

REPORT “SUOMI MEETS NORJA” - Disability sport, from integration to inclusion 15.-16.3.2011

INTRODUCTION

The ‘Suomi meets Norja’ seminar was organized by the Finnish Sport Association of Persons with Disabilities (VAU) and the Finnish Paralympic Committee. It was held in the Finnish Sports Federation HQ, Helsinki, Finland. Seminar guests were welcomed by Petri Pohjonen from the Finnish NPC and Pekka Häätinen from VAU. The first-day focus was on the facts and fundamentals of the various integration and inclusion processes in Norway, the Netherlands and Finland. The second day addressed challenges and ways of solving them. Hannu Tolonen closed the seminar by emphasizing the critical role of evaluation. He stressed that integration and inclusion work will continue in Finland with a greater focus on the ‘sport for all’ principle.

Background to the seminar

The rationale and driving force for organizing this seminar lie in recent history. Finnish integration and inclusion work has taken place against a background of projects funded on a temporary basis by the relevant Ministry. When a new organization for disability sports in Finland, VAU, began operations in January 2010, it emphasized everyone’s free will to choose where, what, when, with whom and how one wished to be an active participant in sport. The new organization was faced with the complexity of the existing integration and inclusion model. At national level, VAU functions as a multi-sport association, serving more than 30 sports all told. Among these sports are disability-specific sports like boccia, goalball, showdown and wheelchair rugby and others that have their own sports federations. As a member of the Finnish Paralympic Committee, VAU is part of the integration process that was launched by NPC. At the same time, VAU serves as a national headquarters for Special Olympics Finland. At the end of his welcoming presentation, VAU’s president Pekka Häätinen posed the fundamental question, “How do we balance between inclusion and disability specific?” Seeking answers and formulating ideas to enable inclusion work to continue was the principal motivator of this seminar.

About the speakers

International guest speakers came from Norway and the Netherlands. Arnfinn Vik, Mads Andreassen and Cato Zahl Pedersen are with the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (later in this report “NIF”), Rita van Driel is the Secretary General of the NPC of the Netherlands and NOC programme manager for disabled sports. She is also a General Board Member of IPC. Kimmo Mustonen and Petri Pohjonen represent the Finnish Paralympic Committee (later FPC). Riikka Juntunen, Pekka Häätinen, Tuomas Törrönen & Aija Saari are with the Finnish Sport Association of Persons with Disabilities, called “VAU”. Kaisu Mononen is a researcher in KIHU, the Research Institute for Olympic Sports, and Hannu Tolonen represents the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. Among national participants we also had guests from Sweden, Stig Carlsson, who presented their recruitment campaign called “Talangjakten” (Talent search) and Denmark, Kristian Jensen, from Danish Disability Sports Information Centre (Handicapidrettens Videncenter).

This report is based on original presentations and the author's notes. The report is divided into four sections: basics and facts; challenges; monitoring; and discussion.

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1. BASICS & FACTS

Disability sport in Norway – lessons learned (Arnfinn Vik)

NIF has approximately 2.1 million memberships, some 1.4 million individual members and consists of 54 national federations, 19 regional confederations, 366 sports councils and 11,936 clubs. The General Assembly of NIF, the supreme governing body of organised sport in Norway, meets every fourth year, and the next meeting will be in May 2011. NIF's Sport Development Department takes responsibility for children's sport; youth sport; sport for people with disabilities (10 people based centrally and regionally); school sport; sport against homophobia; coaching for trainers; and leaders and sport for all.

The initiative from Carl E. Wang (President 1972 NHIF first General Assembly) is well known and defined the organization's direction. "The final goal in respect of handicapped sport must be to dissolve our organization when the disabled are fully integrated in all levels of Norwegian sport."

(1) Milestones: The Norwegian Sport Organisation for the Disabled (NFI) 1997-2007

The purpose of NFI was to increase participation in sport by people with disabilities. Under the mandate issued by NIF, NFI transferred skills, knowledge and advice to NFs, leading to NFs taking responsibility for athletes with disabilities. NFI was the driving force in the integration process, was responsible for sport for the disabled in general through its 250 clubs and, as NPC, represented Norway in all international associations. From the beginning it was clear that NFI should have a limited existence: when all NFs had taken responsibility, NFI should dissolve.

Integration was justified by political pressure on inclusion, integrated pupils in mainstream schools, Norwegian geography, lack of recruitment of new athletes to traditional "handicap sport clubs" and the wish/need to increase competence. Inclusion and equality are important values for NIF and the Ministry of Culture operating under the umbrella of "Sport for all"!

(2) Milestones: Integration 1997-2007

Four NF (skiing, table tennis, football and archery) took on responsibility in 2002, a further five NFs followed in 2003 (golf, dance, climbing, orienteering and handball) and, by the end of 2006, 35 NFs in all had assumed responsibility. The remaining 21 NFs accepted responsibility in 2007. NFI ceased to exist by the end of 2007 and the “Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports” became a member of IPC in 2009.

Lessons learned in NFI 1997-2007

Success: An agreement, containing guidelines, responsibilities and financial arrangements, was signed by NFI, NIF and each sport federation and resulted in new money for being made available for disability sports. The goal was clear at both political and administrative levels.

Mistakes: We didn't keep "our" clubs well enough informed during the integration process and we underestimated the time it would take to transfer competence and knowledge throughout Norwegian sport, told Vik.

The Ministry of Culture gives money it receives from its sports policy, surpluses from the National lottery and Norsk Tipping to NIF for distribution to its organization. Altogether, Norwegian disability sport is given approximately 5 million euros per year of which, in 2011, the NFs received approximately 2.5 million euros, Elite sports, Olympiatoppen and Team Paralympics approximately 1.5 million euros, while some 1 million euros remained in the NIF budget. NIF is responsible for funding, politics etc, NPC, classification, instructors and recruitment in the regions.

Norwegian experiences: Elite & Olympiatoppen Perspectives (Cato Zahl Pedersen)

In the 1988 Winter Paralympics, Norway won no gold medals. With the goal set for improvement at Lillehammer in 1994, the decision was made to re-start Elite Sport. There was one common strategy for Olympics and Paralympics which included collaboration and the principle of the “24h athlete”, with clear goals, professional leadership and an evidence-based approach. Olympiatoppen is a National Centre for Training and Development based on agreements with each Sport federation. The basic principle is that every service delivered to the athletes and coaches should be competence driven.

Challenge 1 - Organization

Integration into Sport Federations requires ownership and inclusion at Board level and agreement on the appointment of the Head Coach for the National Team. This wider approach, with the Board at NIF taking responsibility for both Olympic and Paralympic sports, requires a constant input from the field, the area in which I am working. The integration of National Sport Federations simplifies, in turn, integration into the International Sport Federations (for example FIS).

Challenge 2 - Development

The development of Paralympic sport has enhanced the professionalism of the Olympic perspective through its demands for cooperation, equality and sharing of resources. It also stimulates pride, ownership and a committed approach.

Challenge 3 – Economy

In 2007 OLT distributed € 225.000 to elite sport, increasing to € 1.200.000 in 2011. OLT support to the National Paralympic Teams is about 50 % of the team budget. Professionalism in international Paralympic sports and in cities hosting Paralympic games is accentuating the need for higher budgets in the future.

Future challenges for sport for the disabled in Norway (Mads Andreassen)

A questionnaire entitled, ‘How well is disability sport anchored in federations?’ is distributed every year. Answers show some positive changes in relation to boards, administration, regional federation and clubs. Follow-up on talented athletes shows an increase from 23.1% to 41.3% of the NF. In addition, there is a slight increase of new disabled participants in some new sports, such as climbing and motor sports.

Challenges within the sport organization

The organization relies on volunteers, which means that reaching grassroots level, gaining ownership, building competence and knowledge in the organization, recruiting new athletes (including athletes with need of extensive personal assistance) and determining priorities are a challenge.

Half of the qualified personnel will disappear during a year, said Andreassen, and the volunteer movement cannot be expected to assume this additional work (assistants, equipment etc). There are also some problems concerning training schedules and competition between sports.

Contextual and framework challenges concern facilities (discrimination and accessibility law), health focus (intrinsic or extrinsic value, more health motivation?), inclusion in society (invisibility in sport?) and the economy. To learn more about social barriers to participation see the “Sport for all? Literature study of sport participation and physical activity among the disabled” (Norwegian University of Science and Technology).

Dutch models in integration (Rita van Driel)

In the Netherlands, there is a philosophy of ‘Total inclusion in Sport’. The motto is “Regular what can be regular, special what needs to be special!”

Why integration?

More and better sport opportunities on each level from grassroots sport development to the Paralympic Team. The right people, with the same vision, were at the right place at the right time! At Sydney 2000, a declaration of intent was signed by the NPC (NebasNsg) and NOC (NOC*NSF) of the Netherlands, supported by the Minister of Sport with the ultimate goal being the total

integration within regular sport of the administrative, organizational and technical aspects of sport for athletes with disabilities. The process has three main areas. 1) The collaboration of paralympic and Olympic teams. 2) The transfer of disability sports into mainstream sports federations. 3) The transfer of governance of the NPC to the NOC.

Successful outcomes with regular sports federations have been: a custom-made approach; a declaration of cooperation; the creation of working groups; changes of attitude and addressing the question, “what needs to be special?”; and transfer of governance. The current status is that of 50 regular sports federations identified, 44 integration processes have been completed “Non-integrated” sports are wheelchair rugby, sledge hockey, goalball, boccia, ID soccer and showdown.

The former NPC (NebasNsg/ Gehandicaptensport Nederland) is now a sports federation for disability-specific sports such as goalball, boccia, etc., and an information centre for sport for the disabled. It takes care of Special Olympics, IWAS, INAS-FID, CP-ISRA, IBSA and sports development programs within institutions. NPC is responsible for the implementation of the IPC Classification Code, but the Classification Institute is doing all practical work related to implementation, e.g. the national regulations, classifications, etc.

In the Netherlands, the desire to increase sport participation is defined by two statements of intent. 1) There is the goal/promise of providing sport facilities/possibilities within 10 km. of where they live for all people with a disability. 2) For each athlete, the target is to provide a competent trainer and/or coach. Ongoing sport development programs aim to intensify the programs of federations, invest in youth sport development, create opportunities to get to know sport and invest in a nationwide sport infrastructure.

A nationwide sport infrastructure aims to bring together sports, health care and education. A sport service point will provide regional coordination to direct people who want to participate in sport to the right opportunities or venues and assist sports organizations in setting up adapted sports programmes and possibilities. High class disability sport events and competitions help with awareness training. The ultimate goal is that sport for athletes with disabilities and Paralympic elite sport will be at Olympic level in 2016!

Finnish Integration and Inclusion: Two Perspectives (Riikka Juntunen, Kimmo Mustonen)

Previous status

Individual disabled athletes have been competing in able-bodied competitions since the 1960’s or even earlier. They were mostly amputee-athletes competing, for instance, in athletics and cross-country skiing. In addition, other activities, such as coach education, training camps and research, had been undertaken in co-operation with sport federations. Disabled persons took part in club training sessions and equestrian sports, for example were officially integrated in 1992.

The launch of Paralympic sports integration

Step 1. Finnish Paralympic Committee’s strategy (2002) set to define the role of sport federations and disabled sport federations in top-level sports for disabled athletes.

Step 2. Working group on top-level sports (2004) emphasized that national sports federations, together with the sports organizations for special groups, should launch a wider cooperation to develop top-level sports for athletes with disabilities.

Step 3. Project money from the Ministry of Education for the integration processes (2005-2007) totalled 155.000 euros. Shooting was integrated before the project started. Athletics, Swimming, Judo, Sailing, Alpine Skiing and Nordic Skiing were integrated during the project.

The launch of the development of a wider inclusion

The move towards inclusion took its first steps with the help of projects such as “Sport for All Children” (2002-2008) and “Sports Open for All” (2006-2010) using the inclusion spectrum (Youth Sport Trust, Black & Stevenson) as a framework. Sports federations, together with the disability sport federations developed grassroots-level activities, summer camps etc.

Development phase 2008, from integration to inclusion

Integrated Paralympic sports: Cycling 2009, Table Tennis 2011 and WC-Curling 2011

Integration in Finland, why?

Reasons for integration were equality, respect for others, diversity, efficiency, better results and success, better utilization of resources, connection of the same kind of activities, involvement in top-level sports family and more media coverage and growth of respect.

Challenges

There are still some unsolved questions concerning integration. There is some confusion of the concepts of integration and inclusion. We keep on asking who is the potential athlete and how do we find them? Where are the coaches? What about accessibility? Where do we find the equipment? What should we do with disability specific sports, such as goalball or boccia? Who helps during the process? What happens at the grassroots level when elite sport is transferred into National Sports Federations? In addition to that there are big differences in different sports, level of integration, funding etc., lack of resources. And is integration an opportunity or threat, for instance in cases of “weak” mainstream organization?

The International Paralympic Committee & Sport Governance: Perspective for the future (Rita van Driel)

Basics of the IPC

IPC is the global governing body of the Paralympic Movement. It organizes the Paralympic Games (Summer and Winter). It is committed to developing sport opportunities from beginner to elite level for persons with disabilities. It serves as the International Federation for 9 sports and its vision is “To enable Paralympic athletes to achieve sporting excellence and inspire and excite the world”.

The main goals are to supervise and co-ordinate IPC Competitions (Paralympic Games, IPC Sport World Championships, other signature competitions), support athlete development at local, national and international level across all performance levels, and support and encourage educational, cultural, research and scientific activities.

It aims at developing opportunities at all levels and in all structures (current emphasis on female athletes and athletes with High Support Needs), seeks the continuous global promotion and media coverage (Paralympic Movement, Paralympic Games) and develops and supports IPC Membership.

Sports and their relationship with IPC

In the governance structure of Paralympic Sports, the 3 sport types are IF Sports, IOSD Sports and IPC Sports.

- IF Sports are FITA Para-Archery, ICF Para-Canoe (2016), UCI Para-Cycling, FEI Para-Equestrian, ITTF Para Table Tennis, ITU Para-Triathlon (2016), FISA Rowing, IFDS Sailing, WOVD Sitting Volleyball, IWBF Wheelchair Basketball, WCF Wheelchair Curling, IWRF Wheelchair Rugby, ITF Wheelchair Tennis.
- IOSD Sports are CPISRA Boccia, CPISRA Football 7-a-Side, IBSA Goalball, IBSA Judo, IBSA Football 5-a-Side, IWAS Wheelchair Fencing.
- IPC Sports are IPC Alpine Skiing, IPC Athletics, IPC Biathlon, IPC Cross-Country Skiing, IPC Ice Sledge Hockey, IPC Powerlifting, IPC Shooting, IPC Swimming and IPC Wheelchair Dance Sport.

Sport Focus

1998 - 2000 - IPC Sports were indirectly encouraged to seek greater operational autonomy and independence, although there was no formal mandate to do so.

2001 - 2002 – The IPC Strategic Review determined that sport self-governance would contribute to the long term viability and sustainability of the Paralympic Movement and the IPC.

2003 – At the GA a motion was carried with the aim of supporting IPC sports towards more self-sustainability and eventual independence from the IPC, with the following mission: “to promote the self-governance of each Paralympic sport either as an integral part of the international sport movement for able-bodied athletes, or as an independent sport organization, whilst at all times safeguarding and preserving its own identity.”

2003 – The target set by the GA is the year 2016 by when all IPC Sports shall have moved to independence from the IPC.

Self-Governance Evolution/IPC Sports

IPC’s role as IF until transition are the management of all technical aspects, such as rules, rankings, records and athlete classification; supervision of World Championships and other competitions coordinating closely with local organizing committees; financial management and administration; and promotion and communication of each sport. There is a clear desire for IPC, relevant stakeholders and IPC sports representatives to facilitate the transition of the 9 sports to independence. It’s the IPC’s responsibility to actively plan with each sport to create the opportunity for this transition to occur.

The IPC will work with IPC Sports to reach the appropriate level enabling independence by establishing a consistent framework for each sport based on its development and organizational readiness. The IPC provides a clear layout of the qualification criteria of how to become an

independent organization (e.g. financially and managerially sound) and ensures that all the required technical competencies and expertise are in place to guarantee the credibility of each sport.

IPC Sports, actual status:
IPC Alpine Skiing
IPC Athletics, May 2011 MOU to be signed with IAAF
IPC Biathlon
IPC Cross-Country Skiing
IPC Ice Sledge Hockey, meetings with IIHF and NHL
IPC Powerlifting
IPC Shooting, MOU signed with ISSF
IPC Swimming
IPC Wheelchair Dance Sport, MOU signed with IDSF

2. CHALLENGES

Recruitment, introduction Norway (Mads Andreassen)

Andreassen presented different models and examples for recruitment; for instance, cooperation model between home (athlete, parents), municipality (competence, information, aids, transport, facilities etc.) and club, Beitostølen Healthsports Center. He cited further examples from national federations' recruitment work in swimming, skiing and bandy. In addition, a "No limits" activity day in Skien (organized by NIF) was another type of cooperation between a regional confederation, sports clubs and the Norwegian labour and welfare administration in Telemark County. Recruiting across Norway includes 6 large events with "come and try" activities involving local clubs and 3-5 small events in existing structures/clubs. Simple "eye-openers" and happenings along the route, like seminars /courses included 11 events and meetings with health personnel and decision makers in counties and municipalities involving sport for the disabled. As a strategy to sharpen the focus and attract attention to the project, 2 wheelchair users will be handbiking/rolling in wheelchairs from the south to the north of Norway from 24th of April to 30th June.

Sporttiklubi as a pathway to disability sport? (Tuomas Törrönen & Aija Saari)

The Sporttiklubi program has its roots and history in the Sports for All Children project (LKL) 2002-2008, which aimed towards inclusion. Its targets were to lower the threshold of mainstream sports clubs and to offer a wider variety of physical activity for all abilities. To achieve these targets, disability sports ideas such as inclusion spectrum, reverse integration, peer tutoring and adaptations were used. The result of the LKL project was a greater understanding of inclusion, exclusion and accessibility. We now understand that inclusion is a continuous process. The project helped to clarify the role of disability sports as part of the inclusive service delivery and the role of disability sport practitioners as consultants and/or facilitators of that process.

At present the 1-year old Sporttiklubi is an umbrella for various services which are targeted at young people with a disability. It welcomes all children with special needs and is based on individual, free membership. It emphasizes fun and the easy principle, “everyone can”. Its main goals are to get children involved with sport and physical activity and to raise their interest in sports. It is an information channel about sporting events and services and gives families an opportunity to choose what, where, when and how to participate. It is also a pathway to sports and competitions for those who qualify in disability sports in terms of classification guidelines and find those options interesting.

Sporttiklubi has different activities for smaller children and teenagers. From 1-13 years of age, the focus is on family activities, fun and easy entry, and awareness of sports “suitable for me”. Tools are “Sports Plaza”, events, inclusive and disability specific multisport camps and APA sport clubs, which offer weekly motor activity training. For this age group, Junior Games provides an opportunity for participation.

After 13 years of age, the focus is on sports and training. Teenagers are provided with taster sessions, disability specific sports and camps. Junior Games offer a chance to learn to compete. Teenagers are given pathways towards an athletic career and to the acquisition of leadership skills.

Does Sporttiklubi function as a pathway to an athlete’s career? In a way it does.

Sporttiklubi opens an easy entry under “safe and reliable” DSO, good cooperation with rehabilitation personnel, special schools and family networks. Approximately 700 individual members aged 1-20 years is a strong sign of interest! Sports Plazas, multi-sport events, inclusive camps and Junior Games are popular. An increasing number of children with multiple and severe disabilities are involved. Those with a significant disability are well represented.

There are still several challenges considering athlete’s career. What happens after easy entry? There is no place to train regularly after you’ve found your sport. There are not enough local clubs which are both willing and capable of including a child with a disability. Most NSFs seem not to have anyone to take care of disability sports recruitment or youth sports at the grassroots level. One of the challenges is confidentiality: we in VAU can’t send personal information such as names to outsiders (for example NSFs). Sports as a hobby are not valued as highly as are rehabilitation or academic skills at school. There is a lack of classification at the grassroots level (obs. minimum disability).

We are worried about the decrease of interest in disability sport at competitive levels. There is fear and even negative attitudes towards inclusion among parents and mainstream sport leaders. They might be afraid of extra expense, work, safety issues, and bullying. Disability stereotypes may cause unrealistically high or low expectations of the disabled participant. Unclear roles and responsibilities among the sports actors result in confusion. In addition, we seem to lack easily accessible information and training about classification, assistants, equipment and adaptations.

Tie tähtiin – (“Way to the stars”) recruitment –program (Kimmo Mustonen)

Tie tähtiin, which can be translated as ”Way to the Stars”, is a recruiting program coordinated by the Finnish Paralympic Committee. It works in co-operation with VAU and sport federations and has had a full-time paid development manager since Aug 2009. Tie tähtiin is collecting information from athletes using a web-based form to collate personal and disability information, sport interests, etc. and directs athletes to federations, clubs and taster sessions. It is also creating a network of doctors, physiotherapists, prosthesis experts, PE teachers, sport instructors and coaches. Taster sessions and events are organized in conjunction with federations and VAU. In addition, Tie tähtiin tries to raise awareness by organizing Paralympic School Days.

Sport for all? (Mads Andreassen)

Research on disabled and leisure activities show that disabled children that are excluded from leisure activities lack experiences to share with their friends, and struggle to master skills that their peers value (Wendelborg 2010). Barriers to participation are the lack of: accessibility; financial and human resources; transport; and information and knowledge (Ministry of education and research 2008). Social barriers are created by an underestimation of the competence of those with disabilities and the inherent prejudice of some able bodied people (Løvgren 2009). Participation in organized leisure activities can lead to social integration and a feeling of belonging, but can also create the social stigma and exclusion which many disabled experience (Løvgren 2009).

The social mechanisms of sport

Traditionally, physical activity is most often seen as rehabilitation and, although sport is an area primarily focused on physical skills, it is, nevertheless, a very suitable vehicle for highlighting alternative perceptions of the disabled (Wickman 2008).

Prejudice or ignorance?

There still exists a lot of prejudice towards people with disabilities, which can only be addressed if the disabled are given greater knowledge, visibility and an inclusive environment.

Role of disability sport consultants (Mads Andreassen)

To provide sport for the disabled, NIF employs 10 people, 7 of whom work in NIF regional confederations. National Federations have the responsibility for all aspects including recruitment and organizing, adapting and facilitating activities from grassroots to elite level.

NIF’s central administration (3) gives proactive support to NF, and provides financial distribution, coordination of national efforts, political advocacy and the NPC Norway secretariat.

NIF’s regional advisers (7) support NFs’ local and regional work in recruitment, clubs and athlete follow-up, coordination of courses (not sport specific), strengthening regional confederation and sport councils, advocacy with local government, networking and acting as ambassadors.

In the questionnaire the sport federations see an increased need to cooperate with NIF regional consultants. They increased the score for cooperation from 2,02 in 2009 to 2,78 in 2010. (Rated from 1-4).

3. MONITORING

Monitoring sports for people with a disability in Norway (Arnfinn Vik)

The aim of the integration process, and of the 2007 – 2011 policy document, is to increase the number of disabled athletes in sport. Where are we today in this regard? The problem is that some clubs won't give us the information about disabled athletes and they are under no obligation to do so ("counting the disabled").

Nevertheless, monitoring is important because it shows us if our plans work and whether we achieve our aims. It helps planning as work is based on facts, not opinions. We should also bear in mind that political goals have an effect on funding.

When NFI was disbanded in 2007, it had approximately 250 clubs, but the numbers of athletes is unknown. Registration of sports took place from 2001. Every sports club must now register on the internet and provide the numbers of members and active members. A disabled, active member enrolls in the same way, but anonymously. Since the clubs decide whether an athlete belongs in the ordinary or disabled category, there is a degree of bias in the registrations, which means that a precise overview cannot be obtained.

Future monitoring

Personal registration is a challenge and there is no guarantee that the number of disabled athletes registered is accurate, although the number of clubs is known. A follow-up of development in 54 Sport federations takes place with the aid of a four-level evaluation tool. Firstly, there is an annual survey on how the federations work, their challenges, the number of athletes and results. Secondly, we survey all the clubs every year and one part of that survey evaluates challenges with regard to sports for the disabled. Thirdly, a selected group of 100 voluntary clubs, which have sports for the disabled, is also surveyed with the aim of assessing the development, challenges and numbers of people with disabilities in those clubs. Lastly, a further challenge is the evaluation of the effect of NIF's work in the area.

Monitoring and research in the Netherlands (Rita van Driel)

In the Netherlands, the Mulier Institute made the first evaluation in 2008: '(Un)limited Active'. It focused on definition, numbers and information about barriers, incentives, drivers, etc. The next research takes place in 2012.

We have done some monitoring projects (done by ourselves) such as Special Heroes and 'Provocative sport programs' (with the sport federations). We monitor the results twice (half way and at the end) and use the results to set goals for subsequent periods or projects.

Research on the actual status of integration and inclusion within the sport federations (undertaken by Mulier Institute) is an online research for all federations and has 15 in-depth interviews with different federations. This feedback gives input for the next period or project to be supported by the government. Results to be expected end 2011.

Analysis of Finnish sports integration process (Hannele Pöysti, presented by Aija Saari and Kati Kauhanen, with some practical examples of swimming federation).

We started tripartite meetings every autumn (2009, 2010). The participants were the National Sport Federations (mainstream), the Paralympic committee and the VAU. Minutes of these meetings form the basis for guidelines of activities for the coming year.

The National Sport Federations involved in Paralympic sports integration (participants in these tripartite meetings) were: Cycling, Curling, Equestrian, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis, Yachting, Shooting, Judo, Ski, Ski Sport (alpine) and Athletics. In the tripartite integration meetings the following themes are addressed: resources, national teams, classification, coaching and education systems, national championships, club activities, the national competition system, finding new athletes and communication.

Outside the tripartite meetings there are plenty of other NSFs involved in the integration processes in various ways. They organize club activities, grassroots APA-groups, offer assistance with referees, cooperate with competitions and championships or involve themselves in Special Olympics and SO Unified activities. These sports are for instance golf, soccer, badminton, (wheelchair) dance, ice hockey, floor ball, volleyball, basketball, bowling, orienteering, archery, gymnastics and ice skating.

Positive development

Under the auspices of the National Sport Federation, sports expertise has increased, there are more resources, National Teams are in professional hands and educational aspects are, in some measure, taken care of. There has been increased cooperation amongst the NSF, Paralympic Committee and VAU.

Challenges

More personnel and financial resources are needed, activities need to be offered not only for national teams but at all levels, competition systems need to be refined, disability sport modules are needed at all education levels, more cooperation is needed between NSF and local sport clubs and all disability groups should be integrated into programs at club level.

We have discovered that there are different cooperation systems and relationships with different sports. The target is that NSF will take full responsibility for disability sport and VAU will act only as a partner and assistant.

Integration and inclusion at the organizational level (Aija Saari)

What do we know about integration processes based on international research? Only a small amount of research has been done. The Norwegian disability sport integration process is documented best, but only up until the 2003 research carried out by Marit Sørensen & Nina Kahrs. We do have some information about Australian inclusion programs from ASC (Downs and Black) and there seems to be some data collection in the Northwestern University/ Olympic Research Centre. The problems are that disability sport integration data are difficult to compare and their usefulness is limited due to the differences in terminology and concepts, culture and sport systems and in research settings. For instance, Alexy Valet (2010 in EUCAPA) posed the question: is “inclusion” a concept, a practice, a process, an outcome, a paradigm, a notion or a “meme”?

At present we are collecting some facts about the Finish integration processes by initiating a sector research called, ”Promoting factors and hindrances of inclusion in the sports culture”. Its main objectives are:

- 1) To evaluate and assess integration and inclusion in projects, programs and services of the chosen non-governmental sport organisations.
- 2) To produce evidence based information for future sport strategies and planning of VAU and the ministry.
- 3) To answer the questions, ”Where are we now?” and ”What are the keys to inclusion?” (What works?)

The concept of integration is used in two ways

- 1) A transfer act/rooted to medical model of disability « Integration takes existing programmes for people without a disability and adds a new piece, the participation of people with a disability » (Downs 2001)
- 2) A process/rooted to social model of disability « Inclusion is seen as a final goal of broader integration processes » (see Schleien, Ray & Green 1997; also Nixon 2007).

What is evaluated?

- 1) Freedom of opportunities. Increased availability of accessible and open for all -services for persons with disabilities (all ages and genders).
- 2) Rendez-vous and co-operation. Increased co-operation a) between disability sport (DSO’s) and mainstream sport organizations b) between disability-specific organizations (both locally and nationally).
- 3) Equality and equity. Improvement of equality and equity in programs and policies.
- 4) Competitive disability sport. Better results and achievements for disabled athletes (“more medals”).

Questions that we ask:

How is inclusion/participation of PWD put into operation in action plans & strategies? What is the target? Was there a public commitment to the process? What are the resources and supportive actions? Who does it concern? Are PWDs represented in governing bodies/working groups? Who are the persons in charge? What are the results? How is the follow-up organised?

The research is scheduled to take place from 1.3.-30.9.2011. The report should be ready at the end of September 2011.

Research on Paralympic Sports (Kaisu Mononen)

KIHU –Research Institute for Olympic Sports is a multidisciplinary research and development institute, specializing in research, development and services associated with competitive and elite sports. Funding derives from an annual operational grant from the Ministry of Education and Culture and from projects involving the National Olympic Committee, National Paralympic Committee and National Sport Federations.

Paralympic Sports in KIHU

Co-operation with NPC started in 2004. Five to 6 development projects each year are supported, planned and conducted by the NPC with a focus on elite sports.

The aim is to support elite athletes to achieve success at international level. For instance, the Institute carried out research on Paralympic Sports/Ball Games: sitting volleyball (2003-04, 2009-10), wheelchair rugby (2006), table tennis (2006) and goalball (2008). In addition, an analysis of ice sledge hockey was carried out during the Vancouver Paralympics in 2010 with the approval of the IPC.

Coming in 2011: "Integration of Finnish Paralympic Sports to Sports Federations: Experiences of athletes, coaches and coordinators", focused on 13 integrated Paralympic sports, semi-structured interview, thoughts about past, present, and future. Aims? Expectations? Challenges? Pitfalls? Surprises? Plans? This research is done in co-operation with VAU.

4. DISCUSSION (some topics and round table discussions during two days).

Setting the goal and defining it

The integration process was initiated at high levels in Norway and the Netherlands. When the goal was set, the actions were adjusted in terms of resources and follow-up. "It is good to set the concrete goals and say them aloud", told van Driel. For instance, the Netherlands has set a goal for Elite sport to be placed in the top 10 in 2016.

The process of integration, of itself, does not bring more medals and success. "Times are different and competition is much harder", told Pedersen. Still he believes that the worst is now behind and, due to the Olympiatoppen, Norway will be back at the top.

What is the ultimate goal? “Totalansvar or totalinclusion”. What does it mean? “I think our disability sport organization will “die” in 15-20 years but I’m not thinking about that at the moment” (Stig Carlsson).

Elite vs. sport for all

There was some confusion over whether the elite sport integration and the sports participation/Sport for all principle should stay as separate movements or if they should combine their forces. If sport for all is the target, cooperation sounds like a wise choice to get people and athletes more active at grassroots level. Do these two approaches speak the same language?

Paralympic movement vs. other disability sport movements

In Norway and the Netherlands, sports integration doesn’t apply only to Paralympic sports. “For instance, in the Netherlands 50 sports were taken into the program, 44 of which have now run these activities, including ice skating, handball, badminton”, presented van Driel. Still it seems that IPC makes the standards and dictates the direction whether good and bad.

Inclusion issues are also of concern to other disability sports movements. For instance, Special Olympics Unified Sports work with local sport clubs to run the activities. Why is there no cooperation between IPC and Special Olympics?

Case of Goalball in Norway and the placement of “disability-specific”

Andreassen emphasized the role of NIF in governing the process and the independent nature of club and grassroots movements. “Is the dog wagging the tail or the tail wagging the dog (Andreassen)? He meant that it is up to active goalballers and volunteers to keep the sports alive. There were also other sports like boccia and teppecurling that found no sports-specific organization. A multi-sports organization was instigated for those sports.

This topic highlights the history of disability sports, which is closely connected to rehabilitation. Rehabilitation professionals used to act as active leaders, coaches and developers. There are disability specific sports, adaptations and equipment that would never have born without them. What is their role of rehabilitation professionals in the future?

Gender issue and Human Rights

“Where is the view of gender equality and where are the disabled women?” asked Kate Laine. Are there similarities between various integration processes (e.g. disability – gender)? What can we learn from each other (equality issues) in sports?

Riikka Juntunen emphasized various movements e.g. Paralympic, Special Olympics and men’s/women’s participation. She reminded those present of the importance of United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

The variety of processes and models

In the Netherlands, ice hockey is so small that there is no point in introducing sledge hockey there. A similar situation pertains with archery in Finland. “The quality is more important than the deadline”, reminded van Driel. Each sport is unique, which is why the tailored approach is essential.

What is the sports organization's responsibility and what is society's responsibility?

There was an agreement that society should take care of facilities, education, legislation and disability services (personal assistants, equipment, transportation etc.) and the organization of actions and sport services. The challenge is in the grey area between club and municipality, or club and rehabilitation centre or family-rehabilitation club. "We keep on talking about a service-chain which starts already at home. The person should get assistance and transportation to get to the sports arena," emphasised Pekka Hättinen.

One of the issues raised by some sport federations was the lack of support and consultation. This process is new and future unknown. The person in charge of disability sport often works alone. How can (s)he know what is the right thing to do?

What is the role of disability sports consultants in these processes? What should they do and what not?

Some National Sports Federations stressed that a disability sports organization (e.g. VAU) is needed to assist with special themes and for handling disability specific networks. They can't yet manage it by themselves.

The win-win-issue was raised. Inclusion proceeds if both parties feel that they benefit from inclusion.

Andreassen listed some strategic choices in the role of the disability sport consultant: Is (s)he creating or strengthening? Doing the work or assisting/advising? What comes first, activity or athletes? Money or voluntarism? Segregated or integrated?

How do we make sport an attractive arena for people with disabilities?

Sport (especially its competitive part) seems to have a different status in different cultures. In Finland, it seems to have a lower status than in the Netherlands. In the case of a person with a disability, sport seems not to be part of daily routines unless it provides extra rehabilitation or health value.

Information about sport – What, how, where and when?

We should use major events and the media, offer tailored information for various needs (e.g. Handicapidrettens Videncenter) and purposes and create a large global advertising campaign in conjunction with Olympics.

How do we solve the need for technical aids/equipment?

Development of disability sport rental programs (e.g. SOLIA-program in Finland). Better coordination and cooperation between social and welfare and sports ministries.

The question of finding new talents

We have to engage closely with people to attract them. Swedish Talangjakten (“Talent search”) aims to recruit 500 new athletes. It is the biggest campaign within Swedish Disability sports with PR and activity days all over Sweden. The basic idea is to bring disability sports into public places such as shopping malls.

What should we do in Finland to get more athletes?

Encourage grassroots activities, close to families and potential athletes. Have we thought about long term consequences if disability sports select only those with potential? Should we instead focus in offering high quality physical activities for everyone? Better cooperation between various actors such as VAU, the Paralympic Committee and National Federations. Cooperation between national APA instructors and school teachers. Sports institutes as a resource. Hold significant competitions and side events to raise awareness and identify those with potential.