

# Inclusive Disability Sports Coaching Strategy: A Case Study

*By Andi Baso Husain .*



## Inclusive Disability Sports Coaching Strategy: A Case Study

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### Abstract

**Study purpose.** Disabled sports in Sinjai Regency still face various challenges, despite the great potential possessed by athletes. This study aims to develop an inclusive disability sport coaching strategy in Sinjai District to increase the participation and achievement of athletes with disabilities.

**Material and method.** Using a qualitative approach with a case study method, this research involved in-depth interviews with various stakeholders, such as the Kadispora, the Head of Koni, the National Paralympic Committee (NPC), and disabled sports activists.

**Result.** The results showed that the main obstacles faced include the lack of licensed coaches, the lack of disability-friendly facilities and infrastructure, and the non-optimal management of NPC Sinjai. Therefore, the proposed strategies include reactivation of NPC Sinjai, recruitment of licensed coaches, improvement of facilities and infrastructure, and close collaboration between the local government and related organisations. Hopefully, the implementation of this strategy will be able to support the achievements of Sinjai disabled athletes to the national and international levels.

**Conclusion.** With the synergy between the NPC, local government, coaches, and the community, Sinjai has a great opportunity to become a national example in creating an inclusive and supportive sports ecosystem. Consistent implementation of this strategy is expected to not only produce outstanding athletes, but also establish Sinjai Regency as a pioneer in fighting for equality and success in the field of disability sports in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Strategy, Coaching, Sports, Inclusive, Disabled

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### Introduction

Sport has a crucial role in promoting physical, psychological and social health for individuals and communities, including sport for people with disabilities. The potential of disabled sports certainly has the same rights for every citizen, but in reality, they still do not get equal rights. This can be seen from the lack of participation of athletes with disabilities in various sporting events, both local and national levels. Based on data from the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Indonesia in 2023, the number of athletes with disabilities

in Indonesia was recorded at 2,194 people. Of this number, only 10% are actively participating in training and coaching. This lack of participation is caused by several factors, such as; Lack of accessibility of sports facilities for the disabled (Kiuppis 2018) Lack of specialised training for trainers in understanding the needs of people with disabilities (Rahmawati, Wiyanto, and Setyawan 2020), Lack of inclusive sports programmes in schools and communities, Social stigma against people with disabilities that still exists in society (Ebenhaezer Alsih Taruk Allo 2022; Scior et al. 2020).

Although the rights of athletes with disabilities are constitutionally guaranteed, there are still significant gaps in their implementation. Therefore, the existence of an inclusive disability sports coaching strategy is an urgent need (Declerck et al., 2021; Umar et al., 2021). Sinjai Regency, as a region that reflects this reality, requires serious efforts in creating a comprehensive and inclusive sports coaching system to support its disabled athletes. In the midst of the participation and accessibility gaps faced by athletes with disabilities, the effort to create a coaching model that accommodates diversity and takes into account individual needs is crucial (Gurgis, Kerr, and Darnell 2022). Community involvement as an integral part of this model not only recognises the rights of every citizen, but also responds to the diversity that is part of the identity of Sinjai Regency.

An in-depth understanding of the needs and preferences of the community is essential to achieve a successful and sustainable disability sports coaching strategy in Sinjai District (Sparkes and Brighton 2020). In addition, comprehensive community involvement in the model of disability sports coaching in Sinjai District can also build a more harmonious relationship between the government and the community (Carnemolla, Robinson, and Lay 2021). Inclusive sports coaching is expected to be a vehicle for strengthening social ties between various elements of society, creating awareness of the rights of each individual, and forming an inclusive mindset in the midst of Sinjai society (Sandford, Beckett, and Giulianotti 2022a). The issue of low participation of athletes with disabilities can have a negative impact on their overall well-being (Amnesti 2021). With fewer opportunities to engage in sporting activities, athletes with disabilities may face greater physical and mental health challenges (Amnesti 2021). Therefore, there is a need for maximum concrete efforts to overcome these obstacles.

An inclusive sports coaching strategy is expected to create positive changes that can shift the existing paradigm (Townsend and Cushion 2022). This transformation is not only in the context of sports, but also in building a more inclusive, fair and just society (Ferez et al. 2020). In addition, an in-depth understanding of the needs of people with disabilities and the characteristics of the community will be key to the successful implementation of this model (Sharma et al. 2019). An in-depth understanding of the needs of people with disabilities in Sinjai also provides a special dimension to this research (Sandford, Beckett, and Giulianotti 2022b). By incorporating community perspectives, it is hoped that the resulting coaching strategy can respond appropriately to cultural diversity and local wisdom. This is in line with the principles of sustainable development that emphasise the need to involve local communities in policy planning and implementation (Klenk, Albrecht, and Nagel 2019). In addition, it provides an important impetus to fill the gap in the literature in the context of disability sports coaching at the local level. More in-depth information and understanding of the specific conditions of Sinjai Regency will provide a valuable contribution to understanding the challenges and opportunities faced by disabled athletes in Sinjai Regency. The strategies developed for coaching athletes with disabilities are expected to fill the knowledge gap and serve as a reference for stakeholders in formulating more inclusive disability sport coaching policies and programmes.

## **Materials and Methods**

### ***Study participants***

The Research Approach can be conducted through a series of strategies based on the needs and characteristics of the local community (Abdul Fattah Nasution 2023). The need for in-depth analysis of the level of participation of athletes with disabilities in sports in Sinjai Regency (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022). The main approach in this research is an inclusive and participatory approach that aims to address the main challenges in coaching disabled sports in Sinjai District (Bambang Priyono 2012). The first step is to conduct an in-depth study to comprehensively identify and understand the challenges faced by athletes with disabilities, involving various stakeholders such as athletes, coaches, schools, communities and local governments. This analysis will provide a strong foundation for developing a disability-inclusive Sports Coaching Strategy. The strategy will include the development of clear and measurable implementation guidelines and protocols for the programmes to be run. These guidelines will serve as the operational basis to ensure that every activity in disability sports coaching is implemented in an effective and targeted manner.

### ***Study organization.***

The research method was designed to ensure all important aspects were clearly covered, including the process, outcomes, targeted indicators of achievement, and team members/partners responsible for each stage of the research. This research adopted a qualitative method using an in-depth intrinsic case study design to explore inclusive disability sports coaching strategies in Sinjai District (Rijal Fadli 2021) (Martinsuo and Huemann 2021). The selection of an intrinsic case study design is relevant because it focuses on a unique single case, Sinjai District, which demonstrates the commitment of the Local Government and the various policies that support the development of disability sport, the potential for disabled athletes to excel, and the diversity of sports available (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022). This research used a qualitative approach to understand the perspectives, experiences and perceptions of coaches, athletes with disabilities, local sports organisations, local government and the general public regarding the development of disability sport in Sinjai District, South Sulawesi. This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of the social context and phenomena that influence the implementation of disability sport programmes, with a focus on the challenges, supports and opportunities that exist. Data were collected through in-depth interviews to capture the subjective views of participants, participatory observation to understand field interactions, and document analysis as an additional source of information. Through thematic analysis, the study aimed to identify key patterns and themes that reflect the condition and potential of disability sport development in Sinjai.

## **Results**

Disabled sports development is a strategic step in encouraging the participation of persons with disabilities in increasing their confidence in achieving achievements at the national and even international levels. Efforts to foster sports for people with disabilities cannot be separated from the importance of policy as a formal element to provide accessibility for people with disabilities to get the same position as the community or athletes in general. Inclusivity and equality through policy actualisation will certainly create an inclusive society by refuting the negative stigma against people with disabilities who do not have the same potential and abilities as other athletes. In fact, the development of disabled sports should be a long-term investment in building a just and dignified society.

Indonesia has enacted Law No. 8/2016 on Persons with Disabilities to regulate all aspects of the protection, respect and fulfilment of disability rights by providing accessibility and proper accommodation. This law clearly states that every person with a disability has the

right to be actively involved in various fields of life including participating in sports programmes in a transparent manner. On the other hand, although the Sinjai Regency Government does not have further regulations in the form of regional regulations, the development of sports for people with disabilities still has a strong foundation through the Law and can still be improved through non-regulative initiatives or practical policies.

The inclusiveness of sports coaching is an effort to facilitate and develop all elements or layers of society regardless of physical differences, gender or those linked to other identities. The concept of inclusive sports is a shared responsibility of various elements including the government as a stakeholder who is able to open systematic space, especially for people with disabilities to show achievement and dedication in participating in various sports. The inclusive sports ecosystem for people with disabilities in Sinjai Regency is very dependent on four parties including the Head of the Youth and Sports Service (Kadispora), the Chairperson of the Indonesian National Sports Committee (KONI) and the National Paralympic Committee. These three institutions are integrated in being responsible for formulating and or implementing various disability-friendly sports programmes. In addition, synergy between institutions is the key to realising inclusive sport. In fact, the three of them should not run alone or separately because their roles and responsibilities determine the success of sports programme goals even though they are under different authorities.

The Head of the Youth and Sports Office (Kadispora) has a central role or main facilitator in the form of formulating policies and directing programmes that are feasible at the autonomous or regional level. Kadispora Sinjai has actually been active in conducting coaching programmes and sports weeks even though the programmes that have been run are still dominated by non-disabled athletes. Interview with Kadispora Sinjai 'HA' he said

*'We as the person in charge of sports in Sinjai district, both normal athletes and athletes with disabilities, are ready to encourage the development of sports achievements in Sinjai Regency even though we experience limitations from facilities and infrastructure.'*

A strong commitment to the inclusivity of athletes with disabilities has been accommodated by the Sinjai Regency government. The statement above confirms the role of the Kadispora as the driving force that must initiate and oversee sport-related policies, programmes and activities. This includes procuring infrastructure, allocating budgets, training coaches, and organising competitions or events that provide opportunities for athletes to test their abilities and hone their skills. The spirit of inclusiveness has been embraced by the Sinjai District Government, especially the Kadisporasi, although it must be recognised that there are limitations such as the lack of adequate facilities and infrastructure.

Kadispora's support for disabled sports should be built on the principle of partnership by considering the role of the National Paralympic Committee (NPC) in shaping disability-friendly sports. As an organisation that specialises in disabled sports, the NPC ideally has a full understanding of the needs of disabled athletes from standards, facilities, equipment and training methods. The NPC should even be a pioneer in collaborating with the government. However, the NPC's position is relatively weak in terms of human resources and accessibility to government agencies as in the interview with the National Paralympic Committee (NPC) Manager 'M'.

*'As the NPC administrator in Sinjai, I see the lack of active management that makes some athletes not well coordinated, there are even some athletes who are contracted from other regions to take part in disability sports competitions. In*

*addition, the availability of sports facilities and infrastructure that are friendly to athletes with disabilities has not been fully equipped properly.'*

The NPC in Sinjai Regency has not been able to play a vital role in the development of disability sports in the area. The statement of the NPC board indicates that inactive management has a direct impact on the coordination of athletes, which causes many local athletes to not get optimal coaching. This situation even encourages related parties to recruit athletes from other regions to fulfil competition needs, which should be the role of the NPC to foster and develop the potential of local athletes. In addition, KONI as the parent sports organisation at the regional level has a larger network and resources than NPC, which allows KONI to play an important role in supporting disabled sports activities and facilities in the regions. Unfortunately, disability sport has moved out of KONI and is now under the independent auspices of NPC. The loss of the structural relationship with KONI means that NPC no longer has direct access to the network, budget and infrastructure support that KONI may have previously provided. This leaves the NPC needing to build and strengthen its own capacity to ensure the sustainability of disability sport development in the region. Interview with Koni Sinjai Chairperson 'S'

*'Disabled sports organisations have actually separated from KONI since 2015, but have potential that can be developed. Of course, I am ready to support and collaborate with disabled sports organisations in developing disabled sports in Sinjai Regency to be able to excel and make Sinjai proud.'*

Disability sport in Sinjai Regency has so far experienced quite complex problems and has become a series of challenges that must be taken seriously such as the lack of active management, limited facilities and infrastructure, and the absence of structural support from KONI. Moreover, Sinjai Regency has great potential to develop disabled sports, both in terms of local athlete talent and local government commitment that can be mobilised. However, this potential will be difficult to develop if these challenges are not addressed. As in the interview with disabled sports activist 'M'

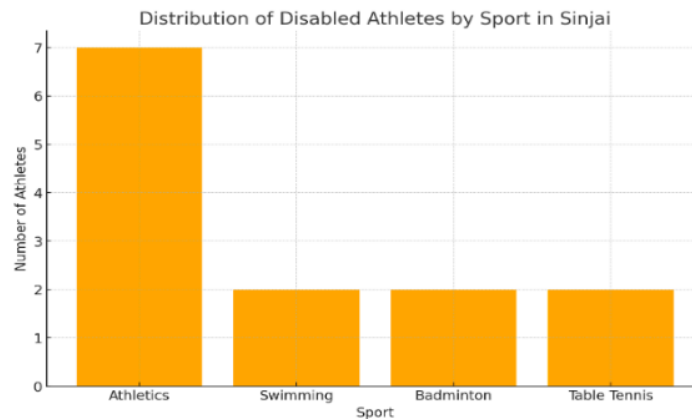
*'The potential for disabled sports in Sinjai Regency is very good, even participating in competitions up to the national level. But we have some limitations here, such as special trainers for licensed disabled athletes that we don't have yet.'*

The potential of disabled sports in Sinjai Regency is promising, as evidenced by the participation of athletes in competitions up to the national level. This achievement shows that Sinjai has a strong talent of disabled athletes and has a great opportunity to achieve higher achievements. However, this development is still faced with a major obstacle, namely limitations in human resources, especially in terms of coaches who have licences and special expertise to handle athletes with disabilities. The absence of licensed coaches is a significant obstacle as disabled sports require a different approach and specialised skills to make training more effective and suited to the needs of athletes. Without trained, licensed coaches, athletes' potential is difficult to develop optimally, and their ability to compete at higher levels is limited.

Sinjai Regency has a number of talented disabled athletes who have successfully penetrated competitions to the regional and national levels. The presence of these disabled athletes on a wider stage is an inspiration and clear evidence that with the right support and coaching, Sinjai disabled athletes have the opportunity to achieve higher achievements. A number of these disabled athletes are as follows [table 1](#):

**Tabel 1.** Disabled athletes who have participated in regional and national competitions

No	Name	Type of Speciality	Sports Branch
1	A.Febriansyah	Hearing loss	Athletics
2	Muh. Fiqri Haikal	Homeless	Athletics
3	Rustam	Homeless	Athletics
4	Irmayanti	Homeless	Athletics
5	St. Herfisyah	Homeless	Athletics
6	Supriadi	Homeless	Athletics
7	Nurul	Hearing loss	Athletics
8	A.Kenanga Bunga Bau	Hearing loss	Swimming
9	Haslinda	Hearing loss	Swimming
10	Muh. Ilham	Hearing loss	Badminton
11	Reski Sahrullah	Hearing loss	Badminton
12	Nurul Waridah Syam	Hearing loss	Table Tennis
13	A.Nanni	Hearing loss	Table Tennis

**Figure 1.** Disabled athletes who have participated in regional and national competitions

### Discussion

The potential of athletes with disabilities in Sinjai Regency always requires inclusive and sustainable coaching efforts so that this potential can be optimally developed. An inclusive coaching strategy will ensure that every athlete, whether they are disabled or deaf, is treated according to their needs. This includes tailored training programmes, coach training that focuses on methods specific to athletes with disabilities, and the provision of disability-friendly facilities and infrastructure. This approach is expected to not only improve the skills and achievements of athletes with disabilities, but also build confidence and competitive spirit among them. With the right strategy, Sinjai can be a pioneer in creating an inclusive sports ecosystem, opening up more opportunities for athletes with disabilities to excel in the national and international arena. Some of the strategies that need to be done include:

a. Activation of the NPC Sinjai Management

Reactivating the Sinjai National Paralympic Committee (NPC) is a crucial step in improving the quality of disability sports in the region. An active board will allow

the NPC to play a more effective role, not only in administration and management, but also in the implementation of structured coaching programmes. With an active board, the NPC can conduct a more systematic recruitment of athletes with disabilities, which means that the athletes selected through this selection are those who have great potential to excel. A good recruitment process also allows the NPC to identify the specific needs of each athlete, so that coaching can be individually tailored, promoting optimal and sustainable development. One of the NPC administrators said.

*'We need an active and structured management so that the recruitment process of athletes with disabilities can run better, because this is where proper coaching will start.'*

b. Cooperation with Local Government

Collaboration with the local government, especially the Sinjai Regency Youth and Sports Office, is not just a form of support, but a strategic partnership to encourage inclusivity in sports. Through close communication and collaboration, NPC can advocate for the fulfilment of special facilities and infrastructure needed by athletes with disabilities, such as access pathways, appropriate training equipment, and adequate sports facilities. Support from local governments also means the possibility of special budget allocations, so that NPC programmes can run sustainably and continuously. With this partnership, NPC and local governments can create an environment that not only supports, but also stimulates the development of disabled athletes' talents to excel at higher levels. One of the officials at the NPC revealed.

*'We hope that there will be closer and continuous communication with the local government, especially with the Youth and Sports Office, to ensure that the needs of athletes with disabilities receive special attention. The fulfilment of disability-friendly facilities and infrastructure is not just a physical facility, but a symbol of support and concern from the local government for the development of disabled athletes in Sinjai. Adequate facilities will provide a sense of comfort and security for athletes while training, so that they can develop their potential to the fullest without obstacles. We want the local government to be more involved in creating an inclusive and adaptive training environment for athletes with disabilities, because this support is very important to push their achievements to a higher level.'*

c. Recruitment of Licensed Coaches

The recruitment of coaches who are licensed and have specialised competencies in training athletes with disabilities is an important step in ensuring the quality of training received by athletes. Licensed coaches have an in-depth understanding of the specific techniques required to optimise the abilities of athletes with disabilities. In addition, licensed trainers bring a higher standard of professionalism, ensuring that training is delivered using structured and tested methods. With competent coaches in place, athletes with disabilities can receive better coaching, which will increase their chances of excelling in competitions at local, national and international levels. One of the disabled sports activists stated:

*'Licensed coaches are a great investment for us, as they bring better training standards and methods suitable for athletes with disabilities.'*



*With trained and licensed coaches, it is hoped that the quality of training can improve, which will directly improve athletes' performance in various competitions.*

d. Training of Trainers

Recruiting licensed coaches, it is important for NPC Sinjai to conduct specialised advanced training that focuses on the needs of athletes with disabilities. This training not only enhances the technical skills of coaches, but also strengthens their understanding of methods and approaches that are appropriate for different types of disabilities. Coaches who understand these specific needs will be able to develop more adaptive and inclusive training programmes, ultimately allowing athletes with disabilities to reach their full potential. With regular coach training, NPC Sinjai ensures that their coaching staff are up-to-date with the latest techniques, which is crucial in improving the competitiveness of athletes with disabilities. One of the disabled athletes stated:

*'Our coaches need to understand more about the special needs of athletes with disabilities. With this training, we hope they can train with methods that are more appropriate and sensitive to the needs of athletes.'*

e. Provision of Facilities and Infrastructure

The provision of adequate and disability-friendly facilities and infrastructure is an important basis to support the development process of athletes with disabilities. Accessible facilities, such as disability-friendly pathways and training rooms, allow athletes to train in a safe and conducive environment. In addition, the presence of specialised equipment and other supporting facilities not only supports the physical needs of athletes, but also builds their spirit and motivation to continue training and achieving. Inclusive facilities and infrastructure will create a more supportive training environment, remove physical barriers that often become obstacles, and ensure that every disabled athlete can focus on developing their abilities without accessibility restrictions. One of the NPC organisers explained.

*'Without appropriate facilities and infrastructure, it is difficult for disabled athletes to reach their full potential. We need facilities that are disabled-friendly so that athletes can train safely and comfortably.'*

**Table 2.** Disability Sports Coaching Strategy

No.	Aspects	Coaching Strategy	Destination
1	Activation of NPC Sinjai Management	Reactivate the management of the National Paralympic Committee (NPC) Sinjai according to its duties and responsibilities.	Improve the recruitment process for athletes with disabilities to run better and produce athletes who excel.
2	Cooperation with Local Government	Building communication with the Youth and Sports Service of Sinjai Regency to support the development of achievements of disabled athletes.	Encourage the provision of facilities and infrastructure that are friendly to athletes with disabilities.
3	Licensed Coach Recruitment	Conduct recruitment of trainers who have official	Improving the quality of training and achievements of

4	Trainer Training	licenses and are competent. Conduct special training for coaches so that they are able to train disabled athletes better.	disabled athletes. Improving the ability of coaches to understand the special needs of disabled athletes and train with appropriate methods.
5	Provision of Facilities and Infrastructure	Providing adequate and disability-friendly facilities and infrastructure.	Creating an environment that supports and motivates athletes with disabilities to train and excel.

In table 2 the series of strategies above show commitment and concrete steps to develop disabled sports in Sinjai Regency. From activating a more structured NPC management, close partnerships with local governments, to providing licensed coaches and disabled-friendly facilities, all are designed to create an inclusive and supportive environment. By implementing these strategies, Sinjai Regency is expected to not only be able to produce high-achieving disabled athletes, but also become an example for other regions in fighting for equality and success in the field of disabled sports. The synergy between NPC, local government, coaches, and local communities is the key to success in bringing the potential of Sinjai's disabled athletes to higher achievements, both at the national and international levels.

### **Conclusions**

Sinjai Regency has great potential in developing disabled sports despite facing a number of obstacles, such as the inactive NPC management, limited facilities and infrastructure, minimal structural support from KONI, and the absence of licensed coaches specifically for disabled athletes. To overcome this, various strategies have been designed, including activating the NPC management, establishing close cooperation with the Youth and Sports Office to provide disabled-friendly facilities, recruiting and training licensed coaches, and creating an inclusive training environment. These strategies reflect Sinjai's commitment to optimally and sustainably developing disabled athletes. With synergy between the NPC, local government, coaches, and community, Sinjai has a great opportunity to become a national example in creating an inclusive and supportive sports ecosystem. Consistent implementation of this strategy is expected to not only produce high-achieving athletes, but also establish Sinjai Regency as a pioneer in fighting for equality and success in the field of disabled sports in Indonesia.

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**Conflict of interest**

This research does not contain any conflict of interest.

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