



In Dive

INTEGRATING DIVERSITIES THROUGH
WATERSPORTS

HANDBOOK

The project

INTEGRATING DIVERSITIES THROUGH WATERSPORTS – IN DIVE

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Handbook Integrating Diversities through Watersports

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A. Intro

1. The project In Dive

The aim of the project “In –Dive, Integrating diversities through Watersports”, is to encourage social inclusion and equal opportunities in sports, with a specific focus on people with mental and physical disabilities.

The project specifically focuses on watersports and physical activities taking place in the water, such as swimming, the discipline of diving, synchronized swimming, psychomotricity in water, sailing.

The differences in between the various activities are articulated in different levels:

- At the level of the sport discipline in itself;
- As difference in between agonistic disciplines (such as swimming, diving, etc.) and the ones more tied to one’s well-being and sociality (such as basic familiarity with water, sailing, etc.);
- As a difference in between disciplines practiced in different settings, such as the ones necessitating sports facilities against disciplines that can be practiced in the open air and natural settings.

Across these differences, there’s something that all of these practices and disciplines have in common, and which makes them particularly suited for people with various disabilities.

- First and foremost water is an element in which also someone with physical disabilities may feel at ease and express themselves fully;
- Some of these sports, such as swimming, are considered – from a physical point of view – the most complete in absolute terms, and the ones that influence in the best way a person’s physical well-being. This, because it’s a practice that encompasses the whole body in a symmetrical way. This is especially important for people with disabilities, who often are affected by having to endure a static situation of life;
- Water is an extremely important element at a psychic level, as it’s the element that has accompanied us as a species throughout the entirety of the evolutionary process and our history as a species, and to this era also accompanies us in the most important moments of our existence. For example, the most recent tests and research studies show that water-based sports have a positive effect in cases of anxiety and depression.
- A further element consists in the recreational element that characterizes many water-based sports.

In spite of the progress that has been made in the last few years in this field, there is still a scarce knowledge of the potentiality that these sports offer for the well-being of people with various disabilities. This, in between operators, volunteers, the disabled themselves and their families.

2. What's the goal of this manual?

Objective of the manual is to support/set up an activity of watersports for disable people. It is aimed at sports operators, social workers, volunteers, and anyone interested in activating integration activities for the disabled through water sport activities.

3. Why water and water sports?

The water can be a source of great preoccupation: many people may have different fears connected with this element. So, making experience with the “water-activities” means then get involved, go back to the origins of your own difficulties, face them and overcome them. For these reasons it's very important to propose the “water activities” practice in a very secure way, in the form of playful and relaxing experience. Indeed, during the play it's easier to "get rid of the water", put aside rationality, accept pleasant sensations, thus creating a favorable climate open to dialogue overcoming your difficulties. The experience of “being part of the water” is exciting, in a learning path the experience of “aquaticity” can contribute to self-knowledge through the water-contact and the movement in deep water. It's important to underline how this experience can contribute to the acquisition of self-confidence and in relation with the others. It's necessary to be aware of your own capabilities, to overcome the embarrassment resulting from the contact with another person with whom one has – initially - low confidence: learn how to trust, get in tune with the other is essential. Beyond the fears and difficulties that beginners may encounter, beyond the skepticism shown by those who seem to have familiarity with the water (such as instructors and competitive swimmers), it's undeniable the psychological force that water exerts on those who accepts to surrender in it.

4. We talk about sport for all

Sport for all is a movement and a life-style which defines a systematic and collective campaign to maintain, change or improve societies through voluntary participation of citizens in sports and physical activity programmes. This concept encompasses the entire population, including children, youth, adult, seniors and the disable people.

Sport for all is therefore essentially a movement designed to promote sport and physical activity opportunities through the following strategies:

- Adopting traditional and modern values of Sport and Physical Activity, based on an ethical foundation for human life and dignity;
- Dedicating one's efforts and resources to establishing a countrywide healthy society;
- Constructing a community of unity, friendship, peace and well-being for all people;

- Making sport and physical activity accessible to all, so that it becomes an essential element of people's daily lives.

To maximize the application of these strategies, it is necessary to identify the significant stakeholders in the sport for all process and strengthen collaborative ties with and among them. There are some identified factors in and recommendations on encouraging health-enhancing physical activity that included the following.

- Facilitate cooperation between the sport, health and other sectors to promote public health.
- Focus on "sport for all" approaches to increase participation, rather than channelling resources to elite sports and one-off high-prestige events.
- Focus on recreational activities and unorganized sport.
- Involve the active transportation and urban planning sectors to increase physical activity.
- Address the specific needs of different target groups; increasing participation is a question of offering types of activities suitable for different groups, and ensuring their accessibility.
- Prioritize work in settings where sedentary population groups can be reached, such as schools and workplaces.
- Increase physical education in schools to reach the younger population.
- Develop strong health and economic arguments to create more political will for and commitment to promoting health-enhancing physical activity.

5. Informal activities (connected with the experience in the water)

Some activities cannot be defined watersports, but water/aquatic activities. Playing with these, you have to know that you are doing educational games which you can learn from.

The "aquaticity" is used to awake the body's sensitivity: the awareness of one's water body scheme. Therefore is very different from other sport and physical activities, which are also promoted inside the water, such as wateraerobics and various forms of water fitness, proposed as "real sport". Being "aquatic" means acquiring calm and tranquility useful to perform relaxed movements, feeling secure of the environment where you are, means listening to your sensations, develop and improve the sensitivity to the water, it also means to face your own fear and try to overcome it. An individual becomes familiar with water not related to what he is able to do in the water, but based on how he can stand in the water; therefore this implies the ability to listen to the sensations of his body immersed in water, and what water tells the body immersed in it. This means being familiar with water.

B. Glossary

1. Watersports

Some activities cannot be defined watersports, but water/aquatic activities. Other activities, however, such as aquaticity, or psychomotricity in water, are non-sporting activities, but they are preparatory and important for sport and any other educational activity in the aquatic environment. Speaking instead of water sports in the strict sense, here is a classification.

Water sports classification

Usually we identify as watersports only those practiced in the pool; we take into consideration, as an educational opportunity, also all rowing, nautical and new trend sports.

These are the main classification:

- FROM POOL - Swimming, water polo, diving, synchronized swimming, swimming for rescue, fin swimming.
- REMIERI - Boating, canoeing, kayaking, canoeing polo.
- REMIERI and VIVA WATER - Dragonboat, canoe, descent.
- NAUTICAL and REGATA - Sailing, windsurfing.
- NAUTICAL - Surfing, skiing, boating, wakeboarding, kitesurfing.
- DIVERS - Underwater.

The so classified sports disciplines, connected to the aquatic environments available, can be a stimulus, to widen the opportunities of realization and experimentation of new learning for the integrated groups.

It is important to know the technique to be able to transform it and adapt it to different situations. In the methodological approach that we want to promote it is fundamental to arrive to a sharing through a playful aspect that enables to live the full the experience

2. Distinction of different disabilities

It is interesting to note that the evolution of the disability approach can be found also in an evolution of the diagnostic manuals and the classification systems of the various disabilities. From the initial ICD (International Classification of Diseases - WHO 1948/1990) based on the classification of diseases and their pathological causes, we arrived at the ICF (International Classification of Functioning - OMS 2001) with which we completely change the disability approach: we start now from a health condition and relate to the person as a whole. This

document presents two different approaches to disability:

- multidimensional approach: a situation of unease may, sooner or later, affect everyone in the course of one's life. According to this approach, disability is seen as an experience that, in the course of life, could concern everyone and not a minority group of people;
- universal approach: the document considers all the environments in which the subject is inserted. For example, a person in good health could experience an uncomfortable situation if placed in an unfavorable work environment. The ICF structure has two parts, each of which is divided into two components. Each of them can be expressed in both positive and negative terms
- functioning and disability: body functions (physiological functions of body systems, including psychological functions) and body structures (anatomical parts of the body, such as organs, limbs and their components), activities (the execution of a task or an action by an individual) and participation (involvement in a life situation)
- contextual factors: both the environmental factors (the attitudes, the physical and social environment in which people live and lead their existence) and the personal factors (subjective responses of each individual) are considered.

There are many different types of disabilities such as intellectual, physical, sensory, and mental illness.

It is important to remember that disability can be quite complex and two people with the same type of disability may not have the same experiences. Also, 90% of disabilities are invisible – so while you may not see any visible signs, the disability can still be a part of someone's day-to-day life.

Intellectual disabilities

An intellectual disability may mean difficulty communicating, learning, and retaining information. It is characterised by an IQ below 70 (the median IQ is 100), and significant difficulty with daily living such as self-care, safety, communication, and socialisation.

People with an intellectual disability may process information more slowly than others, have difficulty communicating and managing daily living skills, and also have difficulty with abstract concepts such as money and time.

An intellectual disability may be caused by a genetic condition, problems during pregnancy and birth, health problems or illness, and environmental factors.

Types of intellectual disabilities are Fragile X syndrome (FXS), Down syndrome.

Physical disabilities

Physical disabilities may affect, either temporarily or permanently, a person's physical capacity and/or mobility.

Whilst there are tests available for some physical disabilities, they are often diagnosed through observations of a person's development, behaviour, and physical capabilities.

There are many different causes of physical disabilities but they can include inherited or genetic disorders, serious illnesses, and injury.

Types of physical disabilities are Acquired brain injury, Spinal cord injury (SCI), Spina bifida, Cerebral palsy, Cystic fibrosis (CF), Epilepsy, Multiple sclerosis (MS), Muscular dystrophy, Tourette syndrome, Dwarfism.

Sensory disabilities

A sensory disability is a disability of the senses (e.g. sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste).

As 95% of the information about the world around us comes from our sight and hearing, a sensory disability can affect how a person gathers information from the world around them.

Types of sensory disabilities are Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), Blindness and low vision, Hearing loss and deafness, Sensory processing disorder.

Mental illness

Mental illness is a general term that refers to a group of illnesses that significantly affects how a person feels, thinks, behaves, and interacts with other people. A mental illness can cause problems in your daily life, such as at school or work, or in relationships.

Mental illnesses can be very difficult and debilitating to those experiencing them, as well as their families and friends. They can also be permanent, temporary, or come and go.

Types of mental illnesses are Bipolar disorder, Depression, Anxiety disorders, Schizophrenia, Anorexia nervosa, Bulimia nervosa, Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Impulse control disorder (ICD) and addiction, Body dysmorphic disorder

3. Social inclusion and equal opportunity

Social cohesion (inclusion) is a process which strives to ensure that everyone, regardless of the circumstances, may achieve one's full potential, while employment and income are important, though not exclusive, criteria. The opposite concept is social exclusion which weakens the relationship between an individual and the community and it isolates him/her. A cause of social exclusion is often simplistically boiled down to an individual's weaknesses and his/her failures, though the cause is much more complex – structural problems of a society.

It is important to advocate public policies that will reduce existing inequalities: income inequality, inequality in access to education, health care and other social services; policies that will enable full employment, eradicate poverty, assert social values of work and solidarity and thus encourage citizens' full participation in community life.

Disability And Social Integration In Europe

The topic of disability in Europe has always been at the center of the attention for the European Union. Starting from the Amsterdam Treaty (1997), which for the first time has inserted this thematic in the founding documents of the Union, and it was then further reaffirmed with the

Lisbon treaty (2008), the attention for the disabled has been an aspect always present in the social politics of the Union.

In 2003, the European Year of People with Disabilities, the Council of Europe has emanated the Recommendation n. 1592 (2003), "Towards full social inclusion of persons with disabilities", and it has reminded of how many of the fundamental rights of a person, ratified from the European Convention on Human Rights, its protocols and its legislations, are still not accessible for many disabled people. The Recommendation underlines how the politics concerning the disabled, in some States that are members of the Union, have gradually evolved from an approach that saw the disabled as "patients" that needed to be cured, to one that considers them "citizens" who have the right of an individual support and to self-determination.

In spite of all the progress made on this matter, data on the isolation and solitude in which the disabled live are still very worrying. In the 27 States of the EU, live 65 million people with disabilities, and according to the Publication from the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education published in 2008, to this day at least 60% of the disabled students in the continent still find themselves in special needs classes or schools.

4. Environments

Aquatic environments

Our technical-didactic proposal, as part of the IN DIVE project, foresees an application with a modality able to best use the resources of the territory and of the natural environment that every organization has more easily available.

The ease of access, the element of safety, the possibility to realize, even with the necessary adjustments, most of the programmed aquatic experience, are elements that together with the lower cost of use, give us the possibility to choose the environment aquatic more suited to planning their own educational / training project. There is nothing to do with the possibility of using, in an integrated way, more aquatic environments to broaden the range of experiences of their students.

Natural outdoor environments, such as lakes and sea, to be used for experiments in some specific sports, may also be able to facilitate the approach to the experiences of basic aquatics, if used safely and in the appropriate seasons. On the other hand, structures such as sports or spa facilities that are more reassuring for those who approach the aquatic experience for the first time, can be, if appropriately adapted, environments where you can experiment with the first elements of technically advanced sports, to be studied further, with more diligence, in external environments.

5. Method

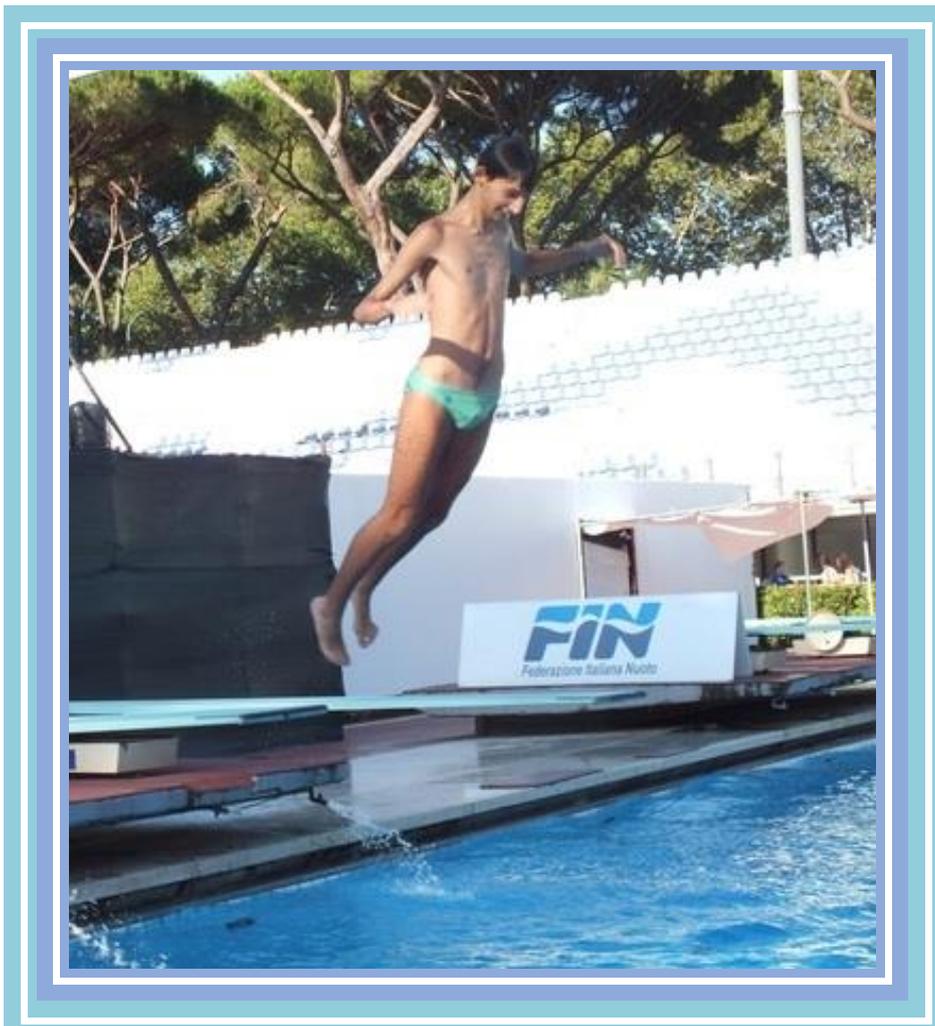
Educational methodologies

The methodologies that characterize this project comes from the integration of different thematic areas:

- background knowledge about the thematic of watersport for disabled persons; in this area we refer to discipline like psychology, medicine, etc.;
- sport disciplines and activities in the field of watersport for inclusion of disabled people; in this area we work on;
- communication and teaching skills for operators working for inclusion of disabled through watersport.

The methodology that the project will define and propose has the peculiarity to be flexible and adaptable to the most diverse contexts.





C - Key elements for In Dive practice

Based on the search for good practices and experiences, we have created this list of guidelines.

1. Adapted disciplines:

The aquatic sports disciplines for the integration of disabled people need to be adapted to the participants. In the research carried out by the project on good practices in this field it is possible to find different examples of adapted disciplines.

2. Complementary activities

Have the aim to foster reflection and to improve awareness (for oneself and for the group). These activities are not simple. They must be checked and readapted toward the feedback of the group. So, it is important to find every time the most appropriate proposal, for that group in that moment. This kind of activities must be integrated in the training compared to the objectives that we want to achieve.

Among the different types of complementary activities we can find:

- Different kinds of activities i.e. all the physical activities that are preparatory to the sport
- Complementary physical activities
- Accompanying towards the activity (i.e. welcoming presentation, exploration of the environment, conclusion, departure)
- Activities involving families
- Activities involving context
- Educational activities for an active life style (i.e. art, knowledge of issues, health, wellness, nutrition etc.)

3. Relationship

Creating a meaningful relationship with children is essential. Some important elements to highlight are:

- the ability to create a channel of communication with the participant, to create a climate of trust, listening and complicity;
- knowledge of the profile of the boy, in terms of physical and relational problems specific to the type of disability and the personal situation of the boy, potential and resources, etc.

4. Adapted environment

The environments where the activity takes place, both on and off the water, must obviously be adapted to the needs and possibilities of the participants.

5. Adapted staff

The realization of aquatic sports activities for the integration of disabled people can be carried out by different professional figures, with different functions and methods: aquatic activity instructors; social workers; psychologists; sports doctors, etc.

We highlight two needs with respect to the formation of these figures:

- at an individual level, the importance of developing a mix of skills is highlighted, while maintaining the specificity of one's role;
- the importance, where possible, of having a staff that includes the different professional figures, especially if you work on a group.

