

Study Visit Spain

Visiting Partners

- Regional Government of Styria, Caritas Styria
- German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB)

Date and Place

- 3+6 October 2011
- Extremadura, Spain

Participants

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I. STUDY VISIT SUMMARY

- **Monday, 2 October 2011 and Thursday, 5 October 2011**

The study visit in Spain was taking place in the frame of the 2nd Conference of "Creating a Level Playing Field". Located in the South West, Extremadura is one of the 17 autonomous regions in Spain, divided into the provinces of Cáceres and Badajoz. Inhabited by one million people, the region currently faces major economic difficulties with about one third of the population being unemployed. Among young adults, this rate is exceeding fifty percent.

Next to presentations on programmes of social inclusion at place, the study visit contained field visits to related facilities. Among the participating organisations, social inclusion has been defined in different ways:

Spain:

The existing policy integrating social inclusion through sports within the organisation is categorized by criteria of differences of disability, gender (here women), age - senior population and youth, neighbourhoods risking from social exclusion, convicts etc.

Germany:

For the German delegation the CLPF-definition of social inclusion is interpreted by the criteria of difference by 'origin'. In Germany, it is named as 'Integration through sport' as a part of 'social inclusion'.

Austria:

For the Austrian delegation the CLPF-definition of social inclusion is interpreted by criteria of differences of origin and disability. Social inclusion has different meanings in different Austrian regions and organisations.

Due to the different circumstances and needs at place, in Extremadura, social Inclusion focuses on the following target groups:

Senior Citizens

An impressive example of social inclusion through sports was an initiative carried out to improve health conditions of elder generations. In cooperation with regional medical centers, senior citizens are supplied sports programmes on prescription. Following a successful pilot project in the surrounding towns (expenditures for medical products could be decreased; subjective well-being of the population increased), 40 coaches have been employed on a permanent basis and offer sports programs for elder citizens three times a week in the various medical centers.

Women

A sports programme specifically tailored to women carries the idea to reach females who are not aware of nearby existing activities. A project team supported by the Ministry of Sports tours different villages together with regional partners such as local sports clubs to carry out advertising. On special training days, females are being acquainted with the various offers at place and get to know each other. According to the organizers, this event reaches women who have, so far, been almost inactive in sports.

Inclusion of Socially Disadvantaged Teenagers and Young Adults



A field visit to the circus and sports academy “Funambulus”, an empty industry hall in Plasencia illustrated an example of social inclusion in a social hotspot. Although a private profit-oriented business, it has a wide-ranging social understanding and considers itself as “social company”. Among its audience are overall socially disadvantaged people and persons from backgrounds at risk and/ or poor backgrounds.

One of the initiatives carried out are summer camps for children from poor divorced families. Next to sports and circus activities, they also include social and pedagogical work. In order to facilitate access for individuals from poor backgrounds, there exists cooperation with public counseling centers, public support programmes and others taking care of related fees. For outdoor activities, this company offers climbing facilities and a zoo in the Plasencia area.

Teenagers and Young Adults

The most impressive part of the study visit was the “Factoria Joven”. This “factory for teenagers” has been supported by the Ministry of Sports and is an exclusive model for integrating teenagers and young adults from deprived urban areas by the help of sports. By surveying young adults about their favorite sporting activities in advance, the needs at place are being determined. In a second step, centers are built based on the suggestions of the concerned target groups.

The project team visited a center focusing on climbing and skating. It contained a climbing tower for blind people and a skate park not only attracting skaters but also graffiti sprayers. Furthermore, it offered free access to computers and internet, gymnastic equipment and multipurpose surfaces (e.g. for hip hop).

Generous opening hours and an extended age limit (35) are allowing access for a large population. This initiative is offering access not only for migrant people but for all living in socially deprived areas and provides useful occupation to young adults suffering from high unemployment.

Persons with Disabilities

“Placeat”, an organisation located in Plasencia is taking care of individuals and persons with mental disabilities since more than 30 years. Next to living and employment arrangements in various day centres, the facility puts a central focus on sports. Sport is part of leisure time activities and integrates disabled people with the community.



II. CONCLUSIONS AND EVALUATION

1.) The principle of participation in the planning phase of projects is essential for their success. The approach to be found in Extremadura does not only focus on migrants. Teenagers and young adults from deprived areas are offered access to sports by “youth factories” (Factoria Joven).

Especially in areas suffering from high unemployment, they are provided leisure time activities and possibilities for self-organisation.

2.) Next to a multitude of new approaches, also the contacts established during both, the study visit and conference have given room for new ideas in the field of social inclusion.

3.) Participating in "Creating a Level Playing Field" is not only valuable sharing of experience but also offers possibilities for peer learning to further develop initiatives within the participating organizations.

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