

THENAPA DISSEMINATION YEAR

BULGARIA

Dissemination of contemporary information about Adapted Physical Activity (APA) in Bulgaria through ADAPT, THENAPA books and other materials, 8th THENAPA Forum in Sofia and other activities of the Bulgarian THENAPA Group results concrete outcomes and impacts on the specific target groups:

- Higher awareness of educational institutions, sports organisations (Bulgarian Paralympic Association, sports federations and clubs for disabled and non-disabled people) and society as a whole about Adapted Physical Activity (APA) possibilities for integration and inclusion of people with disability.
- Further and more information spread to the relevant authorities (Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Trade Unions, etc), relevant governmental and non-governmental organisations, and to disabled people as well, concerning contemporary state of arts and tendencies in APA development as an important and strong tool facilitating social integration and inclusion, and also quality of life of people with disability.
- Dissemination of information about APA in Bulgaria is closely related to the development and quality assurance of education and training of specialists in the field of Physical Education (PE), Sports and Physiotherapy (PT) at all educational levels to meet expectations and needs of APA in rehabilitation, recreational and competitive sport. New programmes in APA are offered at III, IV and V educational levels. ADAPT, THENAPA books and other materials and THENAPA Project results as a whole are examples of good practice in the field and are used as a basis for comparison of educational programmes in APA in the process of accreditation of educational

- institutions and programmes at the National Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of universities.
- Bulgarian THENAPA Group supplies relevant authorities, institutions, organisations and also individuals with copies of ADAPT, THENAPA books and other materials. Different media presentations support dissemination of THENAPA Project results in Bulgaria as well. This way a considerable impact of the project on the specific target groups of relevant authorities, educational and other institutions, governmental and non-governmental organisations and individual disabled people was succeeded.

Development of education and practice in APA in Bulgaria is a considerable achievement thanks the active participation in the THENAPA Project and dissemination of results.

- In general the Project meets its targets in terms of outcomes:
- Development of education and specialisation in the field of APA on undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Continuing education programmes in APA for physical education teachers, sports coaches and physiotherapists.
 - Higher interest among students for specialisation in APA, incl. students from neighbour countries at the National Sports Academy-Sofia.
 - Stimulation of research in the field of APA: students' course works, MSc theses, PhD theses.
 - Changes in attitude of academics and the society as a whole towards people with disabilities and possibilities of APA in their social integration and inclusion, and improvement in quality of life.
 - The National Sports Academy-Sofia (NSA) opens its doors for students with disabilities to study physical education, different sports specialities and physiotherapy.
 - NSA sport facilities (out-door and in-door) are at the disposal of athletes with disabilities (incl. Bulgarian Paralympic athletes) who are supervised by NSA sport and sports medicine and rehabilitation specialists.
 - Step by step integrated PE is gaining positions in Bulgarian primary and secondary schools.

- Members of the Bulgarian THENAPA Group are considered as APA experts and invited as advisers and consultants at national and regional level, concerning all aspects of APA.
- An Informational-Consultative Centre for disabled people wishing to participate in sport activities were established by the Ministry of Youth and Sport at the National Stadium "Vassil Levsky" in Sofia. More will follow soon in the regional main towns. More and more people with disability are interested in recreational sport and could address such centres for consultation, functional diagnostics and advice.

The added value and impact of the project in Bulgaria:

- Changes in understanding problems and acceptance of people with disabilities and the attitude towards them of teachers and students at all levels, parents of disabled and non-disabled pupils.
- Improvement in accessibility of sport facilities for disabled people in schools, sport clubs, recreational, spa and tourists centres etc.
- Increased media interest towards APA and participation of disabled people in different kinds of sport activities.
- Introduction of new profession *Instructor in APA and speciality APA* in the State Register of Professions for Professional Education and Training. As a result, a new accredited professional college offers this speciality to students.
- Higher interest of producers and trade firms in sport equipment adapted to the special needs of disabled.

The overall contribution of the transnational work:

- Participation of NSA in the THENAPA Project was an unique possibility for Bulgaria to be part of the common efforts of academics from 30 European universities in a comparative study of educational programmes in APA at all levels, development of EU standard for education and training of professionals in the field and interventional strategies for acceptance, integration and inclusion of people with disability in society through APA.
- By participation in EMDAPA, DEUAPA, ISAPA, and EURAPA, Bulgaria has the chance to continue development in all aspects of APA. Graduates from EMDAPA and DEUAPA Programmes at present are the leading Bulgarian experts in the field.
- THENAPA experience is multiplying by Bulgarian participation in other transnational projects like CEEPUS (including students with

disabilities), teachers and students mobility on the basis of ECTS recognition, incl. invited lecturers in APA for undergraduate and post-graduate and continuing education programmes in the framework of bilateral SOCRATES/ERASMUS agreements with other EU universities, LEONARDO projects, DREAMS and TEAMS Project of the British Council, etc.

- Bulgarian participation in THENAPA II Project: “Aging and disability – a new crossing between physical activity, social inclusion and life-long well-being” is a logical continuation of transnational collaboration of EU universities in favour of people with disability.
- Bulgarian participation in SOCRATES/ERASMUS, LEONARDO, CEEPUS and other programmes for EU universities collaboration.
- Further increasing of awareness of universities and other educational institutions boards; relevant authorities, governmental and non-governmental organisations and institutions; business, bank and trade institutions and organisations, about the problems of people with disability and the importance THENAPA network activities and results to be sustained by financial support in the process of economical stabilisation and improvement in Bulgaria and expected full-membership in EU from 2007.

