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Original article

THE REALIZATION OF A SPORTS EVENT FOR THE DISABLED

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Abstract

Purpose. The difficulties involving the insertion of the disabled in sports and activities keeps growing. Disabilities, minor and major, concern one in six people in the European Union (EU); that is, about 80 million people are not able to fully participate in everyday social and economic life. (Communication from the European Commission-European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A renewed commitment to a barrier-Brussels 2010). The organization of events therefore becomes a movement of significant importance to which innovation and new identity is necessary. Our research was based on the validity and the return of a sports event called “Una giornata abilmente...diversa” (“An ably diverse day”), dedicated to the disabled.

Methods. Three associations for the disabled participated in the event, as well as secondary schools of the commune Santa Maria Capua Vetere.

The event took place at the public pool of Santa Maria Capua Vetere on May 15, 2013 and saw:

- Recreational activities
- Activities linked to water autonomy
- Activities regarding lifesaving

Subjects without disabilities also took part in the events.

Results. The analysis and the elaboration of the data, as well as a survey given to the disabled subjects, the operators, family members and managers of the associations involved in the event, found that such an initiative results in moments of true inclusion, and the possibility to take advantage of certain structures and therefore carry out physical activities.

Conclusions. The organization of the event demonstrated that the synergy between the players, the local organizations, the universities and schools, sports associations and social associations, can bring about moments of confrontation and development to allow the realization of a consolidated program for the physical activities for the disabled.

Key words: collaboration ,primary school, motor limited activities.

Introduction

In the last thirty years, those who have found themselves or are part of the world of the disabled has taken part in a change in vocabulary. Each of these has symbolized the way in which the person was defined (handicapped, disabled, person with a disability) or the theoretic and operative thought that moved politics and the actions in favor of these people. So, in the 70's, the word was inclusion, in the 80's it became integration. In the last few years, thanks to the UN convention on the rights of the disabled of 2007, we have witnessed a new change: the new word is inclusion.

Sports is the gym of life, fundamental element in social and relational instruction, a time to meet and confront different realities. Sports bring together and aids the comprehension, characterizing the values of reciprocal respect and loyalty.

Sports become an instrument of insertion for the disabled, for those young people who, although having different capabilities compared to their peers,

practice sports, and through this overcome the limits that destiny has given them. (Giugno., et al. – 2013)

The difficulties regarding insertion of the disabled in sports activities and environments is increasing.

The project “Una giornata...abilmente diversa” takes into consideration the needs of young people and of those if deficient conditions who are in an even greater need of participation, integration and socialization through recreational activities-sports that respond to their needs. Furthermore it aims to offer innovative instruments for both the cognitive learning and to strengthen the met cognitive sphere, as well as the recovering from the vast area of the handicap and unease.

One problem that affects society is without a doubt is that of protecting the disabled population. Intense sport, as a moment of pure fun, pleasure, or simply the will to play, represents a gratifying activity

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that transmits a feeling of wellness to the disabled and helps them in the acceptance and understanding of their limits, sometimes able to be overcome. Sports can contribute to developing social integration offering relationships with friends, adults, sports instructors, disabled and not, and constitutes an further evolving dimension in which the subject can experiment.

The dimension of Free Time represents an indicator of quality and today the quality of life is at the core of social health politics and, in the declaration of Madrid (2003), the European Union affirmed that "sports and free time are equal to school and work."

It is on this principle that sports activities should be thought of as a true form of integration; integration that has already been seen in other fields.

Disabilities, minor to major, affect one in six people of the European Union (EU), that is about 80 million people that often don't have the possibility to fully participate in social and economic life (Communication of the European Commission-European Strategy for the disabled 2010-2020: a renewed task for a Europe without barriers-Brussels 2010). The organization of events becomes a moment of significant importance. It is necessary to recognize new characteristics and a new identity.

In 2004, ISTAT conducted a study on people with disabilities that live in families to gather, on one hand, the social integration of the disabled in their social context (relationships, school, work, free time, etc.), on the other hand, the factors that create barriers for these integrations (Mobility limitations, lack of necessary support, etc.)

The world of the disabled, has experienced many transformations in the last 30 years, beginning in the 70's with a call for the renovation of the services and the interventions, and coincides with the first phase of devolution of the competence of the state to the region. To make the community aware of the problems regarding the world of the disabled and the help that sports could give them, because sports is the only reality that does not create distinctions among its participants.

Understanding the psycho-physical and social disadvantage deriving from the condition occurring with "being handicapped" and that this situation can be overcome through the acquisition of a "different" culture. (Raiola, et al. 2013)

We can highlight specific and instructional objectives

-Instructional objectives are those to educate through aquatic activities; contribute to a balanced development of the personality (cognitive, emotional and relational areas)

-Specific objectives are those to educate to the water, through the acquisition of abilities in the following specific areas:

Autonomy in the water

Learning swimming techniques

Elements of water polo and synchronized swimming

Fundamentals of life saving and under water swimming through understanding the aquatic environment

Fundamental elements of assistance and first aid. (Tursi, and al. – 2012)

Method

Twenty associations for the disabled and some secondary schools from the commune of Santa Maria Capua Vetere participated in the event.

The event was held at the public pool of Santa Maria Capua Vetere on 15 May 2012 and saw:

Recreational activities

Activities linked to aquatic autonomy

Life saving activities

Subjects without disabilities also participated in the events.

The participants were gathered and divided into equal groups, considering age and disability.

Each group was guided by 5 operators and the activity coordinator.

All groups carried out the following activities:

Swim competitions (long pool)

Aquatic games (12 x 8 mt pool)

Games aimed in the acquisition of motary patterns (10 x 6 mt pool)

Therapeutic treatments (pool for motary rehabilitation)

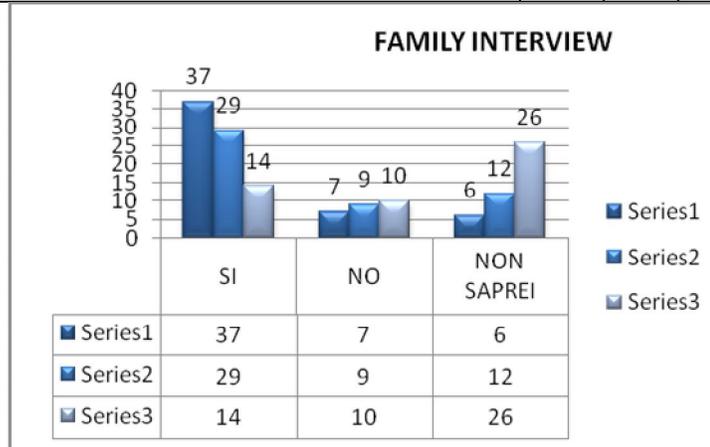
Activities aimed in the autonomy in deep water and understanding of the principle motions for assistance and life saving techniques.

Result

Two interviews were handed out, one for the families and one for the disabled subjects, structured on three

Table 1 Family Interview

Family Interview			
Question	Yes	NO	Doesn't know
Do you think this was a positive experience for your family member?	37	7	6
Can such events favor the social autonomy of the disabled?	29	9	12
Do you consider the aquatic experience adequate for your family member's needs?	14	10	26



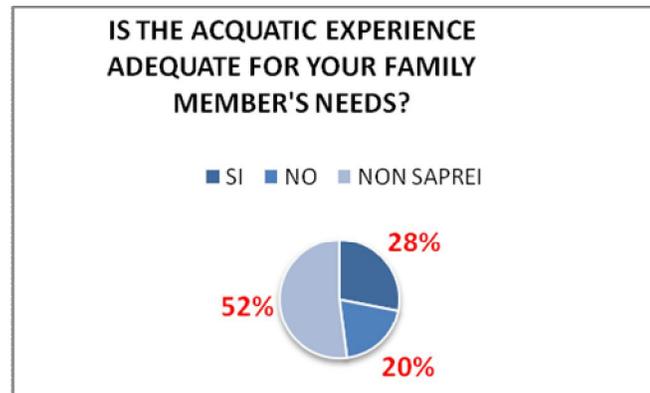
Grafh. N.1



Grafh. N 2



Grafh. N 3

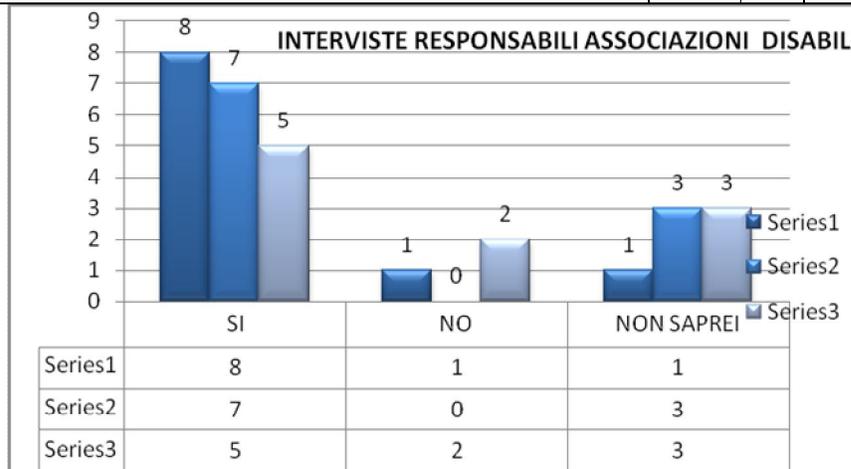


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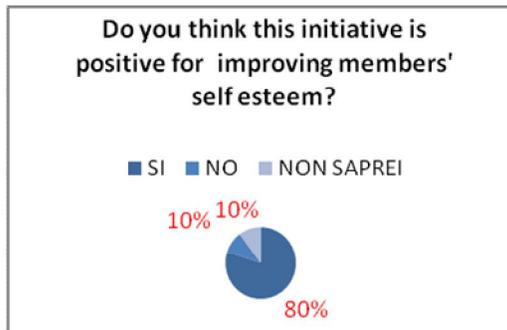
And one interview was handed out to the directors of the associations of the disabled participants, always based on three questions.

Table n. 2 INTERVIEW DIRECTORS DISABLED ASSOCIATIONS

INTERVIEW DIRECTORS DISABLED ASSOCIATIONS			
QUESTION	YES	NO	DOESN'T KNOW
Do you consider this initiative positive towards the improvement of your members' self esteem?	8	1	1
Has this event favored the process of socialization and integration of your members?	7	0	3
Do you consider the aquatic experience adequate for your members' needs?	5	2	3



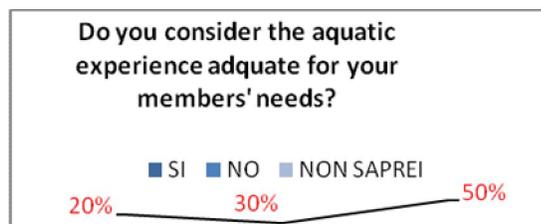
Grafh. N 5



Grafh. N. 6



Grafh, n. 7



Grafh. N. 8

The data collected shows a great interest and high percentages in activities of this kind, by both the families and the representatives of the associations of the disabled involved.



Discussion

The data collected allows us to affirm that our hypothesis has been verified. In fact, the numerous participants, disabled and non, were active and positive. Both the family members and the representatives of the Associations were pleased with the event, but above all they saw a new way of easing integration and inclusion.

It appears to be evident that the regular reoccurrence of these events are the weak link of our project, but at least we were able to prove the validity of such an event.

We can highlight as a strong point:

The Association ACFFADIR (association for parents of the autistic), which, following this event, asked for biweekly meetings for their members to carry out and practice aquatic activities. It has almost been one year that 11 autistic subjects routinely attend the swimming facility of Santa Maria Capua Vetere.

Conclusions

The organization of the event demonstrated that the synergy between the players, the local organizations, the universities and schools, sports associations and social associations, can bring about moments of confrontation and development to allow the realization of a consolidated program for the physical activities for the disabled.

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