

Sviluppare il Sistema Sportivo per Favorire l'inclusione dei Soggetti Disabili: il No-Profit

Develop the Sport System to Promote the Inclusion of People with Disabilities: the No-Profit

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Abstract

The aim of the present work is to highlight the importance that the sport system can play toward persons with disabilities.

In time, are in fact increased the benefits, both physical that the social level, that sport is able to produce for the disabled; among which stands out the ability to stimulate the development of procedures for inclusion and integration, valorising the disabled human resource in the Community.

In this regard the paper focuses its attention on how non-profit enterprises of the sporting sector often represent the ideal tool for achieving social and inclusive benefits for people with disabilities.

Lo scopo del presente lavoro è quello di evidenziare l'importanza che il sistema sportivo può rivestire nei confronti dei soggetti diversamente abili.

Nel tempo, sono infatti aumentati i benefici, sia a livello fisico che a livello sociale, che lo sport è in grado di produrre per i disabili; tra cui spicca la capacità di stimolare lo sviluppo di procedure di inclusione ed integrazione, valorizzando la risorsa disabile nella comunità.

A tal proposito il paper sofferma la sua attenzione su come le imprese no-profit del settore sportivo spesso rappresentano lo strumento ideale per conseguire i benefici sociali ed inclusivi per le persone diversamente abili.

Keywords

Sport; Disability; No-Profit; Inclusion.

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Introduction¹

Sport is both a social and economic phenomenon, because, while contributing significantly to the strategic objectives of solidarity and integration, it becomes the driving force of economic and business dynamics, especially if focusing on a sector, such as that of sports for the disabled, that is very awkward.

The phenomenon lends itself to a multifaceted and multi-disciplinary study. In this regard, the importance of the relationship established between Sports and Disability is emphasized, delineating the link among these and emphasizing the functionality of the former with regard to the latter.

Sports activity for the disabled person is part of a path that completes, and above all improves, the quality of his life. This can be summarized as a means of personal development, and above all, of social integration, as well as a real cure for one's own body.

The activity of non-profit companies, whose object is the carrying out of sports or recreational-motor activities for the disabled, increases the social participation offer and, moreover, makes the effort to move away from the classic institutional subjects advocating policies to support disability, such as school or health authority. Their activity supports families and enriches the whole society, both consciously and unconsciously.

1. Benefits of the Sport - Disability Pair

The European Commission, in the White Paper (2007), defines sport as “all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels”

At all levels, sport plays a primary role: its role is recognized in the defense of public health, in the defense and spread of sociality, in social policies and in support of non-discrimination (Gesuele and Ascione, 2013). There is no doubt that sports activity constitutes a global training experience for the person both at physical, educational and social level (Girelli, 2012, Castelli, 2003). Thanks to the sports practice, the individual is put in relation first with himself, and then with others (Castelli, 1995) and “the life environment” (Golinelli, 2012). We can affirm that sport plays a fundamental role in the life of the disabled for a series of motivations, such as: recovery of physical efficiency, a means of social integration and facilitator of the awareness of one's own potentialities. We will now proceed with a more detailed examination of its benefits.

In recent decades, by considering different perspectives, scholars have identified the multiple benefits that sport generates for disabled people (Girelli, 2012, Castelli, 1995, Damiano, 1993). First of all, the main benefit of sports activity is, without any doubt, that of favoring the physical health of the subject who practices it. In fact, it is highlighted that the practice of a sports activity favors the health state of the disabled person, both directly and indirectly, inviting him to have a healthy and active lifestyle (Girelli, 2012). In most cases, the motor activity for the disabled person is the natural continuation of a rehabilitation process, so the indispensable and necessary choice is the identification, in terms of quality and quantity, of the identification of the activity considered as appropriate to the subject's pathology. For example, several empirical studies underline the importance of sport for the lowering of cardiovascular risks (Hoffmann, 1986; Hooker and Wells, 1989). Other studies, however, focus on the impor-

¹ The manuscript is the result of a collective work of the authors, the specific contribution of which is to be referred to as follows: introduction paragraph n. 2 and conclusions are to be attributed to Antonio Ascione; paragraphs n. 1 and 3 are to be attributed to Davide Di Palma

tance that this assumes within the rehabilitation activity (Raymond, Davis, Van der Plas, 2002; Theisen, Fornusek, Raymond and Gavis, 2002).

Several scholars have investigated the link between sport and disability, focusing on externalities, in a sociological perspective. For example, Bandura (2000) emphasized the value of sport as one's own body self-control mechanism, and therefore of one's own self-affirmation. Similarly, Andersen, in 2009, saw in the sports practice the awareness of one's body, and therefore of his self-awareness. It is in this perspective that the benefits of sports for the disabled subject moves, as it is able to promote his self-development and increase his confidence level, inducing behavior aimed at reaching autonomy (Tafari et al, 2017).

Motor activity for the disabled person becomes, by favoring the subject's personality development and the interaction, a favorable factor for the emotional-affective development (Shapiro & Martin, 2010), and for the re-elaboration of the emotions, whether they are positive, like a victory, or negative, like a defeat (Pope, McHale & Craighead, 1992).

The International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (Colin and Yves Vanlandewijck, 2007) highlights the influence of the sports activity practice by the disabled on the economic and social development of the country; just think of the socio-economic driving force of the Paralympics (Girelli, 2012)

Promoting sports activity, both at competitive and amateur/recreational level, in people with disabilities means investing in the social and economic growth of the country.

2. Sport, Integration and Inclusion

Sport has the potential to be an important tool when starting new processes of integration and inclusion. In fact, the intrinsic values of sport emphasize the need to want to excel, cooperate, respect the rules and laws of the community, its role as a support for a policy of health and hygiene and, above all, the cohesive function with respect to the ethnic, religious and social diversities, constituting a vital contribution to the set up of modern nations (Besozzi, 2005; Cesareo, 2000; Granata, 2012).

The challenge to social inclusion is one of the issues of the near future and sport, in future societies, acts a means through which it is possible to fight against all types of discrimination based on origins, gender, or any other personal circumstance (especially in a multicultural environment), including also physical and mental disabilities (Di Palma & Tafari, 2016; Di Palma, Raiola & Tafari, 2016; Granata, 2012).

Bailey (2005) refers to sport as an experience based on relationships, help, support, solidarity and responsibility; he also refers to others' experience, comparison, exchange and dialogue; these are key issues in the approach to the topic of integration.

Precisely on cultural diversity, which could be a cause of exclusion and discrimination, Allport (1979) argues that sport is paramount to the first contact: "the first contact is pleasant, it leads to think together of the result and change attitudes. The principle is clearly illustrated in the multi-ethnic team. Here a goal is important; the way the team is composed is irrelevant".

Sport can be for the subject a fundamental field of experimentation in the socialization process, it promotes a common sense of belonging and participation (Porro, 2001);

For example, analyzing the White Paper on Sport, the document published by the European Commission (2007), it is clear that sport can be considered a tool for social inclusion and can promote a shared sense of belonging and participation.

Specifically, in fact, sport is one of the very few contexts that can be distinguished for a strategic approach to diversity that is both systemic and integration-oriented. Indeed, almost all kinds of professional sports societies today, from the amateur to the professional ones, have athletes and subject denoted by multiple diversities according to race, social class, culture, religion, etc. In this sector, these diversities are valued for the attainment of a sporting goal that overcomes any inclusive barrier, and allows also to pursue an economic and socio-educational

objective (Di Palma & Tafuri, 2017; Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; Isidori & Fraile, 2008; Light & Dixon, 2007). The socio-educational objective is the direct consequence of the exaltation of the sporting values that facilitate the relationships with others and the integration of the diverse; at the same time, from an economic standpoint, the benefits are provided by the ability to attract a wide range of consumers-viewers fascinated by a multicultural context able of enhancing every diversity. All this seems to be well established both in the planning processes and from a temporal point of view, and an example of this are:

- The increasing presence of female realities in every sports discipline;
- The aforementioned variety of personal peculiarities in the various company realities;
- The willingness of entrepreneurs to invest in sports, albeit in territorial and social contexts apparently distant from their culture;
- The multitude of sport initiatives for disabled people that finds its maximum expression in the Paralympics;
- The presence of several national teams which coexist, compete and collaborate in a multitude of sporting events.

Of course, there are still sporadic cases of exclusion of diversity also in sports, but they tend to be marginalized and punished over time in accordance with the dictates of Diversity Management.

So sport is an example of social context and set of entrepreneurial realities able to manage diversity efficiently, encouraging both a cultural and social development and the possibility of promoting more advantageous economic conditions.

3. Non-Profit in the Sport supporting Social Development

Porter and Kramer, in 2011, highlighted how the Corporate Social Responsibility is a new way of doing business, and of perceiving company action aimed at supporting and protecting all stakeholders, and in a broader sense, the whole society. There are many scholars (Bockstette and Stamp, 2011, Carozza and Scagnelli, 2014) tracing new business strategies related to the company's social responsibility.

The non-profit company for the sport for the disabled, by definition, especially in the Italian context, deals with the promotion of sports for the disabled and the individual well-being, intended as health promotion and benefits for the whole community without gaining any profit, reinvesting the earnings generated in the activity itself.

Non-profit companies, the social purpose of which is the sport for disabled people, with their activities, not only foster their main "clients" but the whole community, favoring the integration and creation of the social capital.

In other words, these make social responsibility a driving factor for all the economic activity that characterizes them. To date, the non-profit in the promotion and development of sports in Italy plays a largely consolidated and recognized role. Just think that, at the date of the last census, non-profit organizations that mainly carry out sports activities are over 93,000, which is equal to about a 30 percent of the Italian institutions, and a 47 percent of the institutions active in the cultural, sport and recreational sector. The organizations that carry out sports activities as a secondary intervention area amount to a 7.7 percent of the national total, for a total of 114.287 units.

Among these organizations, the 72.5 percent of sports institutions have provided services to people with specific disabilities. We are speaking of almost 4,944 institutions that have addressed their intervention to disabled or non-self-sufficient people, for a total of 155 thousand recipients.

These numbers show how the sector of the non-profit organizations operating in the disabled sports sector is a reality that cannot leave scholars unmoved.

Conclusions

The link between sport and disability, over time, has been steadily consolidating. It is indeed correct to state that, through sports activity, whether it is carried out at an amateur, recreational, or even competitive level, it is possible to generate a series of personal and social benefits.

In addition to a physical benefit, the support that sport provides to disabled people, with regard to the possibility of positively stimulating inclusive processes, is of fundamental importance.

In this context, it was highlighted that the non-profit sector operating in the sports sector is characterized as a primary instrument for the promotion of sport for the disabled, in order to achieve a state of individual well-being.

The possibility of increasing the level of well-being perceived by a disabled person, in turn, contributes both to the promotion of health and to the development of better social conditions for the entire community.

Finally, it should be specified that the whole activity of these companies is totally oriented towards the satisfaction of a social objective that goes beyond the economic and financial satisfaction. This testifies even more the importance of this sector in a context such as sport, which is already predisposed to positively stimulate the inclusion of disabled people in society.

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