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INCLUSION AND DISABILITIES IN AND THROUGH SPORT

Best Practice #2 - North Macedonia

OCNM - Olympic Committee of North Macedonia

No. 101089892 – IDI4Sport – ERASMUS-SPORT-2022-SCP



Key words. Please insert 3 to 5 key words that best describe the best practice

Swimming, Atypical Development, Physical abnormalities

1. Type of Disability

Please describe the type of disability that this practice is focused on. If there is an official definition of the disability in European or National documents please provide it.

Our primary focus is to offer services to individuals with a wide range of disabilities, including those with intellectual and physical impairments. However, it is important to note that we specifically cater to individuals who are capable of participating in training sessions and adhering to instructions in a responsible manner that does not pose risks to themselves or others.

2. Organization & Reference

If applicable: Official data of organization, school, club etc. (name, address, email). Please give references such as internet source, homepage etc.

NGO Sport Association ITK Macedonia – Skopje
 Address: Nikola Parapunov 27/4 – 4, Skopje
 itk.macedonia@itk-leipzig.de / itk.macedonia@gmail.com
<http://itk-leipzig.de/>
<https://www.facebook.com/itk.macedonia>
<https://www.instagram.com/itk.macedonia/>

The organization is focused to make positive changes in the society using sport and culture as a tool to integrate as much people as possible.

3. Formal/Informal

Please state if the setting refers to formal or informal education (sport clubs etc.).

Informal

4. Practice summary

Describe what and how was done (regulations of the sport/game/competition/physical activity), please state the specific context of the practice and the sport(s)/game/competition involved.

We are focused on adaptive swimming activities and also we organize events and competitions because there isn't an institution or federation that is taking care for competitive system in this area.

Also we promote volunteerism in our inclusive system and the option for young people to become coaches and assistants in the process.

5. Variations implemented

Please state any kind of useful variations (e.g., concerning settings, age of participants, types of disabilities and adaptations to other sports) of the practice.

The participants are age from 5/6 till 35. In the trainings we have athletes with Down Syndrome, various types of cerebral palsy, autism and other disabilities that cause physical and/or abnormalities.

6. People involved

Please state organizations and people involved, provide types of disabilities participated in this specific good/best practice. If applicable, be concrete about the different roles of the people involved.

In our practical sessions we have 3 coaches that work in small or big pool. But there are also other people, parents and caretakers who assist us in the process. We have 1 coach with motor disabilities that is also a swimmer, winning the 2022 National Championship in the category for disabled athletes.

Last year we were present on two competitions outside of Macedonia, one in Sofia - Bulgaria and the other in Ptolemaida – Greece. And in December 2022 we organized the only inclusive International swimming competition in Macedonia called Atlas Winter Cup that is our tradition.

In the organization we have lawyer, doctor and coaches and experts in different fields.

7. National guidelines adopted

Please refer to the national guidelines that are met through the practice. Give basic legislation frameworks that can help teachers understand their legal-driven responsibilities towards their students.

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8. Implications for teachers/practitioners etc.

Please write any useful implications (what teachers/coaches/physical educators should take into account: safety considerations, equipment needed, support needed) that the practice might have. This may include focal points of the types of disabilities included and how these points were addressed, in terms of the participation in sports.

Ensuring the safety of individuals participating in the activities is paramount, with athletes requiring constant supervision from their coach or designated personnel.

It is crucial for everyone involved to exercise patience when working with individuals with disabilities.

Regrettably, the availability of sports equipment specifically designed for adaptive sports in stores is limited, necessitating adaptation to the existing circumstances.

9. Innovative resources, materials, methods etc. used

Please refer to the resources, materials, methods etc. have been employed. Strategies for creating an inclusive environment, prioritizing accommodations for students with disabilities, forming/refining accessible facilities, equipment, and assistive technology. Please include techniques for adapting sports activities to meet the needs of students with disabilities, such as modified rules, specialized equipment and assistive devices.

Typically, we utilize standard swimming equipment; however, we lack a device or lift specifically designed to safely transfer individuals in wheelchairs into the water. Establishing an inclusive environment has been a long-term focus for us, and through our organization, we aim to enhance the professionalism of coaches working with individuals with atypical development.

10. Communication and collaboration strategies

If applicable, describe strategies for collaborating with other educators, parents, and students to ensure that everyone is working together to create an inclusive environment.

Collaboration with parents and pool staff who comprehend the requirements of individuals with disabilities is the fundamental aspect of our initiatives. We have established numerous cooperation agreements with

organizations sharing similar interests, which actively participate in our activities.

11. Evaluation and/or reflection methods

If applicable, state how teachers planned to know, to what extent basic goals were met. That is, give any kind of evaluation practices, self-reflection methods, and forms of data collection, post-event documentations and follow-ups. Also, report any positive feedback and reinforcement given to students with and without disabilities to encourage and motivate them to continue participating in sports.

The abundance of smiles, positive feedback, improved health conditions, and participants who feel socially fulfilled serve as indicators that our efforts are making a positive impact. In the case of more advanced swimmers, we track improvements in their swimming times to gauge progress. Additionally, we frequently have young individuals visiting our practices to witness the inclusive atmosphere and the rewarding experience of working with disabled individuals.

12. Training pathway for teachers for integrating this good practice

Please provide 5 to 15 practical tips to teachers of sports for implementing the proposed good practice. Ensure that tips: 1. refer both to formal and informal settings 2. Contribute to the awareness of educators for the needs of students with disabilities 3. Take into account the environmental/architectural and attitudinal barriers (such as inaccessible sport spaces, equipment needed, support provided), 4. Provide individualized adaptations 5. Provide social and emotional support by encouraging social interaction and peer support 6. Provide positive reinforcement to motivate them to continue participating in sports and to develop their skills and abilities.

- Offer encouragement and support to the athletes
- Foster understanding of the unique experiences and capabilities of disabled athletes
- Communicate with their loved ones to gain insights into their individual needs more easily
- Allow sufficient time for them to acclimate to the new environment
- Prioritize the social aspect, recognizing that individuals with disabilities often have limited opportunities for socializing and forming friendships
- Create a safe and secure environment to help them feel at ease

Source:

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