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Sport as a Tool for Integration and Social Inclusion. The Case Study "EsportInclou" of the Sport Institute of Barcelona

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Abstract
The note intends to introduce some specific points of reflection about how the "*diversity*", in various forms, can be reduced through physical activity and sport practice. First of all, the note will introduce the European framework on the topic concerning inclusion and integration through sport and after will be observed the case study "*EsportInclou*" developed by the Sport Institute of Barcelona. Following the guidelines provided by the European Council, the city of Barcelona through the Barcelona *EsportInclou* plan, defines specific programs and actions that are able to help the integration and inclusion of those people who are affected by physical, intellectual disorders, auditory, visual and / or mental living in the neighbourhoods. The Barcelona *EsportInclou* program emphasizes the importance of defining a new idea of transformation. The plan tried to develop changes through the conception of the services offered without any type of limitation and that can favour the reduction of barriers between subjects. Finally, the contribution observes how the continuity of the financial interventions established new objectives included in the planning of the three-year period 2018-2021 (+21% M€).

Keywords: Sport, Community, Integration, Social inclusion, Sport facilities.

The processes of naturalization and political correction
remove the traces of concrete historical processes
of production of differences

(Alméida et al., 2010: 32-36)

1. The European Framework

"Knowledge is a process of continuous construction".
(J. Piaget,1973: 5)

Since the first half of the 20th century, after the establishment of the European Economic Community, topics of social inclusion and collective participation have been at the centre of the debate in the Member States.

The first theories of independent living emerged in Anglo-Saxon countries between the 1960s and 1970s. This redefinition about people with disabilities as oppressed human beings within socio-political, economic and cultural structures, contributed to the development of specific models for social integration. The following approach has contributed to change the role of disabled people within the commu-

nity, transforming them from mere patients to active agents. Thus, actors and protagonists of a new inclusive society.

According to Baumann, ethnic and cultural diversities are not a modern phenomenon; on the contrary, they are a phenomenon that has always accompanied man in his social experience (Baumann, 2003).

In this way, UNESCO's in 2001 through the Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity defines diversity as a value to be defended and encouraged[1].

While, the Council of the European Union in 2007, through the White Paper on Sport, defined sport a tool with powerful means of social inclusion, recognizing its nature of promoter of social inclusion. Previously, in 2006, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CDPD), introduced a new definition of people with disabilities: "persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others "(ONU, 2006, Art. 1).

In 2007, the European Commission, through the drafting of the White Paper on sport, identified three macro areas of interventions (1. Sport and Society; 2. Sport and Economy; 3. Sport and Integrity) on which to define the specific objectives and guidelines to be adopt in all EU countries.

Through the White Paper on Sport the European Commission invites member states to implement measures that are able to strengthen integration and social inclusion across sport and physical activity. Specifically, the following guidelines aim to reduce inequality and discrimination of various social groups at risk of exclusion.

Within this framework, according to Ghiralda, sport allows individuals to improve their physical qualities, to improve the cognitive and physical aspects, developing intangible socio-relational skills, especially in people with disabilities (Ghirlanda, 2003).

In this way, an inclusive and participatory community will certainlybe prepared to reduce the various forms of inequality that may develop in the future. Sport as a means of social inclusion should be seen as a moment where various members of the population who are not in the same situation come together. Comparisons are and should be of fundamental importance for the development of good practices that are able to reduce the sources of social inequality and discrimination.

Over the years, through the adoption of special programmes and specific guidelines, European States have started to make national and transnational proposals in order to develop a shared and continuous integration.

Western culture, over the years, has evolved in a nonlinear way starting from a religious conception, segregating and stigmatising the differences between individuals. On the other hand, the medical-naturalistic approach has focused its studies on the care and rehabilitation of individuals.

[1] UNESCO, (2001) Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, Art. 1: “Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations.

Thus, space assumes a fundamental role in the creation of activities and education programmes in the area. The organisation of space and the social environment are two crucial elements in the delivery of social inclusion and integration activities.

2. The Spanish Framework

Since the Constitution of democracy in 1978, the Spanish Autonomous Communities have been recognised as independent bodies for almost all the administrative and financial functions of their citizens[2]. Through this regulatory intervention, the autonomous communities have prepared their own plans for the development of sporting activities in relation with the priority issues of each region.

Furthermore, in 1982[3], the legislature intervened to foment the new general law on disability, a term introduced a few years earlier by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and subsequently replaced in 2001 by functional diversity. The new legislation refers to the ideological principle that people's diversity and functions within communities should be accepted and used as a starting point for establishing forms of equality, participation and sustainability.

The adoption of the specific legislation allows Spain to implement an approach identified with the Anglo-Saxon development model of independent living.

As stated by Palacios: "This model claims the autonomy of the person with functional diversity to decide on his or her own life, and therefore focuses on the elimination of all kinds of barriers in order to provide adequate equality of opportunity" (Palacios iRomañach, 2008: 38).

2.1 The case study "EsportInclou"

> In the end, all of them could go beyond the term inclusion
> to talk definitively about coexistence,
> given that sharing the same conditions favours
> the feeling of identity and relevance.
> (Ajuntament de Barcelona 2018:4)

The "*EsportInclou*" programme is promoted since 2012 by the Barcelona Sports Institute in collaboration with the Municipal Institute for People with Disabilities. The programme was drawn up in close agreement with the general policies that distinguish the city of Barcelona as a European leader in inclusion policies and services for people with a situation of disability.

The alignment of the project to municipal social policies allowed to redefine the conceptual framework on inclusive activities capable of operating transversally. *EsportIncl*ou program emphasises the importance of defining a new idea of transformation, seeking to promote change through the design of the inclusive services offered. Services without any type of limitation and that can favour the reduction of barriers between subjects.

The programme wants to go beyond the term inclusion, identifying coexistence like an element capable of strengthen a sense of identity and belonging to the community. Through a strategic participation between public and private actors,

[2] Spanish Constitution, 1978, see articles from 143 to 158
[3] Law 13/1982, April 7, Social Integration of disabled

the programme intends to inform and sensitisepeople and trainers on issues related to social inclusion and sport as an inclusive element.

EsportInclou is carried out within the wide network of municipal sport facilities (140 facilities of which 43 sport centres, swimming pools, multi-sports spaces, etc.) and through the support of more than 100 private sport facilities[4].

The activities proposed by the municipality are developed so that all people with a disadvantaged situation can contribute as main actors in the creation of an inclusive atmosphere. The specific activities and actions that are able to support the integration and inclusion of all those people who are affected by physical, intellectual disorders, auditory, visual and / or mental living in the neighbourhoods.

Through inclusive activities, *EsportInclou* provides the citizens of Barcelona the opportunity to practice integrative activities that strengthen social relations within their neighbourhoods. In addition, through inclusive activities, stereotypes between the different socio-economic groups in the neighbourhood will be reduced.

The project intends to pursue the general objectives through the following specific actions:

- Expand the supply / demand channel to allow people with a disability to participate
- Training of the various agents involved in adapted physical activity
- Help and advice municipal societies, educational centres and sports facilities
- Raise awareness among the population in relation to the right to practice sports for people in a situation of disability

In addition, the partners organising sporting activities have the possibility of accessing a series of resources that can guarantee an offer that respects the quality criteria established by the Barcelona Institute of Sport and the Higher Sports Council.

Type of resources:

- Support material for programming sports activities
- Activity periodization documents
- Educational materials
- Other types of educational materials

Furthermore, the Barcelona Sports Institute, with the aim of providing a high-quality offer, provides the following complementary services to all educational centres enrolled in the programme:

- *Pedagogical assistance service*: The objective is to respond to the demand of teachers who find themselves in a complex situation with regard to students with a disadvantaged situation.
- *Training service for inclusion*: Each year a training plan is proposed for adapted sports and motor activities according to the inclusive strategy and according to the needs observed from year to year.
- *Loan service of adapted materials*: This type of service is designed to provide materials for the practice of adapted activities with the aim of social inclusion.

The *EsportInclou*programme, which has been running since 2012, has seen a gradual increase in the offer and number of participants over the years. Through the introduction of new auxiliary services such as assistance in changing rooms or as-

[4] *ProgramEsportInclou*. Retrieved from:https://www.barcelona.cat/lesportinclou/ca/

sistance with private transport, the number of people involved has increased proportionally.

Specific Objectives

The general objective of the *EsportInclou* programme is to promote inclusive sport and integrated environment in the city of Barcelona. In order to pursue this objective, the Institute of Sport identifies the following specific actions:

- Encourage people with disabilities in the practice of sports or physical activities in municipal sports centres close to their social and family environment
- To include disabled people in the general offer of the plan for the promotion of motor activities and sport during school hours
- Promote the offer of sports associations in the city that are sponsored by the Sports Institute of Barcelona
- Promote disabled inclusion in the city's sporting events, specifically those organised by Barcelona City Council
- Expand information channels to raise awareness of the *EsportInclou* programme
- Increase the number of disabled participants through information and promotion of municipal activities
- Specific training in adapted physical education for all those involved in the *EsportInclou* development and implementation programme
- Specific advice on the subject of adapted sport for promoters, schools and sports centres, both public and private
- Ensuring specific action measures in relation to users with a disability situation
- Supporting the sport and social initiatives of sports organisations
- Promote collective and individual initiatives for people with functional difficulties

Implementation and execution

The implementation of the *EsportInclou* programme takes place through the following phases: 1. Promotion; 2. Participation in events; 3. Communication; 4. Citizen awareness; 5. Training continuity and resources; 6. Open consultation; 7. Accessibility actions; 8. Support for entities in the sectors; and 9. Pricing.

In addition, the municipality of Barcelona is supported by specific collateral programs *Convivimesportivament*, designed to promote inclusive sports and physical activity in the neighbourhoods. The *Convivimesportivament* side project identifies within sport a primary role in the creation and transmission of inclusive values within neighbourhoods.

Specifically, the initiative has two main axes: 1. *Plan aprenentesportivament* (Plan learning through sport); 2. *Plan eines per a la convivència* (Plan for living together).

In the first axis, the interventions are carried out in schools where there are no sports offer or where there is limited participation by the residents of the neighbourhood. Thus, the proposed activities are carried out within school spaces, private sports facilities, and municipal spaces outside school hours.

While, with regard to the second axis of intervention, the plan for coexistence, the activities are aimed at young people at high risk of social exclusion and discrimination on ethnographic or socio-economic grounds. The initiative aims to involve parents in their children's sports practice, promoting sporting values as elements of social inclusion.

The *Convivimesportivament* programme and the specific lines are directed by the Barcelona Institute of Sport, the Directorate of Immigration Services and the

Public Health Agency, while the diagnosis of the activities is followed jointly with the Barcelona Student Sports Foundation and the Barcelona School Sports Council.

Moreover, the project is actively supported by all the districts, the directorate of the adolescent and youth programme, the Barcelona education consortium and the municipal education institute.

New challenges for sport inclusion in 2018-2021

Analysing the budget of *EsportInclou* projectfor the three-year period 2015-2018, we can see that in 2017 the municipality subsidised projects oriented towards social inclusion for a total of 220 million euros. This financing ofterritorial projects contributed to the promotion and participation of inhabitants with different forms of disabilities. During the promotion days held in 2017 participated 1903 people with different forms of disabilities. While, the number of participants in sports events promoted by the municipality was 1441 subjects with different forms of disabilities.

In particular, the number of subjects participating in sports events was divided as follow:

- 435 participants in popular activities
- 315 participants in the International Tournaments of the City of Barcelona
- 475 participants in the event "Sport without barriers"
- 216 participants in the Inclusive Day.

On the other hand, in relation to the promotion days, the highest participation was recorded for the adapted swimming programme. During the promotion days held in 2017, 1350 people with various types of disability took part in the adapted swimming programme.

Participants in the promotion days were divided as follow:

- 168 subjects participating in the "Learning to Cycling" programme
- 122 children participating in therapeutic activities in water
- 7 participants in 2 groups for the "Let's play" activity
- 144 children and young people participating in school sports competitions
- 30 participants in therapeutic water activities in municipal sports centres.
- 9 participants in the Badminton sports group
- 8 participants in the specific "Autism and water" programme
- 6 participants in the inclusive sailing programme
- 59 participants in weekly outings organised by the Guttman Institute and municipal sports centres

Comparing the budget of the three-year period 2015-2018 with thatof 2018-2021, we observe a 21% increase in the funds dedicated to the promotion and development of sports inclusion activities.

This continuity of intervention in the course of time has allowed the municipality to add new objectives to be incorporated into the programming for the three-year period 2018-2021.

Some of key objectives:

- Exemption and adaptation of programmes in special education centres

- Creation of the inclusion programme for multiple disabilities
- Extension to all child development and early attention centres (CPIAP) to develop hydrotherapy activity programmes
- Inclusive sailing programme
- New badminton group in Mar Bella sports centre
- New water activities for disabled people on the beach
- Intensification of promotional campaign for social inclusion programme
- Inclusion of an inclusive sport image for the dissemination of activities organised by the municipality of Barcelona
- Development of a direct guide for technicians and trainers
- Organization of a day on the good practices of sport inclusion with the theme "Pluridiscapacidad y derecho a la inclusiónen la educaciónfísica y el ociodeportivo "(20 de marzo 2018)

The *EsportInclou* programme in the period 2018-2021 identifies the following specific initiatives in pursuit of the general objective:

- Developing the best inclusive experience in physical-sporting activity
- Propose new inclusive sport activities and events in the school
- Promote activities through disabled sportspeople to raise awareness and convey the values and benefits of sport as an element of social inclusion
- To include the programme for the promotion of sporting activity in the needs of employment centres
- Extend the experience of the weekly Guttmann outings
- Increasing participation in courses promoted by the municipality
- Schedule the offer and make it 100% accessible and feasible for everyone

Finally, within the programming of activities and the social budget for the three-year period 2018-2021, the Barcelona Sports Institute recognises that the proposal is very bold and needs global support in order to provide a segmentation of activities.

Final Observation

The City of Barcelona's have been proportioned the social and inclusive policies with the help of the European Union's social agenda, based on the European Strategy 2020 document on social inclusion policies. Furthermore, Barcelona City Council continues to strivefor social cohesion, equal opportunities and accessibility within its active policies related to the development of municipal sport.

From this perspective, sport facilities *proximitat (proximity)* is considered as a functional resource in the backbone of social activities in the city of Barcelona. The *EsportInclou* programme guarantees universal accessibility to the promoted activities. In this way, the municipality tries to implement means that are able to reduce the possibilities of inequality due to ethnographic or socio-economic differences.

Considering new models of the contemporary city, through the reconstruction of new parts of the city and the development of new models of mixed urbanism, contributes to the evolution of new phenomena of social inequality. In the city of Barcelona, the evolution of segregation and gentrification phenomena in both central and peripheral neighbourhoods have obliged the municipality to react so that the city does not become a simple space to be designed at will.

The interventions implemented in the city public space through the promotion of a healthy lifestyle has allowed people to connect with the community and coexist with the diversity present inside. Through the enhancement of the practice of sport as social capital, the municipality has recognised the role of local authorities as a responsible mediator in the transmission of inclusive values.

The practice of sport must be valued and interpreted as an activity capable of generating social capital, taking into account the sports organisations that will be the mediator responsible for transmitting inclusive values.

Thanks to sports organisations, the municipality will be able to connect people with the community. Promoting the well-being in neighbourhoods and the sense of belonging of citizens will reduce the forms of social exclusion of people at risk. In this way sports organisations will help the municipality to connect people with the community, generating a sense of belonging that will promote the quality of life in the neighbourhood, reducing people at risk of social exclusion.

The municipality of Barcelona expects the development model for sports centres, schools and responsible bodies to promote sport and physical activity as an element capable of providing equity and social justice, favouring the construction of a model of society that we desire. That holistic model of city is able to reduce the possibilities of social exclusion and that sponsors a quality social offer to citizens, without any kind of exception and inequality.

The sporting city is able to reduce forms of exclusion and inequality.

The experiences carried out by the municipality of Barcelona can be considered as best practices and referring to Canevaro's suggestions, but they should not be considered as a perfect model (Canevaro, 2002).

Inclusive city models should be designed through dynamic activities that can change shape and structure over time.

Considering sport and healthas interdependent elements, we have no choice but to carry out measures and intervention planning aimed at promoting the practice of sport in a continuous form throughout life.

"Cultural and ethnic diversity is only one aspect of diversity".

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