

## **THENAPA FINAL REPORT BULGARIA**

**The aims and objectives of THENAPA Project** at national level were formulated considering the social status and related problems of disabled people in Bulgaria in comparison with the situation in other European countries:

- Surveying and assessment of the organization of physical education for pupils with disability;
- Evaluation of the education and training of Physical Education Teachers, Coaches and Physiotherapists for the needs of people with different kinds of disability;
- Examination and assessment of the place and role of Adapted Physical Activity (APA) and Sports in Rehabilitation process, Recreational Sport and Top Sport activities in the life of disabled people;
- Examination and assessment of the situation in integration of people with disabilities in physical education, recreational sport and top sport activities;
- Contribution to the promotion of undergraduate, post-graduate and continuing education and specialization in APA;
- Contribution to the efforts for integration of disabled people in physical education, recreational sport and top sport by collaboration with educational authorities, sport federations and federations of disabled.
- Influence ministries and different working groups on legislative acts related to the needs of disabled people.

### **Organisational approach and structure**

The Bulgarian THENAPA Group was chaired by the Rector of the National Sports Academy (NSA) and consists of academic teachers from NSA; school PE teachers (from regular and special schools); physiotherapists-specialists in hypotherapy, therapeutic riding, therapeutic swimming; coaches; the President of Bulgarian Federation Sport for Disabled; representatives of sport federations and sport clubs; representatives of organisations for disabled.

Leading was the role of NSA representatives as far as NSA was a partner in THENAPA, but as well as the main for Bulgaria goal was promotion of education and specialization in the field as a basis for integration of people with special needs in physical education and sports.

Good contacts with the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Sport and Youth, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Integration facilitated positive influence in the process of proposals and discussions regarding new legislative acts and the defense of equal opportunities for people with disability.

## **Methodology, tools and technology used**

### ***The educational and teaching approach***

- Introduction of a basic APA course in curricula of PE, Sports and Physiotherapy at NSA helped in changing the attitude of students toward the disability and disabled people, and increasing interest in specialization in the field;
- Introduction of specialization in APA at the three NSA Faculties results first for Bulgaria qualified specialists capable to contribute to the real integration of disabled people in PE and Sports.

### ***Open and distance learning***

- Offered in post-graduate and continuing education programmes in the field, offered for PE teachers and sport coaches, interested in APA and integration of disabled people.
- Changing the attitude of PE teachers and sport trainers toward the disability and disabled people.

### ***Tools and results, their dissemination***

- CD-ROMS were used for education of specialists and for dissemination of examples of good practice.
- THENAPA CD-ROMS are of high quality and professionally done and help much in fulfilling the tasks on national level.

## **Results:**

### **• Education and training in APA**

The National Sports Academy, Sofia introduced:

- A basic course in APA for the students of the three different Faculties: Faculty of Physical Education, Faculty of Sports and Faculty of Physiotherapy;
  - 2-year Specialisation in APA in the framework of SOCRATES/ERASMUS DEUAPA and CEEPUS Programmes on a BSc level;
  - 1-year MSc in APA in the framework of EMDAPA Programme;
  - APA module-units in the framework of MSc in Sport and MSc in Physiotherapy Programmes;
  - Short-term continuing education courses in APA;
  - Students' and teachers' mobility in the field in SOCRATES/ERASMUS and CEEPUS Programmes.
  - Research in APA.
- ### **• Integration through APA**

#### ***Competitive Sport:***

- Disabled athletes have access to: the national sport facilities used in the same time by top non-disabled athletes, the same coaches, the same medical staff (for example: the sport facilities of the National Sports

Academy, Sofia are open free for disabled athletes and the Sidney Women Paralympic Champion in shot throwing was trained and shape there);

- Disabled and non-disabled people participate in national, district and county sport events (for example: the Sofia Marathon Running);
- Disabled and non-disabled people participate in organization of national and international sport events;
- The biggest Bulgarian towns organize regularly sport events for disabled people which are accepted well and with high interest by the citizens;
- Sport Federations organize training and sport events both for non-disabled and disabled people;
- Higher public and media interest to the sport events for disabled people.

#### ***Recreational and rehabilitative sport:***

- Hypotherapy and Therapeutic riding, swimming, martial sports etc as a rehabilitation tool are developing with participation of students from the Faculty of Physiotherapy at the National Sports Academy;
- Integrated recreational sports activities are offered and developing at different sport clubs;

#### ***Integrated Physical Education:***

- Attempts in some private schools during the regular classes;
- Integrated school sport activities are developing by PE teachers-enthusiast;
- Students with disability are accepted to study at the National Sports Academy.

#### ***Dissemination***

- Disseminated by THENAPA printed, video-, SD information is facilitating the education in APA and integration of people with special needs in Bulgaria.
- NSA example in introducing APA is followed by other universities offering programmes in PE, Sport and Physiotherapy.
- THENAPA materials help influencing authorities.
- THENAPA results and materials are helping disabled people in Bulgaria in gaining confidence to overcome social barriers and fight for equal opportunities.

#### ***Evaluation***

- Questionnaires and statistics were used to evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of THENAPA Project in Bulgaria.
- Data were collected by PE teachers and sport trainers, Federation of Sport for Disabled, disabled people, members of the national THENAPA Group.

- Several questionnaire were used to evaluate the education and integration at national level, compared with the picture in other European countries. Results were assessed by the national THENAPA Group.
- Difficulties in Bulgaria are related mainly to the lack of specialists in APA, legislative gaps, financial and architectural barriers, lack of support in schools, psychological barriers. In this respects important steps were succeeded in Bulgaria through THENAPA Project toward resolving problems and overcoming barriers. Introduction of a basic and specialized education in APA is considered the most important contribution of the Bulgarian THENAPA Group to the aims of the Project with an impact of multiplication in the future. The involvement of newly educated and trained specialists in APA will facilitate the real integration of people with special needs in Bulgaria.

Ludmila Venova, Assoc.Prof., PhD, PT  
DEAN, Faculty of Kinesitherapy, National Sports Academy  
THENAPA Coordinator for Bulgaria