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Die Universität der Informationsgesellschaft



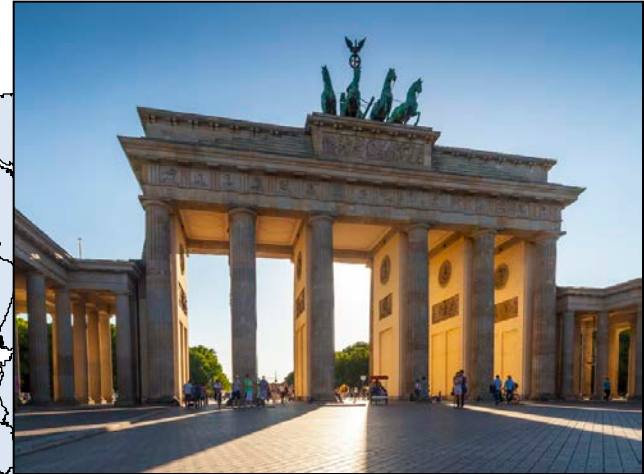
TOWARDS INCLUSIVE SPORTS STRUCTURES

SELECTED RESULTS OF A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON

PROF SABINE RADTKE
UNIVERSITY OF PADERBORN
GERMANY

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Freie Universität



Berlin



Main area of research: structural support for Paralympic athletes

2007: Pilot Study

Structural resources for talent identification and development in Germany and abroad (AUS, CAN, ESP, GB, USA)
Hypothesis development

2010/11: A cross-cultural comparison of TID in Paralympic sports

USA, CAN, UK

Expert interviews (N = 65) with officials, national coaches and athletes (wheelchair basketball, swimming, athletics, alpine skiing, Nordic skiing)
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Quantitative survey (N = 87)
Hypothesis testing

2016/17: A study of school-age athletes with disabilities at German schools

How young athletes combine their sporting career with education at sports schools vs. regular schools

Interviews (N = 35) with athletes, parents, coaches and school principals

Gefördert durch:



Bundesinstitut
für Sportwissenschaft

aufgrund eines Beschlusses
des Deutschen Bundestages

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SABINE RADTKE & GUDRUN DOLL-TEPPER

A cross-cultural comparison of talent identification and development in Paralympic sports

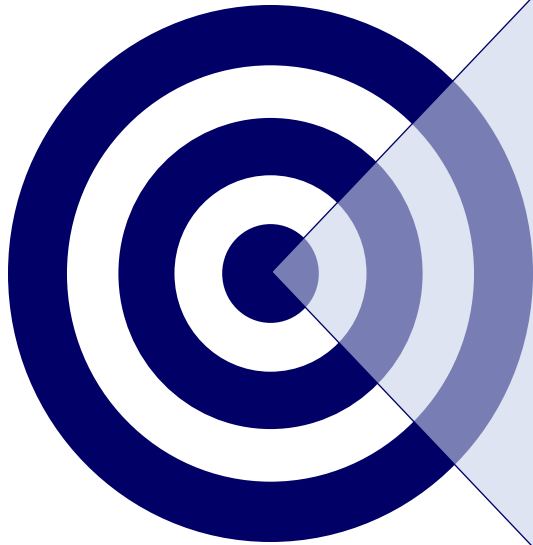
Perceptions and opinions of athletes, coaches and officials

Freie Universität  Berlin

July 2014

Towards inclusive sports structures

Research questions



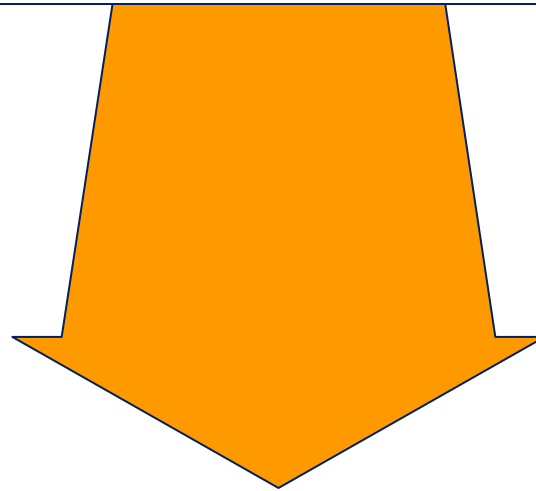
- Has there been a shift towards inclusive rather than segregated sports provision in selected countries?
- How to begin the process of integration and inclusion in sport governing bodies and sport systems? Are there any examples of good practices? What are the views of officials, head coaches, and elite athletes on inclusive sports provision?

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- 1 Starting point for discussion: Implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in Sport
 - 2 Examples of good practices from Canada and the UK
 - 3 Practical recommendations
-

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

The Convention is the first legally binding international treaty protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. The CRPD was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2006 and came into effect in 2008.

Germany ratified the Convention in 2009.



Article 1: The purpose of the Convention is to promote, protect and ensure **the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms** by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity [...] **full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.**

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

Article 30 of the Convention aims to advance and protect people with disabilities' human rights as they relate to sport and it addresses both **mainstream** and **disability-specific** sport.

Article 24 – Education

States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an **inclusive education system at all levels**.

Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

- To encourage and promote the participation, to the fullest extent possible, of persons with disabilities in **mainstream sporting activities** at all levels;
- To ensure that persons with disabilities have an opportunity to organize, develop and participate in **disability-specific** sporting and recreational activities and, to this end, encourage the provision, on an equal basis with others, of appropriate instruction, training and resources ...

The athletes' preference for an inclusive vs. a disability-specific training environment



Preference for an inclusive training
environment at elite level

Athletes stated that they improve their
performance by competing with athletes
without a disability in an inclusive training
environment.



Preference for an inclusive environment
at grass-roots level

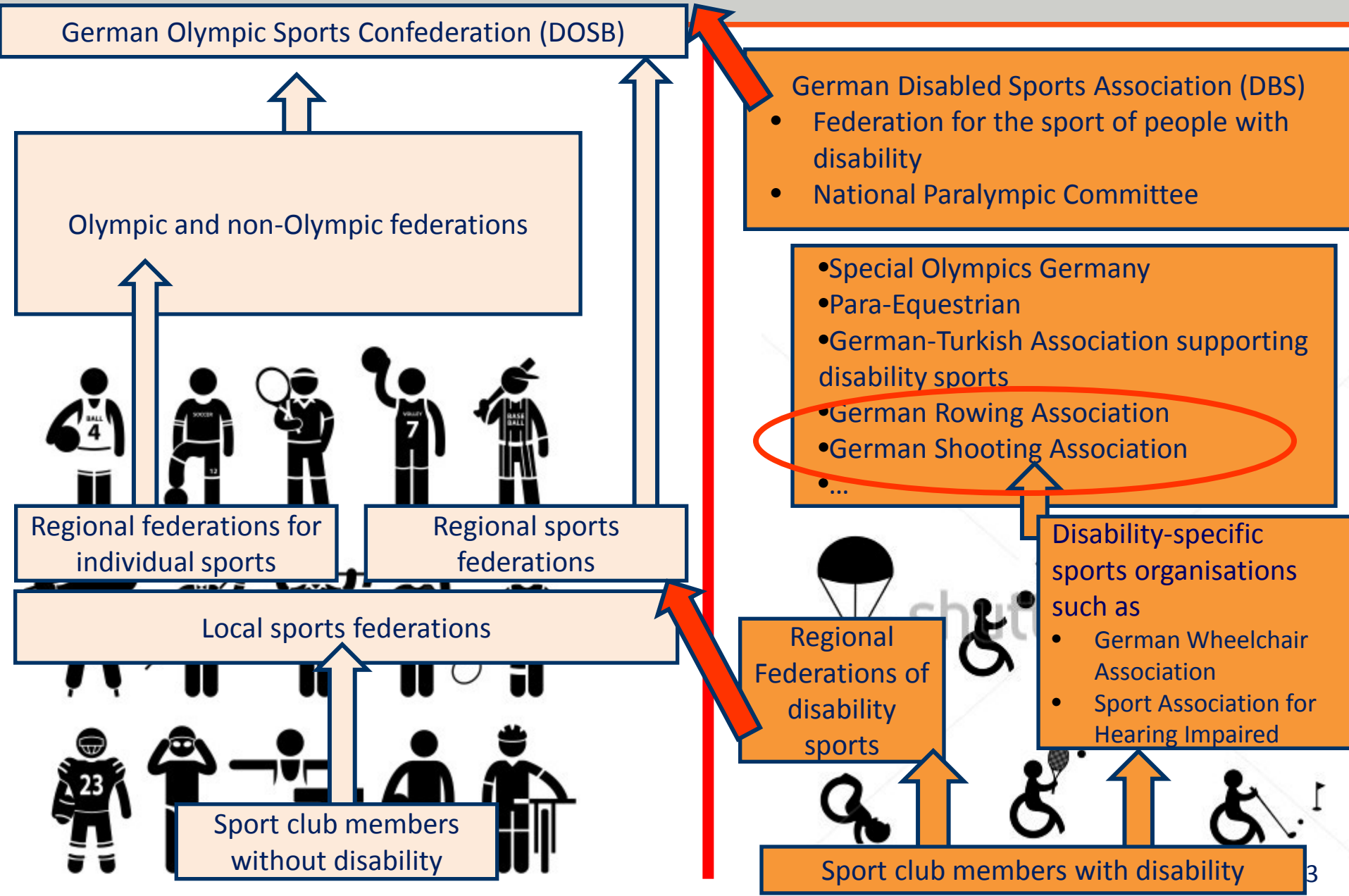
Active children who acquire their
disability through accident or disease
are keen to go on with their sporting
activities among their peers without
disabilities.

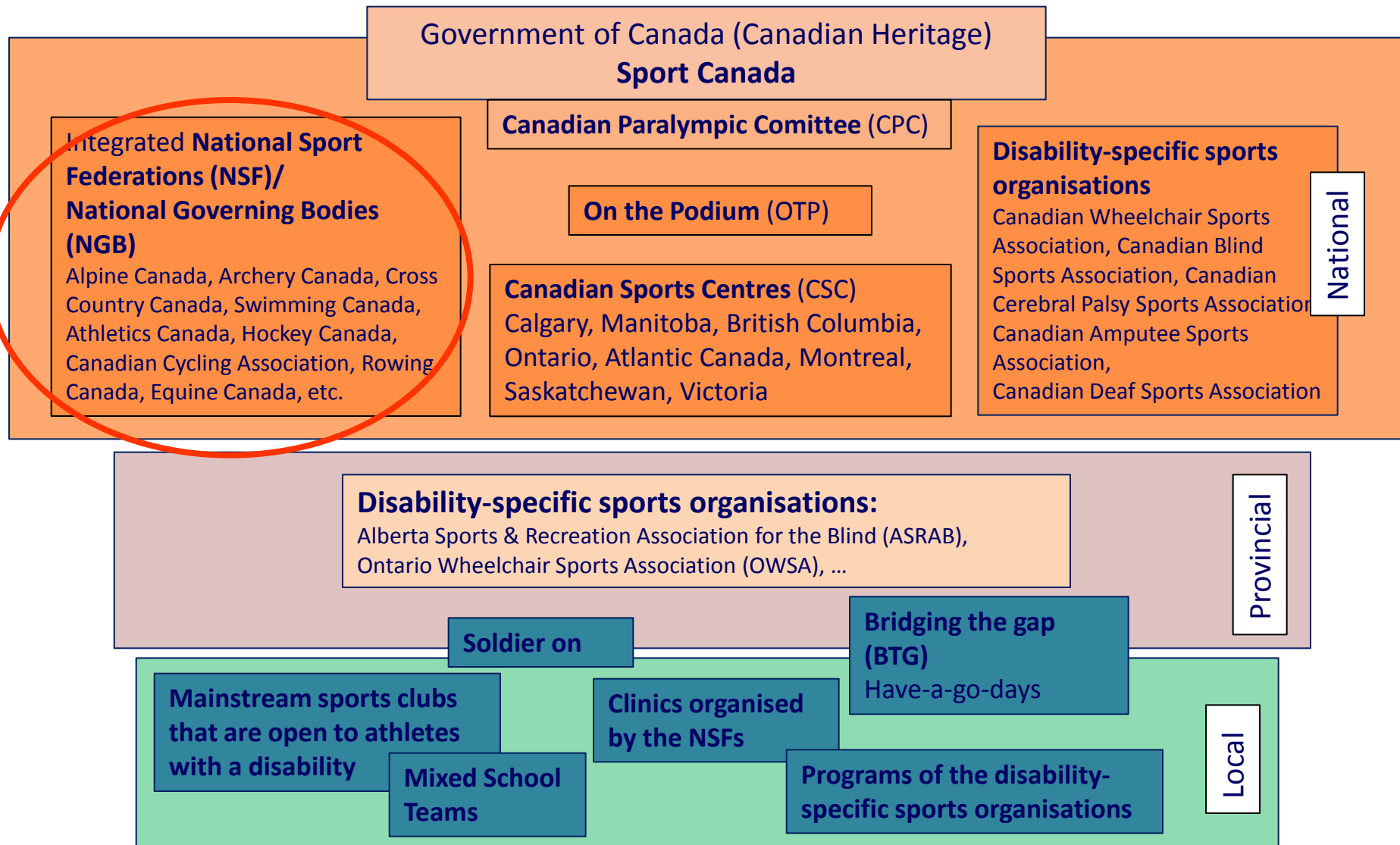


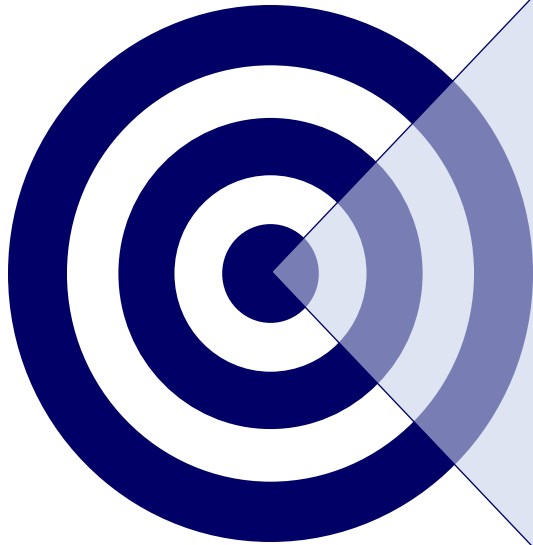
Preference for a disability-specific
environment at grass-roots level

Some athletes benefit from the social
function of disability sports clubs
(function of a “safe room” and function
of a “springboard” to a mainstream
sports club).

Germany with mainly separate disability sports opportunities







- Has there been a shift towards inclusive rather than segregated sports provision in selected countries?
- How to begin the process of integration and inclusion in sport governing bodies and sport systems? How to develop an inclusive culture? Are there any examples of good practices?
- What are the views of officials, head coaches, and elite athletes on inclusive sports provision?

Steps from exclusion to inclusion

Today's examples of best practice (CAN):
Swimming, Alpine Skiing, Sledge Hockey



Today's examples
of best practice
(UK): Rowing,
Swimming, Cycling,
Equestrian Sports,
Athletics

Mostly integrated/inclusive NGBs

- Integration process since mid-1990s
- Integrated/Inclusive training camps and national championships

Knowledge → Inclusion



Mostly non-integrated NGBs

Understanding → Integration

Ac

→ Segregation

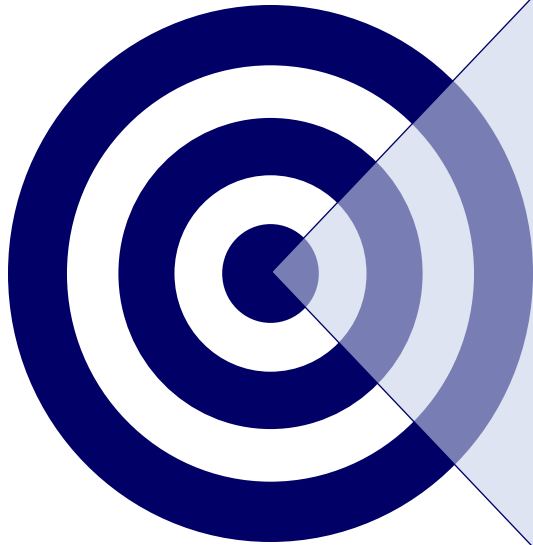


US Paralympics operates as the NGB for seven sports: Alpine Skiing, Cycling, Nordic Skiing, Powerlifting, Swimming and Track & Field.

Denial → Exclusion

- In contrast to other countries Germany is an example for rather segregated sport structures with mainly separate disability sports opportunities.
- Paralympic athletes are often not accepted to train together with their Olympic counterparts although they would prefer an inclusive training setting in order to improve their performance by competing with athletes without a disability.
- Sport competitions of disability and non-disability sport rarely take place in one event.
- Coaches in Paralympic sports are rarely full-time employed.
- Paralympic athletes have less often access to Olympic training centers and their services (e.g. medicine, performance diagnostics, psychology,...).
- School-age athletes with disabilities less often attend sports schools.
- Paralympic athletes have more difficulties finding sponsorship.

No full and effective participation [...] on an equal basis with others!



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How the integration process has started in Canada?

It was the governing body of Sport Canada that basically said 'why are we funding an administrative package for (for example) athletics on the able-bodied side, and then funding an administrative group on the disabled side? Why are they not working under one singular body, because that's just more efficient from a costs point of view.' So that's what drove the initial process was that Sport Canada as the federal governing body said 'you have to integrate.' It wasn't a choice, it was a mandate that the sports, all by a certain date, had to be integrated under a singular governing body [...] Essentially, it was not the decision of the national sport organisations to create that [...] The federal government drove the process.



Canadian Head Coach

Top-down approach led by the government

What are the advantages of the top-down approach?

The benefit (of the top-down approach) has been that the awareness and education piece has grown within that integrated environment and that's what I think has helped Canada become a leader in terms of awareness and education, and working with disabled athletes in integrated environments [...] And the interesting thing is the hardest groups to convince are the administrative groups to work together, the second hardest are the coaches, getting the coaches to buy in. The easiest groups are when you get the athletes together.



Top-down approach => changes in attitudes/values:
positive attitudes towards inclusion

„Forced“ to interact with people with disabilities

(≠ being afraid to approach people with a disability & feeling uncomfortable talking to/being with people with a disability)

When I got talent spotted [...], my mum was tasked with the job of finding me a coach. And she phoned up the university and wanted to speak with their head coach there. So she phoned them up, and said 'Can I speak to the head coach, please?' And my mum described it very well. She said that she spoke to the head coach, everything was very well in the conversation, until the head coach learned that I was disabled. And then the shutters went down and he didn't want any to do with me anymore. (UK1)

Some coaches who work on the able-bodied side of sport have a rather reserved attitude towards disability sport. Some interviewees experience that Paralympic athletes are seen as “second-class” athletes.



When I was first put on the high school group [...], the main coach of that group was totally against me being in the group because he felt Para-sports should be recreational. And it 's very obvious that he has no time for any of the Para-athletes, that's just the way he is. So I've seen it first hand: there are definitely coaches who don't think that Para-athletes are validated athletes. The majority are open. But you still have the odd one that's resistant.

Canadian athlete who is blind since the age of sixteen

Removing the barriers to inclusion: how to convince the coaches?

I said 'I want the gold!', you know, and I took myself off and I did some research on the swim clubs in the area and I said 'Okay, I want to train with this swim club, with this coach because that is the best coach and that is where I think my best chances are going to lie. So I took a deep breath, walked out on the pool deck and had a conversation with that coach, I was terrified [...] I think he was probably even more terrified, but I pitched it to him, I said 'I am a swimmer! And I want to swim faster and I can give you some clues about adaptations that coaches have used with me in the past [...] but, I want your expertise and I think that we can work through this together.' And to his credit he said: 'Okay.' And in the end I think it worked out fairly well. But it has been a real education process for coaches and for sport organisations to make that switch.

Canadian Athlete with CP

Coaches are often afraid to approach people with a disability
Athletes themselves should get in contact with qualified coaches

Removing the barriers to inclusion: how to convince the athletes?

The able-bodied athletes that swim at national competitions see the work that our guys do, they begin to realise, that although they may have impairments that they are actually trying as hard as they can [...] We also try to educate the swimming community. I give you an example: If you got dwarf swimmers, they have obviously got very short arms. So if they go 30 or 35K a week, compared to an AB swimmer who might do 50 or 60K a week, if you think of the arm revolutions that a dwarf would do compared to an AB swimmer, he would probably do twice as many arm strikes to go the same distance [...] So, it is sixty to seventy thousands meters [...] That is an example of how we are trying to sell the message to the coaches and the swimmers that actually our guys are working at least as hard as they do.

Athletes with and without disabilities should get in contact
during training and competition
=> Misconceptions about people with disabilities will be corrected.

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Practical recommendations: breaking down barriers to inclusion

➔ The watchword to be promulgated by the national umbrella organisation for sport as part of a top-down strategy is that of inclusive sports federations at the national and regional levels.

➔ The regional level is to be included from the outset in this transformation process in order to avoid an overlapping of responsibilities and ensuing quarrels between sports federations, disability associations and disability sports federations.

➔ In order to counter the opposition to inclusion that is often observed on the part of senior officials in able-bodied sport, the prospect of financial incentives and an enhanced image should be held out for federations as motives for undertaking this transformation.

➔ Inclusive settings for training and competitions are to be used so that inhibitions on the part of both coaches and athletes can be reduced and an awareness for inclusion created. Inclusion can only be successful if everyone concerned in able-bodied sport is open-minded about these changes.

➔ In order to counter the opposition that is often observed on the part of senior officials in disability sport, it must be made clear by the umbrella organisation that the expertise gained so far is on no account going to be lost; on the contrary, it will continue to be needed in inclusive federations and settings. Likewise, inclusion can only be successful with the expertise of people working in disability sport.

➔ Opportunities for the individual development of athletes with disabilities must be provided in both inclusive and separated settings. The choice of setting must be decided by the individual athlete. All existing infrastructural resources must be available to athletes with and without disabilities alike.



Prof Sabine Radtke
University of Paderborn

eMail: sabine.radtke@upb.de