for me to participate in gym activities.

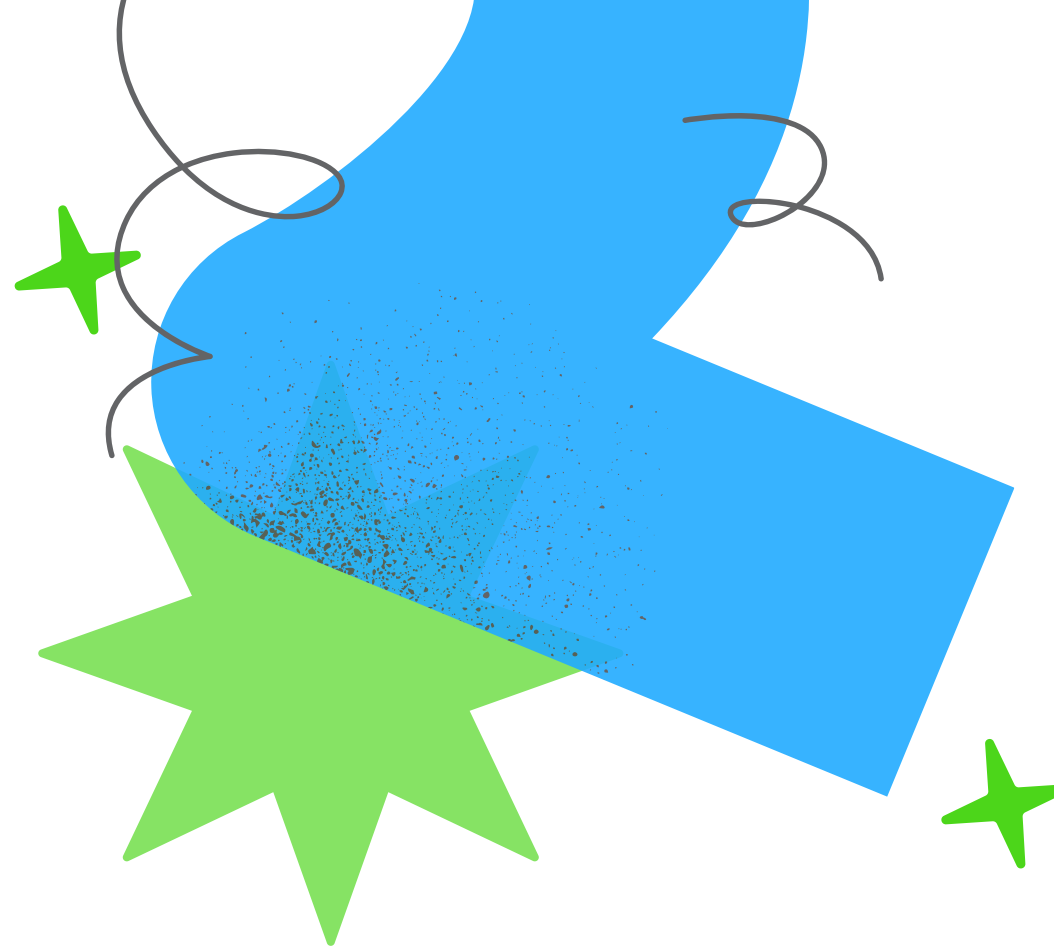
Outside Spaces

Things that make me feel SAFE	Where was this?	Why did it make you feel that way?
The accessible toilets are close by.	Next to the football pitch.	I did not need to travel far from the activities to reach an accessible toilet that I felt safe going to.
Things that make me feel UNSAFE	Where was this?	Why did it make you feel that way?
The basketball court.	Court 3.	The uneven ground makes it difficult to move around in my wheelchair.

How do you clearly communicate around the accessibility of your venue?¹⁸

Young women and girls often do not participate in programmes because they are afraid they will not be able to navigate the space or participate fully. They are also less likely to speak up and ask about available accommodations and for what they need to participate. This is why it is critical for you to share upfront and clearly communicate about the accessibility of your venue/sessions.

1. Always **provide an email/phone** and point person for people to directly contact for any accessibility related enquiries and be sure to follow up. Ensure this is a trusted individual and knows how to communicate effectively with young women and girls and their parents/caregivers.
2. **Communicate upfront about the access you do or do not have** when promoting programmes and events. Make sure to include as many details as you can. It's important to be honest about the reality of the space! Perfection is not required but your intention and actions to address access is key to engaging and building trust with young women and girls with disabilities and their families and caregivers. This is especially needed for more marginalised groups where trust building takes time and evidence of action is required.
3. Promote this access information and your point person's information on your **websites, social media pages, radio announcements** etc. Encourage people to contact them with specific questions or requests they might have.



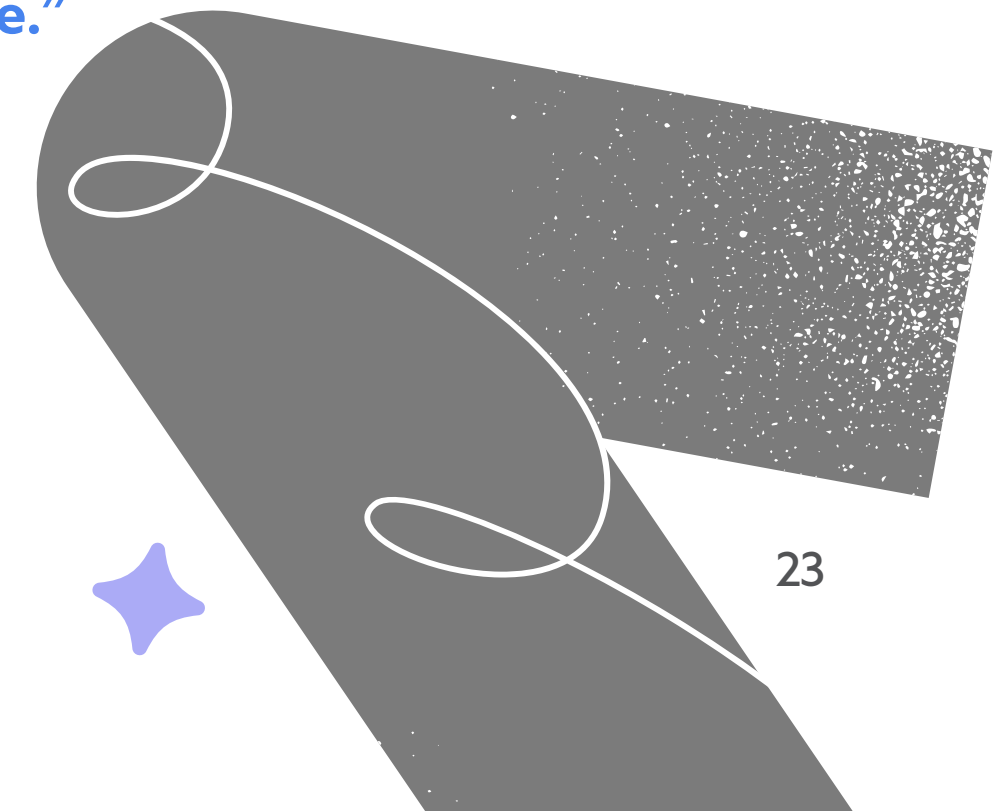
An example of helpful access information:

“The venue is wheelchair accessible and barrier free. There are accessible toilets in the venue close to play areas. Free tap water is available. The sound levels may be high as this is a public space. The nearest public transport is 100m away. The nearest parking space is 20m away. All routes accessible. No ID necessary for entry. Please contact X for more information.”

If you have to hold your programmes in a non-accessible space, consider whether this is really your only option. If this is unavoidable, ensure that the access limitations are clearly marked on all programme related material (social media, flyers, posters, event listings, websites etc.)

Example:

“There are 5 stairs from the play-area to the inside meeting space. The stairs are steep and have no railing. No lift is available. There are an additional two stairs leading from the meeting space to the toilets. No accessible toilets available. Contact X for more information on the accommodations available.”



2. Know your participants

Critical to your inclusion efforts is understanding your participants as individuals, especially to respond to the diversity of young women and girls with disabilities in your group. They are your best source of information about what allows them to participate easily, enjoyably, and safely! Instead of focusing on their disability, work with them to understand what their goals are for participating in your programme, and ask them what they need to achieve these goals. This will help you to understand what their motivations are and what accommodations might be needed to meaningfully include them in your sessions.

Participant Support Questions:¹⁹

- What are your goals in sport and/or this programme?
- What can we do to help you fully participate?
- What supports do you have in general life that could be used to assist your participation?
- What do we need to know to ensure you can participate safely?
- What is the best way for us to communicate?
- What specific or modified equipment do you need to fully participate?
- Does anything impact your ability to perform the sport/activities in the programme?
- Who else can we speak with to better understand you and your support needs?
- What else do we need to know to help you participate fully and achieve your goals?

Remember to also engage parents and caregivers if you are working with more complex or severe forms of impairment.

Case Study

Right to Play Pakistan

Right to Play Pakistan is a non-profit organisation dedicated to enhancing the lives of children through play. The organisation runs the Goal Programme within a community orphanage that includes children with hearing impairments. To ensure that deaf girls can fully participate in the programme, the coach, who is not trained in sign language, uses a variety of methods to communicate with them. The coaches use text, charts, and diagrams to lead the activity process. The coaches also enlists the help of other girls who live with the deaf girls and can better communicate with them. This allows the deaf girls to understand the activity instructions and fully participate in the activity and discussions. For example, they worked together to adapt an activity called "Hope, Hope, and Joy," to use signals instead of spoken words. "Hope" is represented by a single tap, and "Joy" by a double tap.

3. Know your equipment needs

You may find that you need to provide adaptive equipment or modify existing equipment to enable the young women and girls with disabilities in your programmes to independently and enjoyably participate in sports and activities.

When considering what equipment is needed, consider the following:

- **The individual girl's needs:** For example, someone with a visual impairment may need equipment that is specifically designed for them, such as a ball with a bell inside or a racquet with a high-contrast grip. Someone with a physical disability may need equipment that is lightweight and easy to use, or that provides additional support or stability. Remember, equipment and assistive devices are not always built with women and girls in mind, so it is especially important to work with and listen to the young women and girls when finding the right equipment. Review the 'Participant Support Questions' from above to consult with the individual on their equipment needs.
- **Guidance from an expert:** It is also always a good idea to consult with a healthcare professional or physical therapist. They can help assess the girls' needs and abilities and recommend specific equipment or safe modifications. Make sure the expert has experience working with and responding to the unique needs of young women and girls!
- **Trial and error:** Allow participants to try out different adaptive equipment or modifications to see what works best for them. This may involve borrowing or renting equipment to test before making any purchases. Make sure you build a safe and open space where they feel safe to share feedback and needs. This is critical for young women and girls who may not speak up and share their feedback on the equipment they are provided.

Below are a few examples of equipment modifications:

Wheelchairs



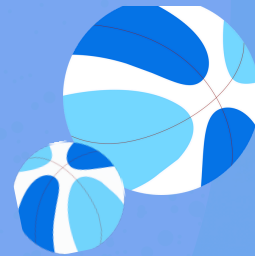
- Adding foam padding or inserts to the seat and backrest to provide additional support and comfort.
- Attaching straps or harnesses to secure the athlete in the wheelchair.
- Modifying the wheels to provide better grip or stability.
- Raising the front wheels to allow for easier wheelies (lifting wheels off the ground) or manoeuvring over obstacles.

Gloves



- Adding padding or reinforcements to protect the hands from bumps or impacts.
- Attaching velcro straps to provide a more secure grip on objects.
- Adding reflective materials to the gloves for improved visibility in low-light conditions.

Balls



- Increasing the size of the ball to make it easier to catch or throw.
- Reducing the weight of the ball to make it easier to throw or hit.
- Using a softer ball to reduce impact and discomfort.
- Adding texture or ridges to the ball to improve grip.
- Inserting a bell or other noisemaker inside the ball to provide auditory feedback.
- Using different colours or patterns on the ball to make it easier to track or see.

Rackets



- Extending the handle length to provide better reach and leverage.
- Enlarging the head size of the racket to increase the sweet spot.
- Modifying the grip shape or material to improve comfort and control.
- Adding weights or dampeners to the racket to reduce vibration and improve feel.
- Using different strings or tensions in the racket to adjust for different playing styles or abilities.

Bats



- Extending the handle length to provide better reach and leverage.
- Soften the bat/make them foam based.
- Modifying the grip shape or material to improve comfort and control.

4. Know how to modify your activities

One of the most important contributors to meaningful participation in sports and life skill programming is ensuring activities can be enjoyed by all participants.

TREE Method for Activity Modification

There are various methods you can use when adapting activities to be more inclusive, and most sports have adaptive alternatives. Below outlines the general **TREE method**. Regardless of what method you use, remember, all individuals have different needs; what works for one person with disability may not work for someone else, and what worked last week/month/year may not work today. Furthermore, adaptation may work immediately for some, but not at all for others. Some may need it just to learn a new skill, while others require long term adaptation. Focus on helping each participant find the right method of play that works best for them.

T.R.E.E.²⁰

Teaching or coaching style: This is about how the coach delivers the activity, how they organise, lead, and communicate. Suggested coaching modifications:

- use disability and age appropriate language.
- keep instructions short and simple and check for understanding.
- be mindful of your positioning, making sure participants are within visual and audible range.
- use appropriate physical assistance: guide participants through a movement.
- use visual aids and demonstrations, such as white boards or cue cards.
- try a buddy/mentoring system.

- ✓ Work with participants to be innovative and creative in modifying a space and game to work for the whole group.
- ✓ Come prepared with several adaptation options to respond to any unexpected changes or needs as you start a session.
- ✓ Encourage participation, but never force anyone to participate!

Buddy/Mentor systems can be helpful in promoting inclusion and meaningful participation. It involves pairing young women and girls with disabilities alongside an experienced participant without disabilities or an outside mentor to offer support and assistance with tasks or emotional support. This approach fosters teamwork and provides participants with disabilities the opportunity to participate fully in sports activities.



Rules: Making changes to the rules to games and activities can enable greater inclusion. You can remove or simplify rules and then reintroduce them. Here are some suggestions:

- allow for more bounces in games like tennis, more steps in basketball or more hits in volleyball.
- reduce the number of players on a team to increase the chances of getting involved.
- increase the number of players on a team to decrease the amount of activity required by each player.
- allow more frequent substitutions.
- allow rolls, bounces, or underarm in cricket, baseball or softball.
- modify the distances for pitching or defending.
- ensure everyone has to touch the ball before the team can score.
- avoid other participants dominating the game.
- or reduce or remove competitive elements such as scoring.

Environment: This is all about making changes to the space, for the whole group or individuals within the group. Try these approaches:

- reducing or increasing the size of the playing area.
- implementing zones within the playing area.
- reducing net, hoop or goal height and width.
- using a smooth surface such as an indoor court.
- limiting distractions in the surrounding area such as loud music, unnecessary equipment or other activities.

Equipment: This is all about changing the thing used to play the game or complete the activity. Try these out:

- change the size.
- change the weight.
- change the colour.
- change the length.
- change the way you use it. No
- use balls that bounce less or float more
- use equipment in a colour that contrasts with the area of play.

Note: Schedules or calendars presented in existing curricula may need adjustment to accommodate activity modification for (i) effective life skills comprehension, especially for those with intellectual impairments; (ii) inclusive sports adaptations, learning new motor and other skills.

Case Study

Volley4Change

Volley4Change extended their 8-week programme to 12 weeks programme to allow for more time to get through content based on adaptation needs and the necessary and greater engagement with families/caretakers. It also provides flexibility for revisiting specific topics, potentially in a one-to-one or smaller group format.

When working with participants with intellectual disabilities, **VAP Kenya** coaches make sure they include more breaks. They run a Life Skill session for about 10-15 minutes, then they move to a short energiser, then again to a Life Skills session, then one more energiser or break and they follow this with a sport training/games session.

5. Know your budget

A true commitment to inclusion requires adequate budgets and resourcing for accessibility and reasonable individual accommodations. Remember, creating accessible environments benefits all your participants and is not just a ‘nice to have’. It should be seen as an essential and necessary requirement for all programmes.

Inclusive budgeting includes:

- **Physical accessibility** (e.g. providing accessible transportation options.)
- **Accessible communications** (e.g. offering materials in multiple formats, such as braille, large print, and audio, to ensure that women and girls with disabilities have equal access to information and opportunities.)
- **Reasonable accommodations** (e.g. responding to individual requirements and providing young women and girls with disabilities the support they need to engage in activities on an equal basis with others.)
- **Specialised items** (e.g. providing sports uniforms and gear designed to accommodate diverse body shapes and preferences of women and girls with disabilities, such as adaptive sports bras or prosthetic-friendly attire OR offering hygiene and wellness products tailored to the needs of women and girls with disabilities, such as urinary incontinence supplies.)
- **Assistive devices and mobility equipment** (e.g. providing adaptive sports equipment and assistive devices that cater to the specific abilities and interests of young women and girls with disabilities, encouraging their engagement in various sports and life skills activities.)



6. Coaching for Inclusion

This section provides guidance on the role of a coach in disability inclusion, the use of disability-inclusive language, and implementing coaching strategies that enable all participants to benefit from and enjoy your programmes more fully.

What is the role of the coach in disability inclusion?

Many of the young women and girls with disabilities you might work with may not have had other experiences in sport and life skills programmes, may have had negative first experiences, or have had limited opportunities for socialisation. You play a key role in making their experience a positive one!

A coach working with young women and girls with and without disabilities should...

→ **have a basic understanding of accessibility** - knowing the basic accessibility requirements of facilities and venues for your sessions, knowing your participants' needs, and understanding basic equipment modifications. This allows you to plan and be flexible in modifying activities to create a fun and positive experience for all. See section 'Improving Accessibility' for more information on accessibility requirements & equipment.

→ **build personal relationship & support networks** – fostering relationships with and between your participants is critical. This is especially important for young women and girls who are often used to being excluded, ignored, and isolated. It helps them feel more comfortable engaging in activities, sharing what they need to participate, asking for support, and transferring the life skills they learn in session to the rest of their lives. In order to do this...

- **be a welcoming presence and greet every participant** with positivity and enthusiasm. Show them you are excited they are there, and ask questions that show you're interested in and care for them (while respecting their boundaries).
- **create opportunities** for connection between participants and in ways they might not otherwise connect outside of the session.

- **set clear ground rules** with participants that make it clear that behaviours such as teasing, shaming, bullying and harassment are not tolerated.
- **avoid “othering”** by viewing each individual as a whole person and not only for their disability. It is important to know when and when not to acknowledge differences. There are ways to recognise the uniqueness of every young woman or girl without “othering” or singling anyone out.

→ **redefine ‘performance’** – supporting the skill development of each participant, while redefining success and performance in a way that recognises that young women and girls with disabilities may take longer to engage, develop skills or make progress than others. In order to do this...

- **Celebrate (non-physical) efforts as much as progress or performance.** Try to show that it's possible for everyone to have some kind of success in every single session. For example, congratulate a participant for how well they listened in a particular session (and not necessarily for the amount of goals they scored). Take the emphasis away from competition and toward fun, building trust and community.
- **understand individual goals and motivations** for engaging in the programme, and create a supportive and fun environment that sets everyone up for their own definition of success.
- **support them through experiences of disappointment and frustration** and show them that even disappointing and emotional moments can be a chance to learn resilience.

Note: Many of the coaching techniques were adapted from Nike's 'Coaching for Belonging Playbook'. See more here: <https://www.goodpush.org/node/2398>

→ **promote life skills development** – ensuring that the young women and girls you work with are gaining valuable and transferable life skills. Core life skills such as confidence, decision making, problem solving and leadership as well as knowledge about sexual and reproductive health and rights are just as important for young women and girls with disabilities, as they are for anyone else (if not more). However, the approach to teaching and practising these skills may need to be adapted considering the form of impairments your participants may have. There are also certain life skills that can be even more critical for young women and girls with disabilities. This is due to some of the increased risks/barriers they can face in society, for example:

- **Self-advocacy & rights knowledge:** Use sessions to support young women to practise how to assert themselves, communicate their needs – what they like and don't like - and to understand their rights, boundaries, and when those boundaries have been crossed.
- **Building relationships & trust:** Run activities in ways that support skills like communication, empathy, and teamwork to allow young women to practise building positive connections, socialising, and building their network of support.
- **Self-care:** Use sessions to provide simple ways young women and girls can integrate physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing practices into their daily lives, especially if they have limited movement or socialisation opportunities outside of the sessions.
- **Sexual and reproductive health and rights:** Find ways to emphasise that young women and girls with disabilities have the same rights as anyone else, including sexual and reproductive health and rights. Normalise conversations about menstruation for those with and without disabilities.

→ **role modelling inclusivity** – being a role model, and championing inclusion! When coaches exemplify empathy, kindness and openness, the young women and girls will be more likely to take it forward in their own lives. Even if you make mistakes, acknowledge them and then grow. Other strategies include:

- **Using examples in sessions** and celebrating women athletes and coaches with disabilities.
- **Instead of shying away** from big, challenging topics, consider using them as teachable moments.
- **Talking as a team**, in age-appropriate ways, about misconceptions and stereotypes and how they can be harmful even when not intended to be.
- **Providing opportunities for leadership.** Show the group that everyone has leadership qualities and potential.
- **Taking time to recognise and challenge your own position**, and assumptions about gender, disability, and sport as well.
- **Calling out praise when you see participants communicating well**, supporting each other and including everyone.



Case Study

Embarking on a journey together - what can we do, how can we include you?

Maitrayana's vision is a gender equal society in India where girls can access their rights and achieve their potential. Leveraging the power of sport and its ecosystem is their mission and strategy, and traditionally, they work in schools, building life skills connected with netball. Until recently, the numbers of girls with disabilities they worked with were small and mostly with partial disability. Staff were hesitant to engage more broadly with people with disabilities as they felt their skills were inadequate to engage on disability and the term alone was blocking creative ideas. In addition, there was a fear of possibly causing offence by saying or doing the wrong thing around girls with disabilities.

On reflection and recognising their role and strengths in inclusion, they pivoted towards seeing the girls first in all their diversity – rich, poor, pregnant, young mothers, with and without disability, out-of-school and so on. Two girls with disabilities became young mentors for staff as they explored how best to leverage their gender and social inclusion skill sets into an adaptive and inclusive programme.

Other girls living with disabilities from the community heard about this development and became involved. Staff and the girls worked together in awareness raising with their parents and the wider community. It is becoming a demand-driven community adaptive process. One lesson and good practice is to see the girl or young women in all their diversity - know her name, get to know her personality, her potential as a change agent and ally. This is the social model and entry point for change. Hence, you do not have to be an 'expert', a medic or physiotherapist, bone specialist etc. to work with people with disabilities. You can build a roster of two or three specialists who can support assessments, identification of risks and potential and invite guest speakers for specific advice. As a Maitrayana staff member you need to be a specialist in inclusion, and the girls, women, boys, men and other identities are your companions on the journey.

How do you build your knowledge and skills in gender-sensitive disability inclusion?

Often when coaches encounter a young woman or girl with disabilities, they may feel unsure about their ability to respond and can leave them out simply because they are not informed on the best methods to involve them. Ask yourself:

- What skills and knowledge do I have around disability inclusion?
- What other skills or knowledge might I need to respond to the specific needs of young women and girls with disabilities?
- How can I fill my skills and knowledge gaps?

Some suggestions include:

- **Talk to other coaches.** Collaborate with other coaches or organisations experienced in working with young women and girls with disabilities. Ask about best practices, share ideas, and brainstorm solutions to challenges.
- **Find opportunities for parent/caregiver interaction** to understand any tailored assistance their child may require and brainstorm creative ways to engage their child.
- **Work with your participants**, their parents/caregivers, or experts to develop basic communication skills, for example in local sign language.
- **Engage with experts** to understand how to use assistive devices, technology, and equipment that specifically responds to the needs of young women and girls. They can also support you to identify simple and low-cost modifications you can make to your equipment.
- **Identify opportunities for training or qualification/certificates** in disability inclusion or adaptive sports to build your skills in a structured and supportive learning environment. This can also support you to pass on skills to others more effectively.
- **Inform yourself about the most marginalised groups.** Work to understand who might be the most marginalised, and may need the most support. What are the barriers they face? How can you support their meaningful participation?

How do you use disability-inclusive language in your coaching?

One of the most important things a coach can do is recognise the **power of their words**. Using empowering language can be the foundation of respect and understanding between coaches and participants, and between participants themselves. It plays a key role in making the young women and girls with disabilities feel valued and meaningfully included in your programmes.

General principles for disability-inclusive language²¹

Adapted from the UN Disability Inclusive Language Guidelines

When speaking about disabilities use the following principles as a guide:

- 1. Use people-first language.** People-first language emphasises the person, not the disability, by placing a reference to the person or group before the reference to the disability. For example, saying “a young woman with autism” instead of “an autistic woman.” If you are unsure how to speak about someone’s disability or impairment, you should ask the person or group.
- 2. Avoid labels and stereotypes.** Avoid labelling people and only mention a person's disability or impairment when it is directly relevant to the conversation, brings clarity, or provides useful information.
- 3. Focus on support not the disability.** When asking if you can assist, take the emphasis off the disability or impairment and emphasise the availability of support instead. Ask about what support they need, not about their disability.

4. Avoid condescending euphemisms. While terms like “differently abled” may be well-intentioned, they can come across as patronising. Similarly, describing individuals with disabilities as having “special needs” can be offensive and condescending. Opt for more neutral and positive language, like referring to “tailored assistance” or “requires specific accommodations” whenever possible.

5. Disability is not an illness or a problem. Expressions such as “suffers from,” “afflicted with,” or “stricken with” can be inappropriate as they imply constant pain and powerlessness. They also carry the assumption that individuals with disabilities have a lower quality of life. Instead, use statements like “has [a disability]” or “is [blind/deaf/deafblind]” to describe a person's condition. Additionally, when describing people without disabilities, don’t use terms like “normal”, “healthy”, or “able-bodied”. Instead, use “non-disabled” or “people without (visible) disabilities.”

6. Speak respectfully and use everyday language. Most persons with disabilities are comfortable with the phrases used in daily life. For example, you can say “let’s go for a walk” to a person who uses a wheelchair or write “have you heard the news?” to a person who is hard of hearing. However, avoid offensive phrases like “blind as a bat” or “deaf as a post,” and never use disability-related terms as insults or criticism!



Being intentional about using empowering language is critical to inclusive coaching.

Before asking someone about their disability (or disability status), consider these three things:

- What is your motivation for knowing/asking?
- Is it relevant or necessary to provide support or for their participation in activities?
- How will knowing this information help?

Dos and Don'ts of disability-inclusive language

Recommended language

- person with disability, person with [type of impairment], persons/people with disabilities.
- person without disability.
- have [disability/impairment/condition].
- person with an intellectual disability, person with an intellectual impairment.
- person with a psychosocial disability.
- deaf person, person who is deaf, person with a hearing disability, person with a hearing impairment, person with hearing loss, hard-of-hearing person, deafblind person.
- blind person, person who is blind, person with a vision/visual disability, person with a vision/visual impairment, person with low vision, deafblind person.
- person with a physical disability, person with a physical impairment.

Language to be avoided

- disabled person, handicapped, person with special needs, handicapable, atypical, person living with a disability, differently abled, people of all abilities, people of determination.
- normal, healthy, able-bodied, typical, whole, of sound body/mind.
- suffer from, afflicted by, stricken by, troubled with.
- retarded, simple, slow, afflicted, brain-damaged, intellectually challenged, subnormal, of unsound mind, feeble-minded, mentally handicapped
- insane, crazy, maniac, psycho, hypersensitive, lunatic, demented, panicked, agitated, mentally deranged, mentally ill.
- the deaf, hearing impaired, deaf and dumb, deaf and mute.
- the blind, partially-sighted.
- crippled, invalid, deformed, lame, handicapped, physically challenged, person with physical limitations, limp.

Recomended language

wheelchair user, person who uses a wheelchair, person with a mobility disability, person with a mobility impairment, person using a mobility device.

person of short stature, little person.

person with Down syndrome, person with trisomy-21.

person with albinism.

person affected by leprosy.

person who uses a communication device, person who uses an alternative method of communication.

accessible parking, parking reserved for persons with disabilities, accessible bathroom.

Language to be avoided

confined/restricted to a wheelchair wheelchair-bound.

midget, dwarf, stunted.

mongoloid, special person, down.

albino.

leper, leprosy patient.

non-verbal, can't talk, mute.

disabled/handicapped parking, handicapped bathroom.

What are the critical actions to take before, during, and after a session?

Fostering inclusion is an ongoing process. It requires you to consider what actions can be taken before, during, and after activities that create safer, and more welcoming environments for all participants.

Use the checklist below as a reminder for steps you can take to foster inclusion:

Before activities

- ✓ **Communicate with participants.** Communicate directly with participants to understand their expectations and needs.
- ✓ **Communicate with families, parents, and caregivers.** Speak with those who support participants to know how you can tailor your approach and activities to the needs of all individuals' circumstances.
- ✓ **Assess and communicate with the venue.** Contact or visit the venue to make sure it is safe and meets your requirements. Confirm any additional support or modifications you need to ensure the venue is adequate. Share the accessibility features or potential barriers of the venue with participants.
- ✓ **Gather or request the appropriate or modified equipment.** Make sure you have or have requested all you need to conduct the session.
- ✓ **Ask for support if needed.** Ask for additional personnel or support if needed depending on the group. However, be aware that introducing new individuals to the group will require time spent on making sure everyone is comfortable and feeling safe.
- ✓ **Plan for inclusive activities.** Have a plan for how you will accommodate participants' different needs, skill levels, and abilities within the activities for that session.
- ✓ **Understand what you need to be confident at the session.** Even if you're feeling nervous yourself, try to communicate a strong sense that you are happy to have this individual/these individuals in your session; and that you are optimistic and confident that you and they will find a way to make their participation successful.



During activities

- ✓ **Use inclusive language.** Use inclusive language and make sure all participants are using inclusive language as well.
- ✓ **Communicate appropriately.** Be aware of the preferred mode of communication of your participants. Use simple straightforward instructions.
- ✓ **Provide support and encouragement.** Encourage all participants to participate and challenge themselves, but never force anyone to participate. Be patient and supportive, and offer assistance when needed. Remember, do not assume someone needs help, always ask if the participant wants your assistance and only provide the help requested.
- ✓ **Provide opportunities for leadership.** Identify opportunities for all participants to take on leadership responsibilities. This can significantly improve their self-confidence and sense of belonging.
- ✓ **Observe for safety.** Identify factors that will ensure both the physical and emotional safety of the group (e.g. everyone feels included)
- ✓ **Encourage interaction.** Encourage participants to interact with each other and build relationships. This can help foster mutual understanding and friendship, as well as a sense of community and belonging.
- ✓ **Celebrate successes.** Recognise and celebrate the accomplishments of all participants, regardless of their skill level.

After activities

- ✓ **Reflect on the activity.** Consider how you can make the activity more inclusive in the future.
- ✓ **Record adaptations that worked.** Record any effective adaptations (such as equipment modifications or coaching cues) so that they can be easily referenced in future sessions and shared with other coaches or facilitators.
- ✓ **Ask for feedback.** Ask participants for feedback on the activity and how you can improve.
 - Did you enjoy the session?
 - Did you learn something new? If yes, what was it?
 - Did you feel safe while participating? – what was it that made you feel safe or unsafe?
 - How can we improve in the next session so you can get the most out of it?
 - Any other feedback?
- ✓ **Share with families, parents, and caregivers.** Remember to talk to the parents again after the activity, telling them about their child's achievements. Highlight how their child's participation in the programme can also improve daily living skills, posture, mobility, endurance, and cognitive and social skills.
- ✓ **Share successes and challenges** with other coaches, your organisation, and the venue. For example, any accessibility challenges and required accommodations.



Case Study

Personal: An ongoing Journey for a Paralympian Sport and Life Skills Coach

At three years of age, this coach was already feeling isolated, as her parents and two older siblings prevented her from interacting with anyone outside the family. From childhood to early adolescence she was physically beaten, emotionally and verbally abused – told she was like a ‘beachstone’ who just sits there, useless, going nowhere in life. Born with Spina Bifida, she was crawling until 15 years of age, but nevertheless, she was fiercely interested in sports and knew she could compete. She was fortunate to meet a female counsellor who ignited a spark within her, renewing her interest in life and her own potential. Realising that she could change her life simply by trying, she moved towards sports, always her key passion. At first, she was learning ‘from the bench’ while being a spectator, looking at different physical activities and coaching styles. She was encouraged further by accessing a wheelchair, which became a life companion for everyday activities and later as she progressed to be one of the first female Paralympians in Kenya. Starting with racing, she competed in many parts of the country. She tried Wheelchair Volleyball, then Shot Put, Javelin and Discus, with Wheelchair Basketball ultimately being her favourite. She competed internationally and currently coaches adolescent girls and boys with disabilities for national and international competitions.

7. Inclusive Games & Adaptive Sports

This section provides a range of games and adaptive sport options to integrate into your programming.

Inclusive games

The following games and activities are designed to be played with little or no equipment, for all ages, and are suitable for a range of disabilities. These games can be integrated into your life skills activities or be played as a stand-alone game. They support social inclusion, and help people use their senses to connect with their surroundings, learn new skills and build confidence while making friends.

BALLOON KEEP UP

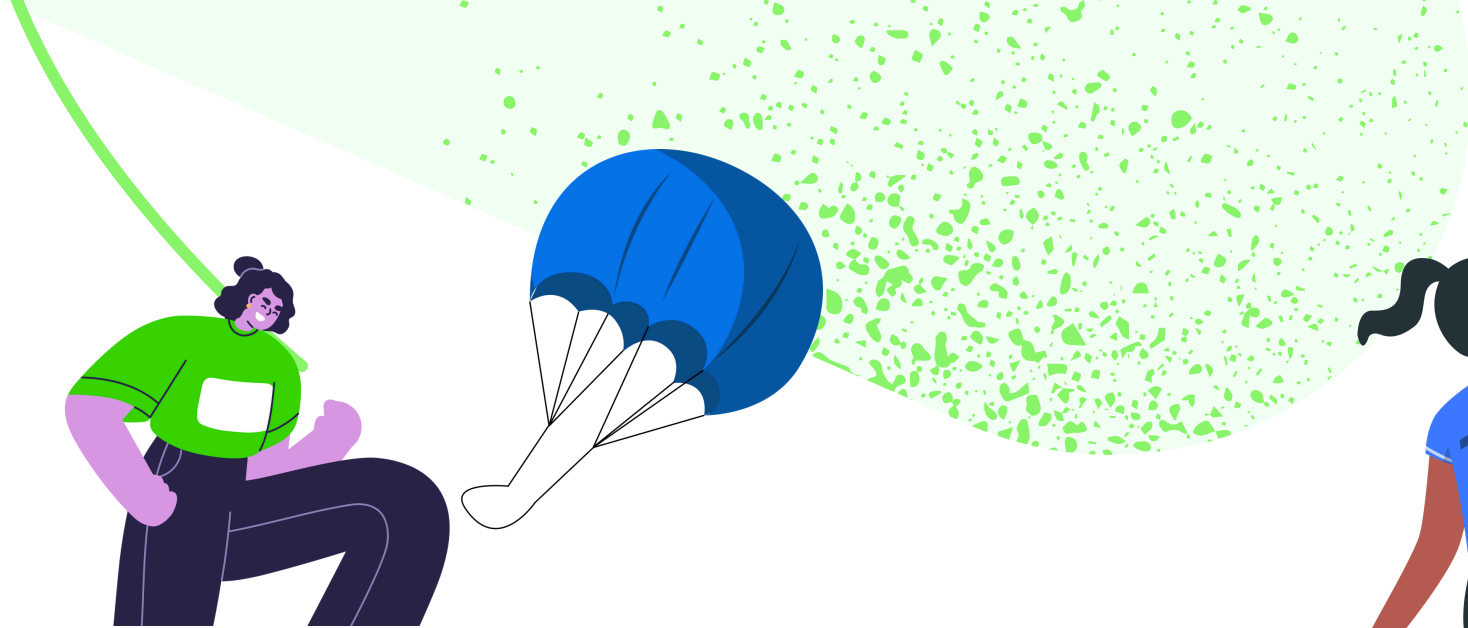
Keep your balloon off the floor for as long as possible with this quick and easy group game – all you need is a few inflated balloons.

Materials: Inflated balloons, a clear space to play.

How to play:

- Each player has to keep their balloon off the ground for as long as possible by tapping it up in the air.
- Players should be encouraged to stretch up and reach the balloons!
- For those finding it easy, try using multiple balloons or working as a group.
- If you are supporting the player, join in as part of their team, or offer support to those who need it.
- Make it more sensory with different coloured or shaped balloons.





PARACHUTE RUN

Players take turns making their way to the other side of the sheet before the parachute comes back down.

Materials: a large sheet.

How to play:

- Everyone stands around the sheet or 'parachute' and holds it tight at waist level.
- Players lift the parachute up above their heads and down again.
- As the players lift the parachute, the leader calls out a name.
- The named player then has to get to the other side of the parachute before it comes back down.
- Make it more sensory by playing a sound every time a player reaches the other side.
- Hold the parachute up for longer or bring it down more quickly to adapt the difficulty.
- Call out multiple names at once for more of a challenge.



SITTING VOLLEYBALL

Two teams take turns to pass the ball back and forth over the net in this seated version of volleyball. If it is a big group, try using more than one ball to keep everyone engaged.

Materials: a beach ball, balloon, or other light ball and a net at low height (or piece of rope).

How to play:

- One team starts with the ball. The participants must try to hit the ball back and forth over the net using any body part.
- You could add some competition – if a team drops a ball, the other team gets a point.
- Encourage participants to stretch up for the ball and shuffle across the space.
- Use different coloured balls – bright colours are great.
- Make it more sensory with balls that have bells in them or have different textures.
- Lighter or heavier balls will change the difficulty.
- If it's too easy, try moving the teams further away from the net, or closer for a less challenging game.
- You can also try raising or lowering the net.



YOGA

Yoga poses can be adapted to allow those with and without disabilities to participate in a personalised and enjoyable practice. Create your own yoga sequence with various poses and modifications to suit different needs.

Materials: a yoga mat or comfortable surface, optional props like blocks, cushions for support, straps, soothing background music or nature sounds.

How to practise:

- Select a series of yoga poses and breathing exercises suitable for the participants. Opt for poses that can be easily modified or adapted and have a range of standing, seated, and laying down options.
- Seated poses on a chair can be beneficial for individuals with mobility challenges.
- Integrate sensory elements into the practice, such as calming music, gentle scents, or textured props.

Adaptive Sports

Adaptive sports are sports that are modified to allow people with a range of disabilities to participate. Almost every sport, and many other athletic recreational activities, has an adaptive counterpart. The following section provides example adaptations to common sports. You can use similar techniques to other sports that may not be mentioned here. Remember to reference the T.R.E.E. method from the earlier section when adapting sports and activities. You can also find more extensive adaptive sports rules online.

Sport-specific Considerations:



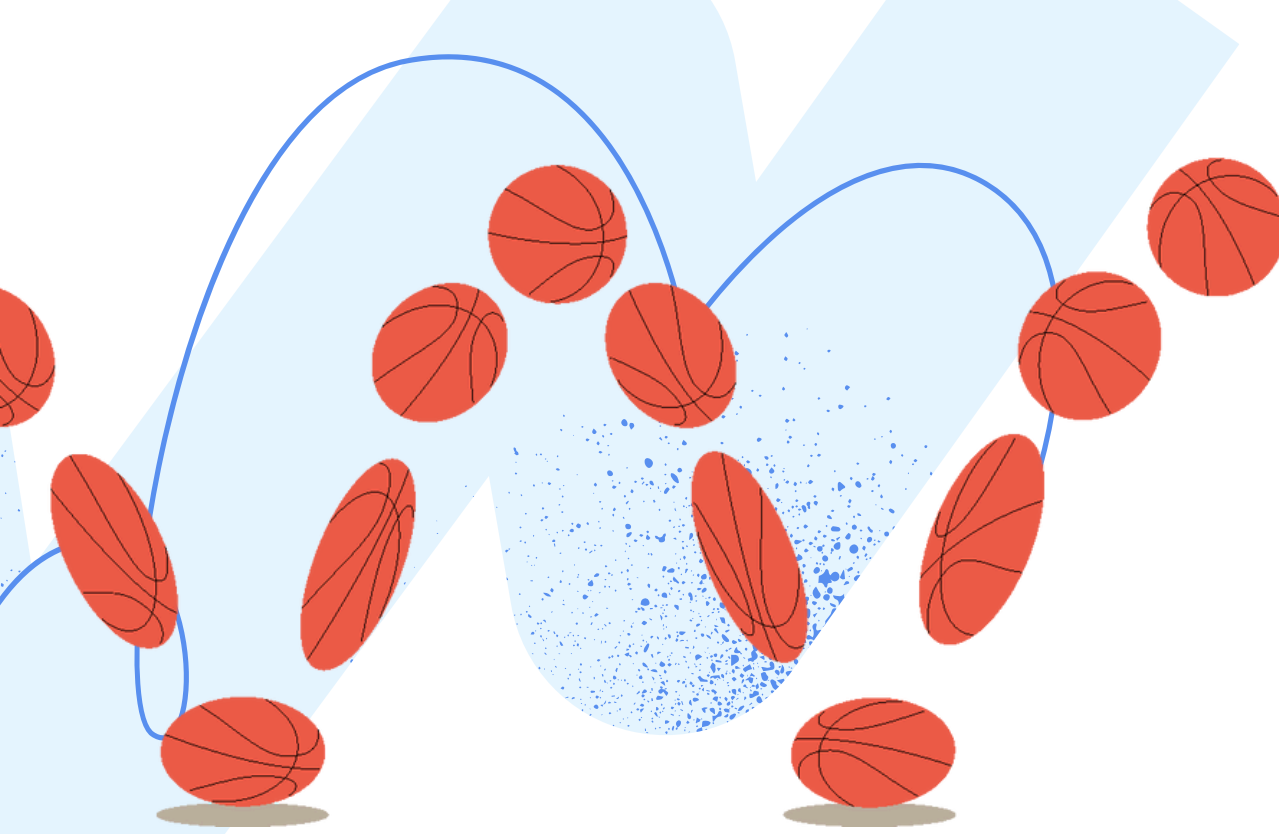
BADMINTON

- Lower the net, use a line or cones on the floor to represent the net, or do not use a net.
- Have participants closer to the net on serve or eliminate serving positions or lines.
- Vary the size of shuttlecocks—use different sizes, weights, colours, or balloons.
- Have a horn, bell, or flashing lights go off to reward players for scoring a point.
- Use a racket with a larger head or a longer handle.
- Use a beeping shuttlecock or a balloon with a bell in it for easier tracking.
- Introduce a seated version of badminton where all participants play in a sitting position.



VOLLEYBALL

- Allow any type of serve (hit off tee, bounce serve, overhead serve).
- Allow serving from closer to the net.
- Allow the ball to bounce before hitting.
- Lower the net, use a line or cones on the floor to represent the net, or do not use a net.
- Introduce a balloon or beach ball version
- Allow players to catch the ball instead of volleying.
- Vary the types of balls used (different sizes, weights, textures, colours, beeper balls or balloons).
- Have a horn, bell, or flashing lights go off to reward players for scoring a point.
- Allow more than one try when serving.
- Allow an unlimited number of hits.
- Lower the net and have all participants play seated Number.



BASKETBALL

- Use a hoop with a larger circumference.
- Use a lower hoop.
- Allow travelling or two-handed dribbling.
- Slow the pace
- Use a sound-making device under the basket.
- Encourage bounce passes since they are easier to track and are a slower pace.
- Encourage the child to catch the ball with arms extended so that they can feel the ball and bring it to the body.
- Allow children to catch by trapping the ball on their lap.

TENNIS

- Allow any type of serve (hit off tee, bounce serve, overhead serve).
- Allow the ball to bounce more than once before hitting.
- Lower the net, use a line or cones on the floor to represent the net, or do not use a net.
- Allow serving from closer to the net.
- Vary the types of balls used (different sizes, weights, textures, colours, beeper balls or balloons).
- Use a target that makes a noise when hit
- Use rackets with a larger face.
- Allow more than one try when serving.
- Encourage shorter rallies and modified scoring for players with limited endurance.



FOOTBALL


- Reduce the size of the goal.
- Use a slightly deflated ball for easier control and so that the pace is slower
- Do not use goalies.
- Have a horn, bell, or flashing lights go off to reward players for scoring a goal.
- Practice indoors or on dirt ground for easier manoeuvring (avoid grass).
- Slow the pace of the game for children who use assistive devices to walk
- Allow players to use their hands if needed, adapting the game to their abilities.



ANNEX 1: Accessibility Checklist

The following checklist was adapted from [Save the Children](#) and can be used to assess the physical accessibility and safety of your venues.

Physical Disabilities

	Is the building or space accessible for participants who use any mobility equipment? This includes ensuring venues have ramps (minimising the presence of steps), widened doorways (enabling mobility equipment such as wheelchairs to pass), safety bars/railings and handles on both sides, and non-slippery floors.
	Will participants require assistive technology to access the building or space? This includes verifying with the participant or their parents or caregivers if they have the assistive devices necessary to access the space, enabling them to bring these devices (such as wheelchairs, crutches, prosthetics) as required.
	Is the internal set-up of the building/space inclusive for participants who use any mobility equipment? This includes ensuring there are wide enough spaces between furniture (desks, chairs) to enable children with physical disabilities to move as freely around the room as others.
	Is the building or space free from hazards that may lead to accidents? This includes potholes, uneven floors and slippery floors that cause instability for participants using crutches or wheelchairs.
	Will the building or space uphold the dignity of participants with physical disabilities? Are the toilets accessible, with ramps, handrails and enough room for a wheelchair?
	If using a building with stairs, can a participant with difficulties moving access all floors and levels with lifts or elevators?
	Are the lifts or elevators operating without disruptions? Do the lifts have audio instructions and braille on the floor and control buttons?
	Is there a safe route to evacuate participants with physical disabilities from a building if there is a fire and the lifts or elevators stop working (for example, evacuation wheelchairs)?

ANNEX 1: Accessibility Checklist

Visual Impairments

	Is printed safety information and messages, such as posters on walls, available in alternative formats such as texts in braille, large print or audio and provided before the event or activity?
	Does the space have plenty of natural light to increase visibility?
	If using an indoor space, are there curtains or blinds to control the level of illumination at different times of the day and avoid glare?
	Does the space contain non-reflective surfaces to avoid any glare from overhead lighting?
	Is it possible for furniture, electrical cables and other items to be arranged so that they do not become a trip hazard?
	Is it possible to adapt the space to include visual and tactile symbols or signs that will provide cues for a child's orientation and mobility? Once a participant is oriented, is it possible for the environment to remain the same throughout?
	Do emergency exit or evacuation routes have edges on steps marked in a different colour and texture? Are there handrails on the evacuation routes and stairs? Do participants have an appointed buddy in case of an emergency?
	Does the space have limited visual clutter that could create visual distractions?

ANNEX 1: Accessibility Checklist

Hearing Impairments

	Does the building or space have adequate lighting to enable participants to follow conversations as clearly as possible, such as seeing lip patterns, facial expressions, hand gestures and sign language?
	Does the room have soft furnishings that will absorb sound to dampen echoes and reverberations?
	Have chairs and tables been assembled in a way that will ensure people in a room or space can easily face each other, such as in a circle or semicircle (to avoid a person speaking with their back to a child with a hearing impairment)?
	Is the room or space set up in a way that will ensure speakers are not standing in front of a window (since it is not possible to see a person's face clearly if the light source is directly behind them)?
	Is the room equipped with a hearing loop for participants using a hearing aid and, if so, has it been confirmed to work and made clear to organisers how to operate it and avoid auditory disturbances?
	Does the environment have limited visual and auditory distractions, such as colourful displays, people frequently walking in and out of the room, doors opening and closing, excessive background noise, road traffic?
	Is the building or space away from loud noises that would prevent participants dependent on a quiet environment from hearing?
	A participant with a hearing impairment may not be aware of a fire alarm if they are in a room on their own (such as the toilets or a bedroom). Has an appropriate system been installed to alert the child in an emergency, such as a flashing light, vibrating equipment or an appointed buddy?

ANNEX 1: Accessibility Checklist

Neurological Disabilities

	Is it possible to minimise distractions that may overwhelm a participant’s senses and cause them to lose focus or be overwhelmed?
	Can less obvious noise distractions such as lights buzzing and humming sounds from extractor fans be avoided?
	Does the room have soft furnishings that could absorb sound to dampen echoes and reverberations that may disturb some participants?
	Is it possible to provide alternative lighting to different individuals, such as table lamps in addition to or instead of overhead lights, depending on individuals' differing sensitivities to light?
	Have checks been made to ensure there are no flashing or flickering lights?
	Could colour coding be used to mark out hazards and escape routes as colour is usually more easily recognised as a sign of danger?

Psychosocial Disabilities

	Is there a 'breakout' area or a place where participants can relax if feeling overwhelmed?
	Is the venue easy to travel to, avoiding stressful commutes for participants who feel anxious when travelling?
	Can efforts be made to avoid strangers or adults unknown to the children in the environment that may make a child feel nervous or anxious?

ANNEX 2: Responding to Different Impairments

Below are basic considerations for different forms of impairments to improve the inclusion of young women and girls with disabilities into sport and life skills programmes. Remember, all individuals have different needs; what works for one person with disability may not work for someone else, and what worked last week/month/year may not work today. Use the below guidance as a starting point but also engage directly with the young women and girls you work with to understand their needs.

Physical Impairments

Physical disabilities require you to focus on creating environments that are easy to navigate and where adapted equipment and activities are provided.

Physical space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure accessibility with ramps, widened doorways, safety features, and non-slippery floors.• Ensure ample room for mobility equipment.• Eliminate hazards like uneven floors and potholes.• Ensure accessible toilets and facilities.• Check the operational functionality of lifts or elevators.Establish safe evacuation plans
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When speaking to a person seated in a wheelchair, sit so that you and the person are at the same eye level.• Talk to them directly rather than to an accompanying person.• Ask the person if assistance is needed; do not assume that help is needed until you ask. Respect the person's wishes if they don't accept your offer.
Activity Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan ahead any adaptations for activities but always ask if they are wanted.• Do not exclude a participant from some group activities because you think it will be too difficult for them.• Use equipment that is simple and easy to use or specifically designed for a person with a physical disability.• Slow the pace of the game or activity.• Focus on balance, range of motion, and repetition of activities.
Example Equipment Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adaptive grips: Replace or modify existing grips to accommodate different hand sizes, strengths, or grip styles.• Supportive seating: Provide supportive seating or cushions to enhance comfort and stability

Physical space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise natural light and control glare with curtains or blinds. • Incorporate visual and tactile cues for orientation and mobility. • Arrange furniture and items to avoid trip hazards. • Ensure that the participant has time to walk around the space to get a sense of the environment before the activity begins. • Mark escape routes with distinct colours and textures. • Offer information in alternative formats like braille, large print, or audio. • Utilise colour contrasts (reds, bright orange, bright yellows) to note stairs, posts, on arrows pointing to wash areas, toilets, training areas, etc. • Keep frequently used equipment in the same accessible place.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify yourself when you approach a person who has low vision or blindness. Introduce anyone with you to the person with vision loss. • Touch the person's arm lightly when you speak so that they know you are speaking to them before you begin. • Face the person at a respectful distance and speak directly to them, do not get 'into their space'. • Use a normal tone of voice (avoid shouting). • Some participants with visual impairment may wish to map you by touching your face, ears, hair. • Do not assume they need assistance by grabbing their arm. When guiding them, allow them to initiate holding your arm and following you. • Explain when you are leaving the environment.
Activity Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt the activity or space so that participants can use a cane or other support. • Use verbal or audio cues and description to support spatial awareness and make participants feel included. • Explore audio-transcribed written instructions/ Life Skills session guides. • Play with different coloured lines, posts, goals, or equipment for ease of identification and spatial awareness. • Visual (e.g. wave) or tactile signals (light touch) can be used to get the person's attention. • Call the person's name before passing to them. • Have a horn, bell, or flashing lights go off to reward players for achieving a goal.
Example Equipment Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-contrast markings: Use bright colours or tactile textures to make equipment more visible. • Auditory cues: Incorporate sound effects (bell inside a ball or balloon) or verbal instructions to guide the participants.

Visual Impairments

When working with participants with visual impairments, it is most important to ensure that the indoor and outdoor playing areas are free of unnecessary objects or obstructions. If they are fixed, ensure the players know where they are. They can also be padded or distinguished e.g., by having music/sound coming from that point or using a colour to mark the item.

Hearing Impairments

Although participants who have hearing impairments can often navigate spaces and play activities or sports with minimal adaptations, they often require adaptations to the activity demonstrations and communication. Keep in mind the need to use local sign language. Engage with local specialists who know the local disability language and context.

Physical space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure adequate lighting for lip reading, facial expressions, and sign language.• Implement sound-absorbing furnishings to reduce echoes.• Provide a hearing loop for those with hearing aids, ensuring proper operation.• Minimise visual and auditory distractions in the environment.• Establish emergency alert systems, such as flashing lights or vibrating equipment.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employ a sign language interpreter if the participant uses sign language.• If you are speaking through a sign language interpreter, pause occasionally to allow the interpreter time to translate completely and accurately.• Talk directly to the person who is assisted by a sign interpreter, not to the interpreter, even if the person is looking at the interpreter and does not make eye contact with you. Reduce background noise when you are having a conversation, or coaching.• For lip-reading, make sure the person is in front of you, maintain your usual mouth movement, but speak clearly and loudly.• Be conscious that if you are wearing a facemask, lip-reading is impossible.
Activity Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use physical demonstrations and visual information such as whiteboards, black boards, flip charts, written guides and instructions when explaining the activities.• Ensure that participants can identify essential signals in your sport (e.g. visual equivalents to whistles). Some examples are: Using flashing lights to start and end a race or signal the end of the session. Referees can use visual signs to get attention and visual aids for scoring and keeping score.
Example Equipment Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide ALDs, such as personal amplification systems, loop systems, or FM systems, to enhance sound clarity for individuals with hearing impairments.

Physical space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The physical layout for play and sports should have a clear structure and routine to make the environment consistent and predictable.• Minimise distractions and background noise.• Ensure there is a dedicated, quiet, private space that the participants can go to reset if they get overstimulated.• Choose venues with easy, stress-free travel options.• Provide alternative lighting options based on individual sensitivities.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adapt the speed or the vocabulary you use according to theirs. Give clear and concise instructions.• Avoid abstract language.• Ask simple questions about one topic at a time. Use basic answer choices.• If their response time is slower, be patient and allow the person to take their time without putting words into their mouth to speed up the response time.• As much as possible, communicate directly with the participant and use a variety of communication methods.• Be aware of body language, facial expressions that the participant may use to convey something they may not articulate with words (maybe with support of caregivers who know their signals).
Activity Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide visual prompts or clues on where to go and what to do (e.g., taping a picture to the wall of a person throwing indicates a throwing station).• Increase the amount of time you have for the activity.• Use alternative forms of communication to supplement explanations, such as pictures (e.g., picture of a ball), real objects (e.g., a real ball), and sign language (signing the word “ball”).• Take your time with explanations and be prepared to repeat information more than once and in different ways.• Have a steady approach to introducing new topics. Try speaking slower, not louder.• Avoid giving too many directions at one time.• Break down activity tasks (if any) into small steps; use flashcards, pictures or symbols or music to help with information or activity.• Be prepared to let the participant go away and come back if they need a break outside scheduled breaks.
Example Equipment Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simplify: Reduce the complexity of equipment.• Visual aids: Provide visual prompts or instructions to guide the user through the process of using the equipment or completing an activity.

Intellectual, Cognitive or Developmental Impairments

Participants with intellectual impairments might require adaptations to the space and activities themselves but also adaptations in the coaching approach and structure of the activity or sport sessions.

ANNEX 3: Safeguarding Considerations

Young women and girls with disabilities can be at risk of being included in programmes that do not effectively safeguard them.

Disability-inclusive safeguarding means making sure that systems to protect participants include those with disabilities, and all participants feel they can safely participate in programme activities. It involves recognising and lessening the unique risks young women and girls with disabilities may face, enabling them to report concerns, and responding to these concerns in a disability-inclusive way. It is also important to remember that it is not gender or the impairment itself that increases vulnerability, but rather the risks and barriers in the environment.

Young women and girls with disabilities should be included in the decisions concerning their own safeguarding.



Tips for ensuring gender & disability inclusive safeguarding

- Ensure safeguarding policies and reporting mechanisms are accessible in a range of formats and locations. This includes easy-to-read, pictorial, symbol or sign-based formats. Give young women the meaningful opportunities to assess their appropriateness and identify gaps or improvements needed.
- Make sure young women and girls with disabilities, along with parents/caregivers, understand the information.
- Confirm they know how to raise concerns and what to expect when a concern is raised. Recognise that young women and girls with disabilities may have fewer opportunities to disclose abuse due to isolation and dependency on others, who may be the perpetrators of abuse.
- Familiarise yourselves with the signs of abuse and everyone's rights to be free from harm and abuse, drawing insights from frameworks such as the [UNCRPD](#) and [UNCRC](#).
- Review your safeguarding policies to determine what might need to be improved or added to safeguard all participants.
- Understand the reporting procedures should a safeguarding violation occur.
- Be able to provide resources or service referrals to anyone who has been the victim of a safeguarding violation.
- Make sure young women and girls play a central role in defining the ways in which they feel safe and identifying the ways in which they wish to be protected.
- Raise awareness with organisational leaders, staff and project stakeholders of the intersectionality of disability, age, gender, socio-economic status, religion and ethnicity, and how combinations of these characteristics can compound the safeguarding risks individuals experience.
- Identify and clearly articulate how each teammate contributes to safeguarding young women and girls with disabilities in their role.
- Inform participants, including those with disabilities, parents/caregivers and communities, of the standards of behaviour they should expect from you and your team.

Find more information [here](#).

Remember, policies and procedures should go beyond generic statements around non-discrimination, inclusion or even disability inclusion. Instead, look for specific commitments, responsibilities and approaches that are explicitly written to ensure young women and girls with disabilities are included across the safeguarding systems.

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