

Follow up of Integration and Inclusion – Phase Report of Finnish Sports Federations

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My background

- Research rooted in praxis: 20 years career as a disability sport officer in Finnish disability sports.
- Cultural and sociological perspective to APA and disability sport.
- PhD 2011, Jyväskylä university/ Inclusion in local after school sport -projects 2004-2007.

Theoretical assumptions

based on Saari, A. 2011 (diss.)

1) The concept of integration is connected to medical model.

 ***Actions of cure and/or control.***

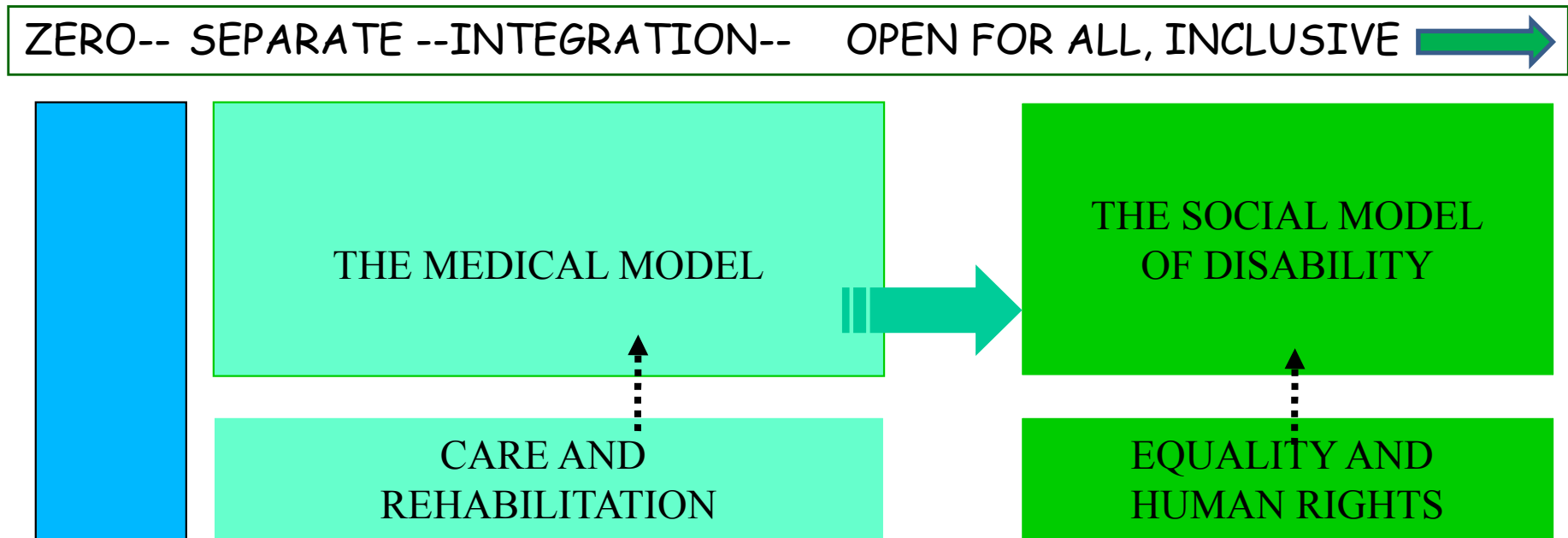
2) The concept of inclusion is connected to social model thinking.

 ***Actions of empowerment and/or multiculturalism.***

3) Processual thinking:

 ***Inclusion is an unending process of increasing participation and supporting diversity.***

Inclusion is an unending process



*Saari, A. 2005.
Adapted from Schleien, Ray & Green 1997*

Finnish sports is a handshake btw. public and voluntary

Public sector (GO):

Ministry of Education
and Culture

- Provinces/Federal
authorities
- Self-governing
municipalities

Voluntary (NGO): Finnish
Sports Federation (+NOC,
NPC)

& other national associations
(sports, VAU)

- Regional sport federations
- Sports clubs & others

Before:

how was DS organised?

- Visual/blind, locomotor, intellectual disabilities had their own organisations, which organised all DS sports
- DS elite sport taken care of the NPC
- Mainstream sport federation assisted DS in competitions, some co-operation in coaching
- Unification process & 2009 birth of **VAU** (Finnish Sport Association of Persons with Disabilities)

Current:

Finnish Sport Association of Persons with Disabilities (VAU)

- still responsible for 7 paralympic sports.
- supports “integrated sports” with recruitment, education & development.
- national DS federation, member of NPC & NOC.
- Special Olympics Finland, wide range of recreational activities
- VAU strategy 2021: the goal of inclusion

Evaluation of project results

1) Finnish Paralympic Committee's sports integration project (2005–2007).

- *Focus on paralympic/elite athletes*

2) Project Sports for All Children (2002–2008)

3) Open-for-All Sports programme (2006–2010)

- *Focus on inclusion.*

Main objectives of the research

- 1) To evaluate and assess integration and inclusion of the chosen non-governmental organisations of sports (federations);
- 2) To produce evidence based information for future sport strategies and planning;
- 3) Unswer the questions "Where are we now?"
"What are the keys to inclusion?" What works?

Participants

- Sports (12): cycling, curling, equestrian, swimming, table tennis, tennis, yachting, shooting, judo, ski & alpine, & track and field.
- 2 other national federations (Young Finland, FSF).
- Regional federations (13/15).
- Sports clubs in the cities of Oulu & Turku (26/32).

Methods & data

Data:

1) Documents

- 2010-11 strategy documents, reports, other published data, websites & minutes of meetings.

2) Email questionnaires

- 32 key actors answered.

3) Telephone interviews

- 26 sport club representatives.

Data was analysed using content analysis.

Research questions

- How is inclusion/participation operationalised in action plans & strategies?
- What was the target? Who/what does it concern?
- Was there public commitment to the process?
- What were the resources & support?
- Are PWD's represented in governing bodies/working groups?
- Who are the persons in charge?
- What are the results/successes/challenges?
- How is it assessed inside the organisation/is there any follow-up?

RESULTS

FSF & Young Finland aimed towards inclusion

(+) Better understanding
about integration and
inclusion

(+) New ideas &
development

(+) Attitude awareness

(+) Networks

- Slow progress
- "Inclusion – what?"
- Negative attitudes
- Person in charge left alone
- Inaccessible facilities
- Exclusive nature of sports

Regional associations and sports clubs need support

(+) Long-term work & commitment

(+) Networks (APA- & disability sports)

(+) Inclusive youth sports starts; camps, events, education.

(+) Inclusive demand.

- Lacking resources!
...coaches, leaders, facilities, equipment, expertise, knowledge & money...
- Negative attitudes, fear
- Without traditions & networks clubs do not find new athletes.

Heterogenous field of sport NGOs

(+) Elite athletes successfully integrated (teams, coaching).

(+) Athletes=rolemodels, to keep up visibility.

(+) Person in charge/hired experts in certain sports.

Best sports: Judo, yachting, equestrian, swimming.

- Exclusion of non-paralympic sports & athletes.
- No-one to take care of recruitment, recreation, development...?
- Decrease of athletes & participation rates in competitions.
- No support to local clubs.

CONCLUSION

Hindrances to inclusion

Biggest hindrance is the lack of common goals,

- which is partly result of ambiguous terminology (integration and/or inclusion?),
- and of power struggle/contradictions between movements, ideologies and disability groups.
- and of exclusive nature of sports.

One must decide!

Integration model seems easier and the goal is clear.

- Transfer (of money & athletes) leads to better conditions to elite athletes (competition systems, insurance, media, finance) **BUT: it may not lead to broader inclusion.**

Inclusion model is more complex & ambiguous.

- Inclusive services and values are a base for broader development process **BUT: only if organisational support, consultation and networks are provided.**
- It also opens new challenges & not foreseen exclusion (unending process).
- This was the choice of VAU (strategy 2021).

Inclusion promotion

- 1) A long-term national programme with common goals, partnerships btw. public & voluntary, and concrete support & follow-up systems.
- 2) APA/ DS experts turn into consultants, casemanagers or critical friends.
- 3) International co-operation and follow-up plan.

THANK YOU

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