

HUMAN RIGHTS, DISABILITY AND SPORT*

In July 2017 the Kazan Action Plan (KAP) was adopted "to facilitate international and multi-stakeholder policy convergence, ease international cooperation and foster capacity-building efforts of governmental authorities and sports". Since then, the sports sector globally is unifying and advancing its human rights activities considerably. The UNESCO Chair, IT Tralee is coordinating work in this domain. We are involved in building mechanisms based on the SDG mantra of 'no-one left behind, starting with the most vulnerable' in the aspiration that policy and investment decisions can be evidence-based, rights-based and led from areas of the most need.

Participation in sport has numerous benefits for health and mental well-being. Participation in sports also increases confidence, self-esteem and social skills such as teamwork, leadership and discipline. People with disabilities who met recommended physical activity levels were 2.2 times more likely to report higher quality of life than those who did not exercise and 1.6 more likely than those who did some exercise. [1]

Several UN human rights treaties contain articles recognizing sport as a human right, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). They also contain rights which are necessary for the full enjoyment of the right to sports, such as accessibility and education including physical education, and rights which participation in sports can contribute to, such as health and rehabilitation. These rights link to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Article 30.5 - Right to participate in sport and leisure

Article 7 - Rights of children with disabilities

Article 9 - Right to accessibility

Article 16 - Right to freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse

Article 24 - Right to personal mobility

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Article 6 - Rights of women and girls with disabilities

Article 8 - Awareness raising by states

Article 10 - Right to education, including physical education

Article 19 - Right to live independently and in the community

Article 25 - Right to health

Article 27 - Right to work

5 GENDER EQUALITY



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8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



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When something is a human right it means that everybody is entitled to it, simply by virtue of being human. However, not everybody is always supported to enjoy these rights equally. Approximately 15% of the people experience some form of disability.[2] Persons with disabilities are three times less active than persons without disabilities [3] and children with disabilities are 4.5 times less active than their peers[4]. 93% of women with disabilities are inactive at levels that promote health [5]. For many people with disabilities when multiple identities such as gender, income, sexuality, minority status, location, migrant status etc., combine, participation can be even harder.

The UN "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework's guiding principles recognise: (a) States' obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and fundamental freedoms; (b) the role of business enterprises as specialized organs of society, required to comply with all applicable laws and to respect human rights; (c) the need for rights and obligations to be matched to appropriate and effective remedies when breached. In order to promote the protection and respect of human rights in and through sports, tools on engaging with the UN treaties, including CRPD, are being prepared for states, National Human Rights Institutions, and civil society organisations, including sports organisations. These tools aim to raise awareness of sport as a human right, to encourage states to take stock or where their policies are and share good practices, and to empower civil society in advocating for sports as a human right.

*"Sport" is being used to reflect physical education, physical activity and sport in this note.

1) National Disability Authority (2005). Promoting the Participation of People with Disabilities in Physical Activity and Sport in Ireland. Available online <http://nda.ie/Image-Library/PDF-Downloads/Physical-Activity-and-Sport-Report.pdf>

2) World Bank Group available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/disability>

3) NDA Ireland (2005).

4) Sagas, M. and Cunningham, G.M. (2014). Sport Participation Rates Among Underserved American Youth. Aspen Institute's Project Play: Reimagining Youth Sports in America. Available at: https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/files/content/docs/education/Project_Play_Underserved_Populations_Roundtable_Research_Brief.PDF

5) Sun, F., Norman, I. J., & While, A. E. (2013). Physical activity in older people: a systematic review. BMC Public Health, 13(1), 49. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-449>