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**Recreation and leisure**

1a.

1. The Sports Act (390/2015), Act on Equality between Women and Men (609/1986; amendments 915/2016) and Non-discrimination Act (1325/2014) state that everyone is equally entitled to participate sports and physical activity (PA) at all levels and chosen roles. The CRPD (27/2016), stresses the importance of choice.
2. Land Use and Building Act (132/1999, amendment 222/2003), and government accessibility regulation (241/2017) give guidelines for accessibility. Ministry of Education and Culture has funded guidebooks, such as Esteetön luontoliikunta 2017 [Accessible Outdoor Recreation] and Esteettömät liikuntatilat 2013 [Accessible Indoor Sport Facilities] which provide sports specific information. A mapping report on accessibility must be included if the constructor wishes to get government grant for establishing or renovating sports facilities. There is an accessibility evaluator network with special knowhow on recreation and leisure facilities, website (Finnish only) <https://www.invalidiliitto.fi/esteettomyysesteettomyyskeskus-eske/eskeh-kartoitusmenetelma>
3. There are some 100 adapted physical activity (APA) instructors hired by the municipalities. In the light of participant numbers municipalities are the biggest service providers of APA for PWD’s. The Finnish Society of Sport Sciences (LTS) keeps up the APA network and the working group and organizes meeting places for researchers and practitioners.

Website <https://www.sportscience.fi/adapted-physical-activity.html>

1b.

1. The Sports Act is noncompulsory and gives municipalities a lot of freedom in implementation of the Sport Act. The Disability Services and Assistance Act (380/1987) which regulates transportation, personal assistance and special aids, is outdated. PA of PWD’s is often deprioritized in municipalities due other more pressing issues.
2. There are still many who believe that accessibility in PA concern only wheelchair users and those who are esteemed as participants or clients. Accessibility needs of those with sensory impairments (seeing, hearing) or those in other roles, such as a coach, instructor or a volunteer, are often ignored.
3. The traditional medical model in PA is often dominant, for instance activities are organized for groups of PWD’s with similar functional difficulties. Co-operation in PA between municipalities and mainstream service providers is limited. Consequently, needs of those who need or prefer more individual options, or who are too few to make a group (women and girls, persons with multiple impairments) are often forgotten.
4. There are fewer women and girls in PA. In the Valtti-programme (see III) only 1 of 3 have been girls, despite active attempts to favour girls in the selection phase. There is lack of data concerning hindrances to participation of women and girls with PWD in PA and leisure.

Examples of good practices:

1-I. SOLIA is an equipment rental service for disability sport and adapted sports with five regional rental centers. The most popular equipment are the ones which can be used with one’s family and friends. Website (Finnish only): <https://www.paralympia.fi/palvelut/solia>

1-II. LUKA [Outdoor recreation for all] is a 3-year project which supports accessibility knowhow so that outdoor entrepreneurs can better serve their clients with disabilities. It has been supported by the Eräpolku [wilderness trails] -project, which has developed accessibility mapping tools for national parks and wilderness trails.

Website (Finnish only): <https://www.paralympia.fi/liikunta/luontoliikunta>

1-III. Valtti is a programme which helps children with special needs to find a physical hobby with a personal APA instructor (PAPAI). Since 2017 out of 900 participants almost half has found a hobby and almost as many increased one’s PA levels.

Website <https://www.paralympia.fi/liikunta/lapset-ja-nuoret/valtti/in-english>

1-IV Löydä oma Seura [Find your sport club] is a platform for sport service providers who wish to advertise their offer for PWD’s. Website (Finnish only): <https://www.paralympia.fi/palvelut/loyda-oma-seura>

**Sports**

3a. The Finnish Paralympic Committee (FPC), along with The Deaf Sport Federation have traditional roles of organizing and governing sports, PA and recreation for their members, which are mainly disability-specific clubs.

Integration and inclusion (see 3-I)

* 38 out of 70 National Sports Federations has taken responsibility of disability sports, but there is variety on commitment, magnitude and dimensions (Saari 2015). Some federations may prioritize elite level Paralympians whilst others try to cover the whole spectrum from grassroots and recreation to Special Olympics and elite level parasports. The three most inclusive sports are judo, swimming and equestrian.
* FPC steers integration processes. It also serves as a national sport federation for two kind of sports. There are sports which have the potential to move into mainstream federation, and the disability-specific ones, which do not. FPC governs the disability-specific sports such as goalball, boccia, wheelchair rugby and showdown which, in terms of integration, have no other place to go. FPC still governs chess and shooting for the visually impaired, para ice hockey, electric wheelchair hockey, para powerlifting and seven-a-side soccer which are esteemed to move under the mainstream sport federation.
* The Special Olympics Finland and Transplant Sports operate under the FPC’s umbrella.

3b. Yes. Disabled athletes have lesser national competition opportunities, and often there is the need to unify classes because the small number of participants.

3c. There are 21 sport academies all around in Finland which promote goal-oriented training and studying for all athletes, including para-athletes. KIHU Olympic Research Institute is focused on elite sport research, including Paralympians and Paralympic sports. Out of 11 national, and three regional sport institutes most have some programmes or services for PWD’s, and some 3-5 perform very well in disability sports, such as the Pajulahti Sports Institute.

3d. Para-athletes are equally entitled to receive grants for elite athletes from the Ministry of Education and Culture.

3e.

* Separate or integrated- see 3a.
* Finland’s geography poses a challenge. Certain team sports (e.g. wheelchair rugby, goalball) can only be practiced in biggest cities (see 3 b). To increase service delivery of disability sports the FPC has launched a new project called Avoimet ovet {open Doors] which advices mainstream sport providers in adapting and disability sports related issues.
* Sport clubs have different ways to provide services for PWD’s. There may be a single PWD in an open mainstream group, or a unified training group for both Special Olympics and cp-soccer players. There are also separate Unified teams in mainstream sport clubs.
* Funding opportunities are relatively equal.
* There are projects, events and workshops which offer a platform for knowhow exchange between sports practitioners.

Notes

3-I. The purpose of integration processes in Finnish disability sports is inclusion. Inclusion is understood as the PWD’s ability to freely choose one’s preferred activity forms, sports, levels and roles in disability-specific or mainstream settings (see CRPD 30.5).

3-II. The Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) finances Finnish sports. Since 2015 MEC has required a non-discrimination and equality plan from sports organizations as a factor affecting the allocation of grants and as a condition for receiving them. This has given an extra boost in terms of integration.