

Analysis of the current coach programme and to what extent addresses social inclusion at the Spanish national level

Executive Summary

This document analyses sports as a fundamental tool for the development of a society. Everyone has the right to play sports because practicing them does not only mean physical activity, it means much more - among other contributions, sports allows you to obtain values, a discipline and, above all, a personal and social development that improves the individual itself and its social relations. Hence, it is important that coaches are prepared to run this intervention and design proper programmes to carry out their tasks. From here onwards, we are going to examine the current coach programmes that exist in Spain and to what extent they are sufficient to address social inclusion.

1. Introduction.

Sports is undoubtedly a fundamental tool for the development of a society. Everyone has the right to play sports because practicing them does not only mean physical activity, it means much more - among other contributions, sports allows you to obtain values, a discipline and, above all, a personal and social development that improves the individual itself and its social relations. For these reasons, those people who live in situations of social vulnerability are the ones who need it the most. By social vulnerability we understand,

"those vulnerabilities that are constructed from the stereotypes, roles and sociocultural practices established in a given community. People or groups

that suffer from this type of vulnerability are often affected by prejudices and discriminatory practices due to certain qualities of the human being such as race, sex, condition or social origin, as well as sexual orientation."

Due to sports and with the intervention of professionals links are established to generate inclusion, promotion of education, health and the organisation of a community – that is, bonds can be created between the different members of the group that allow strengthening the figure of the person and the group itself.

In this sense, it is important that coaches are prepared to run this intervention and design proper programmes to carry out their tasks. From here onwards, we are going to examine the current coach programmes that exist in Spain and to what extent they are sufficient to address social inclusion.

2. Background

When it comes to sports as a vehicle of social inclusion, there are some studies carry out in Spain which highlight the issue of the barriers for intervention. According to Rios (2009), there are three kind of barriers related to sports used as a vehicle of social inclusion:

- **Infrastructure constraints.** It encompasses the following issues:
 - Lack of information available to people at risk or situation of social exclusion.
 - Shortage of economic resources.
- **Determinants of the collective itself.** That is, self-marginalization problems and lack of recognition of their own rights as citizens: people with social difficulties may tend towards self-marginalization, both due to ignorance of their real possibilities of inclusion.
- **Social constraints.**
 - The lack of information or ignorance of citizens: avoidance, lack of solidarity and lack of awareness. Our society is not yet sufficiently sensitized and does not have real information about people in situation or at risk of social exclusion. This misinformation provokes preconceived ideas, topics and damages based on false beliefs, which have negative and unhelpful attitudes of social inclusion.
 - Little knowledge of social profitability.
 - Precarious training of educators and sports professionals.

And it is the latter that is relevant for our analysis. It is deemed that coaches are not prepared to carry out interventions of social inclusion due to the absence of specific compulsory subjects in physical education which may prevent inclusion and the successful implementation of a programme. That is, it is stressed that coaches are not properly educated for undertaking the commitment of social inclusion – therefore, a different approach is needed at university and sports clubs level to improve the curricula of those involved.

Having said that, there are efforts from the public Administration to bridge this gap. In this sense, we are going to discuss the Plan A+D launched by the central government in 2008, which is the official framework and guidelines that exist nowadays in Spain. Of course, there are private initiatives but here we are going to focus on what we have at national level. After discussing the Plan A+D, we are going to examine the guidelines provided by the programme. Later on, we will draw some conclusions.

3. Plan A + D.

The design and implementation of **A+D Plan** was one of the main lines of action of the programme of the Government for the legislature 2008-2012¹. This can be considered the starting point for our analysis since one of the main points was to provide recommendations for coaches at national level addressing social inclusion.

From here on, we are going to discuss the Plan and the guidelines that were issued.

3.1 The Comprehensive Plan for Physical Activity and Sport (Plan A + D).

It is an instrument created by the Superior Council of Sports (CSD) in order to guarantee the Spanish population universal access to quality sports, thus helping to combat the high level of sedentary lifestyle and obesity present in our country and to promote active and healthy lifestyle habits. In fact, the A + D Plan attempted to answer three relevant questions:

1. What can the Government do, within the framework of its competences, to achieve a greater and better promotion of physical activity and sport in Spain following the guidelines of the European Union and the World Health Organization?
2. How can the Government, the Autonomous Communities, the Local Corporations, the sports association sector (clubs and federations) and the private business sector work in the

¹ For more information, please consult the following website: <http://www.planamasd.es/index.html>

same direction to promote the practice of physical activity and sport in the whole of the Spanish population?

3. What steps would the CSD have to take in the coming years to design a Plan that establishes guidelines for all agents of the state's sports system?

One of the **specific objectives of the programme was to address sports as a vehicle of social inclusion**. The specific **objectives** of the programme were the followings:

- Clarify and specify the functions of sport in the new contexts of intervention and responsibility.
- Work for the development of egalitarian sports practices and in which ethnocentrism and the development of new forms of colonialism are avoided.
- Develop the playful, relational, communicative and pedagogical sense that sports practices have when they are proposed as instruments rather than ends.
- Support all kinds of actions to combat racism and xenophobia not only in sports "show", but also in sports practices of more modest groups.

Furthermore, the following **measures** were devised:

- Guide to good practices in sports management;
- Sports projects in the public space;
- Adaptation of aerobic circuits for the elderly;
- Inclusion of a gender perspective in the design and use of sports spaces;
- Inclusion of people with disabilities in the municipal, county and provincial sports offer;
- Calls for projects on sports, creativity and social inclusion;
- National plan for transport on foot and by bicycle;
- Support for the construction of sports facilities in schools.

In the present work is relevant that there were devised **calls for projects on sports², creativity and social inclusion** with the aim to consolidate a stable social sports network that developed egalitarian sports practices in which



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² Annual call for the Autonomous Communities with which it was intended to set the guidelines to follow to consolidate a National Social Sports Network under the parameters of the Higher Sports Council, always taking into account the general objectives established in this A + D Plan.

ethnocentrism, racism and xenophobia are avoided, and which were capable of encompassing the different social strata, with a cosmopolitan mentality that allowed for the expansion and updating the basis of the State's own cultural heritage.

This call seek to commit the Autonomous Communities, so that they form and consolidate a functional work platform, based on the knowledge of the situation of the most disadvantaged social structures. This platform allowed an investigation at the state level, which provided a real diagnosis of the existing situation, from which, facilitating socialization actions can be proposed using physical activity and sports.



3.2 The Guide for Social Intervention through Sports.

The Guide was created with the aim to give support in the increasingly broad field of initiatives that conceive sports as a tool for social inclusion. The document focuses on the role that sports can play in the field of social inclusion, in addition to detecting, recognizing and finding solutions to the multiple problems that are behind each situation of social exclusion. The Guide tries to offer some recommendations that are useful for these means. It addresses issues from the delineation of the objectives, the most appropriate activities, context and evaluation tools that allow professionals and collaborators to analyse the situation and advance. What is more, there is a section that focuses on the coach programmes, education and profile. This will be elaborated in the next section.

3.3 Coach programmes.

The Guide begins by describing the profile of coaches ascribed in this kind of social intervention. It is put forward that in order to promote change and that the school is in the process of transformation, it is necessary that the coaches develop their capacity for innovation and professional development. Therefore, a teacher who is committed to deal with diversity and social inclusion should be characterised by the following traits:

- Not only having didactic competences and knowledge to deal with diversity and, consequently, to the great variety of learning styles, but also be accompanied of a moral commitment to education for all.
- Be reflective, critical, researcher and transformer of your his professional practice.

- A person who seeks to improve his teaching practice by becoming involved in educational organizations of its center and considers that the attention to diversity is an opportunity to improve your teaching practice.

To this end, it is clear that coaches should be able to have access to an adequate design and development curriculum.

The guidelines highlight the following points:

- A sports project with these characteristics can be organised by professionals that belong to different disciplines. In this sense, it is important to be **open to interdisciplinarity**. Be interested and learn from the other discipline that is part of the project. Recognize the role of each discipline and the professional that represents it.
- The coach or monitor must have **deep knowledge on the sports' technique** that is going to be practiced. This fits with the idea of offering quality the participant, especially when it comes to young boys. So they feel respected, taken seriously into account and, therefore, they will respect.
- Moreover, it is interesting that the coach or monitor has **a basic knowledge about dynamics group, conflict resolution, and skills social**. In the same vein, it's interesting that the coach have certain knowledge about social education social - for example, insights of the social inclusion processes.
- Moreover, the coach must understand and know the contributions of educators to the project. He must understand that the sports project must go beyond sporting results with the help of educators or other social agents.

Likewise, it can be very useful to create **communication spaces among professionals** (educators and coaches or monitors) involved in a sports projects and social inclusion. In this sense, it is important the transmission of information about group situations, users, etc. Likewise, the communication spaces favour the clarification of the functions and roles of every professional. In these spaces you can take action agreements, strategies, can seek understanding and reflection on group situations, etc.

3.4. Proposed profile

This section refers to the strategies that the educator, monitor to establish the contact with project participants of social inclusion and favour a personal treatment that helps generate a favourable climate or environment. Although the advices could be very numerous, the information has been condensed in 6 main points:

1. Know your students: This means, whenever possible, a daily work in which you ask and investigate, with tact and progression, for their lives outside the program, their likes, hobbies, fears, problems, concerns, needs or if everything they are doing well This information also to help you better understand your participants will be the basis for creating a better climate of confidence that enhances the objectives of the program.

2. Empathy: Trust can help start receiving sensitive information or emotionally shocking. It is important to know how to maintain a emotional distance as a professional, to not be dragged before many situations of true injustice, being aware that you do not You can solve their life. The job multidisciplinary with psychologists, educators social, etc., can help you channel answers and solutions that you just can not face for lack of specific preparation.

3. Establish personal reflections and group discussions: The only way to change the values or attitudes of a person is speaking with her and offering her experiences that oblige her to develop a reasoning moral.

4. Always boost your self-esteem: Highlighting what you do well, valuing your efforts, encouraging them and recognizing what they do constantly, even telling them the things that make you happy.

5. Be aware that you are a model for your students: You must always keep in mind that everything you say in your activities affects the students and that they are always aware of your behavior. If you want to establish some rules you have to be the first to comply.

6. Develop your patience: Many of your participants have "being like this" for 14 or 21 years of age, and in a few sessions or a year of intervention they will not change radically. We are planting seeds that if taken care of and given a minimum of favorable conditions will flourish over time.

4. Conclusions.

In the light of the previous analysis, we can conclude that coaches should have an appropriate socio-pedagogical approach to give adequate response to the educational needs of students and carrying out intervention of social inclusion. The point is that this goal is difficult to reach due to the absence of specific compulsory subjects in physical education which may prevent inclusion and the successful implementation of a programme. That is, it is our contention that coaches are not properly educated for undertaking the commitment of social inclusion – therefore, a different approach is needed at university and sports clubs level to improve the curricula of those involved. For instance, it would be a good practice to hold seminars addressing this kind of intervention. We find examples in Mexico, such as the following one: <http://ftsych.uanl.mx/index.php/cursos-taller-entrenador-social-deportivo-2/>

Nonetheless, we must bear in mind that this academic field is “broad and should continue to be configured to give adequate responses to the educational needs of current students. Although scientifically the theoretical corpus in this area is scarce, as it is a specific problem within the subject that deals with some skills, content, objectives and a specific methodology, we could talk about an Intercultural Physical Education.”

To conclude, we believe that an appropriate socio-pedagogical coaching practice can be, to some extent, taught to coaches. However, there are some important aspects that are more difficult to teach. For example, the motivation and genuineness in wanting to work with such young people is difficult to put in a curriculum or training programme.

5. Bibliography.

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