

THENAPA FINAL REPORT BELGIUM – 2003

Karin Bultiauw – Keyperson Thenapa Belgium – European Institute of Higher Education Brussels (EHSAL – campus Parnas)

1. Aims and objectives of the work at national level

- 1.1 Discuss the different profiles and make suggestions for training/education and retraining at all APA-levels.(rehabilitation, education, recreation and competition)
- 1.2 Discussion on the strategy and quality of retraining at all APA-levels
- 1.3 Improvement of education for professionals and volunteers in sport and movement activities for people with special needs
- 1.4 Motivate all sportsfederations to organise retrainings (cfr. Decree).
- 1.5 Motivate volunteers to participate in APA- courses
- 1.6 Enlargement of integration/ inclusion through adapted physical activities.
- 1.7 Stimulate cooperation and integration between different federations and organisations at all levels (not only for competition)

2. Achievement of aims and objectives

- 2.1 The first aim of Thenapa Belgium was the improvement of education for professionals and volunteers in sport and movement activities for people with special needs.

- Education (primary,secondary, University and Higher education)

After discussing the Thenapa proposal of the ideal profile, different Universities and Institutes of Higher Education implemented APA contents in the curriculum (teacher education for physical education, social care work,occupational therapy etc.)

Some of those Institutes started organising additional APA - trainings for professionals and students.

Representative organisations for P.E. teachers (like the BVLO- Bond voor Lichamelijke Opvoeding) started to implement practical APA workshops on a yearly base.

Some sportfederations for people with a handicap and governemental organisations are organising retrainings for their own staff (VFGS f.i.) or for volunteers in A.P.A. (different provinces).

At the first EUPEA Symposium (European Physical Education Association) on Quality Physical Education (november 2002- Brussels, Belgium), A.P.A was mentioned in the proceedings, stimulating all P.E. teachers to include children with special needs in their lessons and schoolactivities.

Despite the increase of primary and secondary pupils in special schools in Belgium (8 different types), we see small efforts to stress the importance of A. P.A. in some inclusive schools. Some trainingsessions for physiotherapists, teachers and administrators involved in GON (Supported system for pupils integrated in regular schools) are focusing on APA.

The importance of APA in some institutions and schools for people with special needs has been increased by stimulating their own employees to take part in APA sessions.

- Recreational and competitive sport

Professionals and volunteers involved in adapted sports are stimulated to obtain a certificate as an initiator or trainer. ADEPS and BLOSO (governemental organisations for sport and outdoor activities) for instance recently developed interesting teaching materials and trainingscourses for several adapted sports(f.e. boccia, swimming). They co-operated intensively with sport federations for people with a handicap and persons with a handicap themselves.

Regular sports federations are also stimulated to integrate a special APA module in the education of their coaches and trainers (horse back riding, track and field, tennis...). Recently hippotherapy was admitted by a scientific intervention of the Thenapa co-ordinator Prof. H.Van Coppenolle.

- Rehabilitation

The sportsparticipation in rehabilitation centres in Belgium didn't change remarkably. We hope present students will increase APA in their future work and will be able to convince their colleagues to change their attitude towards adapted sport and movement activities.

2.2 The second aim of Thenapa Belgium was integration / inclusion through adapated physical activities.

- The attitude of the Belgian society towards integration and inclusion of people with a handicap cannot be called very open yet but small steps forward have been taken. Some organisations like f.i. "Ouders voor Inclusie" and "Inclusie Vlaanderen" are stimulating inclusieve initiatives.

Sportsfederations and clubs also started to integrate children and youngsters with a handicap (Unified Sport – Bewegingsschool Achilles etc.)

In some governmental letters of sportpolicy, adapted sport is totally included (f.e. R.De Lathouwer in VGC - Brussels)

- Some Institutes for Higher Education and Universities are organising inclusive sportcamps for their own students together with persons with a handicap. These initiatives are integrated in the curriculum and gives all participants the opportunity to break through a threshold fear in taking contact with people with a handicap.
Those experiences are very important to promote inclusion through APA, doing sport together, touching each other in games, making contact with other people during ADL (activities of daily life) and moments of free time.
- Although sport and movement activities is not a priority, some Belgian sick-funds (Christelijke en Socialistische Mutualiteiten) are taking initiatives for integration through APA.
- The Belgian educational system of special schools is a barrier to inclusion but integration of pupils in regular schools is no longer a taboo.

3. Organisational approach and structure

A national comittee was established. Two working groups held meetings and discussions (education and recreation/competition sports). The rehabilitation group didn't start because of time management problems and lack of interest.

In the education group there was a big engagement of different partners:

- representatives from the Ministry of Education (GON –accompanists of the 3 educational networks)
- representatives from governemental sportorganisations (BLOSO – ADEPS etc.)
- representatives from sportsfederations for people with a handicap
- representatives from Schoolsportorganisations
- professors,teachers and staff of different Universities and Institutes of Higher Education

In the sportsgroup also different interested persons were involved intensively:

- representatives from governemental sportorganisations (BLOSO – ADEPS)
- representatives from sportsfederations for people with a handicap
- representatives from Schoolsportorganisations
- representatives from leisure organisations for people with a handicap
- persons with a handicap
- athletes

Results of the different groups were reported in each Belgian Thenapa meeting. Those meetings were very effective discussing the different items of the European Thenapa proposals; there was a positive and constructive atmosphere.

During the 3 years of this European Network, all national Thenapa reports were supported by these groups. Compared to some other European countries the contribution of Thenapa Belgium was quite big during each European THENPA meeting. All contributions were produced and based on investigations and discussions of the national committee.

4. Methodology

The educational and teaching approach was focused mainly on integrating APA – modules in existing curricula (theoretically as well as practically). By improving the education of professionals and volunteers involved in APA and the stimulation of different sport federations and clubs, integration and inclusion has increased in society during the last years.

This approach promoted within the project has had an important impact. This impact is obvious at different levels integrating Thenapa proposals:

- improvement of quality in different curricula
- enlargement and improvement of retrainings in APA
- increase of inclusive sports initiatives
- enlargement of motivation in many people involved with APA
- promotion of integration / inclusion in society

EDUCATION → ATTITUDE → INTEGRATION

5. Products and results

Thenapa CD - roms, videomaterial, addresses of different websites and literature were distributed and disseminated during conferences and meetings. Teaching material for a pilot project in Boccia was edited and experienced in a initiator course for sportscoaches (in co-operation with BLOSO) and will be used as a canvas for developing teaching materials in other sports. Articles on APA will be published in magazines for P.E.- teachers and other professionals.

6. Dissemination

The dissemination strategie was based especially on attendance in meetings, conferences, preparation sessions and inservice trainingsessions where Thenapa keyperson promoted and stimulated the both objectives of the network (education and integration) and distributed interesting material.

Target groups were both educational- and sportssettings and governemental organistions.

The estimate number of people reached in 2003 is approximatly 25.000 (100 staff and 20.000 students at Universities and Institutes of Higher Education, 20 sportsstaff and 100 new coaches and trainers in APA, 100 staff at the Ministry of Education and Sport, sportfederations for people with or without a handicap, governemental organisations, schoolsportfederations and all their members.)

We estimate the number of persons reached in the future will be at least 8000 each year in education about 200 persons a year in sports and hopefully with the help of the media yearly 100.000 citizens.

7. Equal opportunities for people with disabilities in Belgium

In governemental discussions concerning equal chances in education (f.e. Flemish Minister M. Van Der Poorten) an intervention has been made in becoming conscious of the importance of P.E. and A.P.A.

This theme of increasing equal chances in education has been discussed many times during the last year at several levels.

Unfortunately inclusive initiatives for pupils with a handicap in education are not really promoted in the last Decree (Equal chances).

Several organisations has been founded to influence society and our different governements to realise autonomy, equal treatment, self-determination and participation of persons with a handicap in an inclusive society as well in economical, social, cultural or political activities (f.e. GRIP: Gelijke Rechten voor Iedere Persoon met een handicap, Equal Rights for Each Person with a handicap).

Thenapa research in sportsfederations and clubs, schools and other organisations involved with A.P.A. over these 3 years, stimulated the partners in arising questions of how integration and inclusion could be realised in future.

8. Evaluation

The evaluation of Thenapa hasn't been finished yet in all groups, but the partners were quite satisfied especially for the proposal of the ideal profile. This proposal is already implemented in different teaching material as well in education as in sports. We noticed also plenty of initiatives for scientific research in A.P.A. like the investigations of the Belgian Prof. Yves Van Landewijck and his team in Leuven.

Difficulties in the development of education and integration/inclusion were:

- the attitude of society towards integration and inclusion
- the different communities in Belgium (Flanders, Wallonia, Brussels)
- the educational system in Belgium of special schools
- the medical model of looking to "handicap" instead of a social model, wich is still prior in some institutions.

Organisational diffuculties were:

- time management problems for all volunteers involved in Thenapa Belgium having all a full-time job
- problems of different languages
- problems of transport moving to meetings in different places of the country

Thanks to the co-operation of many volunteers, convinced of the importance of APA and to the 2 Belgian Thenapa co-ordinators Prof. Jean Claude De Potter en Prof. Herman Van Coppenolle, this Belgian work of Thenapa has been a succes. The succession of this work is still needed and hopefully will be realised as well in education as in sports.

Integration and inclusion will become realistic in society when the positive changing attitude in the Belgian society will continue and future professionals and volunteers start to implement the results of this European Network.

Karin Bultiauw
European Institute of Higher Education Brussels (EHSAL)
Keyperson Thenapa Belgium