

## **Sport for Community Development CD - Good practices template**

*Sport CD project believes that the practice of sporting activities potentiates the communities development, improving also personal and collective skills for life.*

*This template has the aim to collect good practices of sport realized with an impact on the growth and development of the community itself. Thanks so much for your kind cooperation!*

### **GENERAL DATA**

**Good practice title:** Compagnia della Mia Misura (The Company of My Own Size)

**Organization doing the research:** ASD Università Popolare dello Sport

**Good practice theme:** A project of social inclusion through art and dance

**Organization responsible for the good practice:** La Mia Misura ASD

**Short description** (max 1000 characters):

The Company of My Own Size was founded in 2011 as a dance laboratory, from an idea of Vittoria La Costa and Roberta Bassani. The project is to create a permanent integrated laboratory, open to all those who want to play their different abilities, an experimental place where everyone can express and value their own resources. Since 2015 the company is formed as "La Mia Misura ASD". During the years we have performed live performances to promote culture and diversity of cultures in the social environment, to stimulate the use of expressive ways and to facilitate the development of creative and relational potentialities. The proposed activities are developed in different but strictly related areas between them: the laboratory, the shows, the projects, the travels and the collaborations. The network created during the years around the project, allows us to activate always more resources and competences, with an ever greater impact on the consolidation of the internal community (dancers, family members, friends) and external (who saw us dancing, i.e. acquaintances, spectators).

**Person/s interviewed, and role in the organization:** Vittoria La Costa – as President

### **STRUCTURE OF THE ACTIVITY**

**Type of the activity** (is it a course? an Event? etc.):

Permanent laboratory, projects, shows, events, workshop, travels.

**Duration and structure of the activity** (duration in hours, and how the activity is articulated):

The permanent dance laboratory takes place 2 hours a week for 10 months a year.

Its structure is so articulated: initial greeting circle, body heating, experimentation with a theme of movement through precise targeted exercises, dance improvisations, test choreography, verbal exchange and final greeting circle. Also the remaining activities (such as projects, shows, events, workshop, travels) are held during the same period (each year from September to June included.)

**Period** (when was realized? do it still exist?):

From 2011 to the present.

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**Beneficiaries** (what kind of participants? what age?)

Participants are adults from the age of 18 and over. The laboratory is open to all those who want to get involved with their different abilities.

**Is the activity devoted to everybody?**

Yes

**Do the activity regard a group or the individual?** (or a mix?). If it regards a group, how many people?

At present the group is composed of 25 people of which 16 disabled of various types.

**How many participants are involved during one year in the described activity? and how many have been involved (more or less) since the beginning?**

During the years, around 50 people alternated in the laboratory attendance.

Through the projects, the workshops, the shows and the participation in events, we have reached about 2000 people.

**Staff: how is composed the staff?** Teachers, instructors, coaches, volunteers, experts (psychologist, sociologist, etc.); for each category, which are the required qualification?

- 1 Teacher, choreographer, Project Manager and President La Mia Misura ASD: Psychologist, Psychotherapist, Gestalt-Analitica, Dottoranda in Lettere; Dance Movement Therapist ATI-APID – Supervisor APID; Art Psychoterapist.
- 1 teacher, choreographer, project manager, responsible of project and Vice-President La Mia Misura ASD: Danzatrice, Dance Movement Therapist ATI-APID, Certificated Body-Mind Centering as Somatic Movement Educator (SME) and Infant Developmental Movement Educator (IDME) and teacher of Infant Massage AIMI.
- Volunteers with competences in various fields;
- Trainees from various Schools (Physiotherapy, Psychomotoricity, Dance Movement Therapy, Expressive Therapies, Photography);
- Selected external teachers expert in specific techniques (contact improvisation, tango, primitive expression, vocalities, etc.) for proven experience in their field.

**How many staff members?**

10 founding members ASD La Mia Misura

**CONTENT OF THE ACTIVITY**

**Vision** (what is your "dream", your main and general purpose?):

We believe dance is a language that creates a way of common substrate.

It takes us to the essence of things, to a level in which we move by using our whole being and not only the logical-rational part. It helps us to be concentrated inside ourselves (with the body and with the mind) and

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this allows us to interact with the others and with the environment without falling because we have lost the balance.

It helps us to experience that being part of a group it does not mean to lose oneself, and that allow people to be part of a group it does not mean to be confused and not having any more their own cultural identity. I think this perspective can help seeing the diversity as a resource and not as a danger from which defend oneself. This is what we think to be the spirit of a community. Our dream is that this idea can spread to more larger levels and continue to get in touch with same realities as ours in order to exchange experiences and good practices.

### **Educational objectives:**

In general, the objectives aim to improve the quality of life of people involved with this activities and their family and social context. In this perspective, the work is focused on the development of each one's resources favoring a major self-esteem, autonomy and more authentic interpersonal relationships. Our multi-year experience in the field of discomfort (such as dancers, therapist dance movement, scholars in the field of research of movement and psychology), made us notice that utilizing expressive modes has produced interesting results in the improvement of relation and communication capacities, in particular referring to people with different kind of disabilities. The group work and the importance of each one role within it, are a remarkable support for the people involved in the project, giving each one their own space of expression, by favouring integration and social inclusion, activating an interchange system between different abilities. All these aspects are in turn consolidated by the proposal of external activities (shows, workshops, participation of external teachers, participation in regional and European projects, events, travel). For example, the travels that the Company of My Own Size organizes have the objective of social inclusion and the exchange of good practice with dance groups that have a reality similar to ours, always with respect to the individual and his peculiarities. The work that precedes each departure requires a great preparation, with special attention on the observation of people with difficulties, to verify the appropriate competences in this specific field. Proposal of travelling is therefore made in a very targeted way, following an increasing level of complexity (starting from a regional level displacement, then national and finally European) in order to allow each one to experiment the level of difficulties that one can afford to face.

### **Story of the practice (how has been created):**

For about twenty years I worked with various groups in different social cooperatives in Rome. In this situation groups are generally formed by people with disabilities and their home assistants. About ten years ago together with my colleague Roberta Bassani, we have noticed that some pupils in the dance therapy groups wished to do something more, express themselves more. Beside that, what was an integration mainly due to work obligations (home assistants) that could or not have a motivation for participating in the group, could eventually change into a personal choice. In 2011 we managed to create a dance theatre group that had different characteristics, and that was open to all those who wanted to play their different abilities and that it was addressed to the outside, promoting shows, workshops, exhibitions, travels, participation in various events, not only related to the project of disability. Thus, the Company of My Measure was created: a social inclusion project through art and dance.

### **Method and technics**

**How is articulated the activity? are there any steps?** (i.e. first contact; orientation; physical preparation; training; competitions/events; etc.); what are the technics and procedures adopted?

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Phase	Technichs or procedures adopted
knowledge and orientation to different activities	Observation techniques in motor, psychological and relational contexts to point out the different objectives of each person in the group, together with Dance Movement Therapy techniques, Laban Movement Analysis, Body Mind Centering.
Preparatiion to the activities	<p>Laboratory, shows, workshops, events: physical preparation through specific exercises, movement experimentation and performance tests through Dance Therapy techniques, Laban Movement Analysis, Body Mind Centering, Contact Improvisation, Soft Gymnastics;</p> <p>Travels: verification of the different levels of competence and autonomy achieved and preparation based on different levels of difficulty (regional, national, European) through observation techniques in the motor, psychological and relational field, both for interested people and for their families.</p>
Realization of activities	Practical organization involving all the people making part of our community.
Feedback and experience elaboration	<p>Reflection and verbal comparison in the restricted group (participants in the laboratory) and in the extended group (family, friends and volunteers) how the activity was developed, both on a practical and emotional level.</p> <p>This elaboration can be reached at verbal level, graphic-pictorial and / or using autobiographical methodologies.</p>

### Do the methods or technics belong to an already codified approach?

No. The methodology used is based on various techniques we have studied over the years. This experience and knowledge allows us to apply them in a creative way in different situations and in relation to the needs of individuals and the group.

### Are the methods or technics innovative?

All the methodologies used are based on an active approach with respect to the person, taking in consideration the different processing times, taking into consideration the limits without stigmatizing, which points to the valorization of each one resources on a relational and personal level, in view of personal growth towards new levels of autonomy and self-esteem, with a consequent improvement of quality of life at personal level and in the environmental context (community).

*Please, try to reflect on the experience you are narrating in relation to some key aspects listed below...*

Sports As Community Development	
<b>A) Emerging and enhancement of a community's resources throughout sports:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do the experience here described supported the emersion and enhancement</li> </ul>	Yes. we noticed that once you have set up the work on the bases described above, the project it feeds

<p>of any community's resource?</p>	<p>itself by favoring the multiplication of good practices to increasing levels.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the community's resources related to sports and physical activities emerged and enhanced thanks to the project-activities?</li> </ul>	<p>The main resources can be described with the following sentences: "It can be done" and "I can do it". It includes the potentialities of change and the affirmation of each individual as a unique individual and precious for what he is. No more efforts to homologate with the norm but being able to express their own potentiality in an original way, while respecting social rules. This explanation is valid both at individual and family level continuing to expand into wider social contexts</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the territory's resources that the project-activity have enhanced?</li> </ul>	<p>The possibility to look at diversity as a resource and not as something to fight or to have pity.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which are the resources that should be developed?</li> </ul>	<p>Consolidating this concept, expanding stakeholders. At a practical level, the possibility to eliminate architectural barriers to facilitate the move on the territory of the city regional and national; at a human level, the possibility to overcome mental barriers, pre-concepts and prejudices.</p>
<p><b><i>B) Active involvement of the citizens in promoting the community's well-being throughout sports:</i></b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent in this experience/project, sports and physical activity became an element of involvement for the community members, ensuring their active participation?</li> </ul>	<p>The first time we saw this possibility was during a dance session with some choreographies. The public did not know that on the scene there would be people with disabilities. After an initial astonishment the spectators made a warm applause and out of the theatre they stopped us saying that for the first time they had reflected on how people with disabilities could be seen differently, precisely as persons. From then we realized that "we could do it" and whenever we go on stage with a show or we propose a workshop we reach an increasing number of people who in turn become stakeholders and multipliers of good practices.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the project supported the emersion of the community's needs and desires in relation to sports?</li> </ul>	<p>Yes. We are now starting to enlarge our proposal involving families with their own activity, a dedicated story, so that they can perceive more and more the importance of the movement for personal benefit, so that they can take care of themselves and experiment in first person the idea of "it can be done/I can do it".</p>

	<p>Gradually this level of consolidation and increase of activity will give possibility to expand to people close to families and outside people, thus promoting the spread of good practice at territorial level.</p>
<p><b>C) How can sports help developing community's skills:</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did sports became a learning occasion for the community?</li> </ul>	<p>Yes. Sport and motor activity are a very special learning tool precisely because they are lived through the body and are, therefore, immediately an integral part of the person.</p>

## Impact

**What are the benefit of this specific sporting practice on the communities?** (in terms of development, social inclusion, skills learning, physical benefits, etc.)

Through dance we have the opportunity to communicate and make visible the possibility of integrating differences into different areas, to see them as a resource. For example, we have created workshops in various contexts (students of Physiotherapy of La Sapienza University of Rome, students of Psychomotricity of IPSE in Viterbo, teachers and dance movement therapists of various schools, dancers, parents of disabled children, educators etc. ) where boys with "disabilities" were teaching, showing and also explaining the exercise that was to be proposed. "Because I know and they do not know it" as Noemi, one of the dancers of the Company, says. This has a great impact on the people minds, of those who attend the workshops because it is a complete overturn because in this case the one who is seen as disabled is in reality so able to help you become it!

**What are the benefit of this specific sporting practice on individuals?**

Certainly an increase in self-esteem and autonomy. Feeling able to do many different things, dancing with an audience that applauds you because you've been good, to know new towns and people speaking a different language, communicate by dancing and sharing deep sensations and emotions, show and teach exercises to other people "because I know it and they do not know it ".All this brings a net improvement in the quality of life of each individual.

**What are the benefit of this specific sporting practice on families?**

Seeing a greater autonomy in their children, a greater autonomy of scenic space, enthusiasm in participating in different activities, allows families to start to "let go" a little bit all what disability involves for parents. It also opens a window in taking greater care of oneself as well. Motor activity is a special channel for everyone exactly because it passes through the body and allows it to work on muscle tension, respiratory relaxation and articulation, to join a greater psycho-physical benefit.

This graduality varies from family to family, but those who enter more into this view, becomes in turn a multiplier of good practice, helping and supporting also those who make efforts to think to himself, and to his own life in a different way.

**What are the benefit of the specific discipline on society?**

Our shows are proposed not only in social contexts, but also and above all by participating in events, shows of various type and in the official theatre circuits. This allows us also to reach people who are not closely related to the world of disability or who have an idea that was not verified in reality. Quite often it happens that these people approach this idea of integration and social inclusion in a different way, as a knowledge of other people, who have different abilities, this does not mean less or more, negative or positive. Not on a quantitative bases, but instead on a qualitative basis. In the diversity there is richness, variety, possibility of change.

## COMMENTS by the researcher

### **Any strength or weakness points in our opinion:**

The project so framed and started has considerable strengths. There is a need for major support from the institutions and a work in synergy with them in order to promote the development and dissemination of good practice.

### **Relevant aspects emerged during the interview** (any obstacle, discovering, learnings, etc.)

The emphasis on the resources respecting each one's limits ("It can be done / I can do it") could also be applied in other contexts, not just within disability area.

## ATTACHMENTS

### **References, as articles, links, etc.**

#### **Articles:**

<http://promosaik.blogspot.it/2017/05/una-compagnia-della-mia-misura.html>

<http://promosaik.blogspot.it/2017/05/una-compagnia-della-mia-misura.html>

<http://www.artnoise.it/?p=8276>

**Link YouTube:** some examples of networked videos:

#### **Performances:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I7ImiD-R9M>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnh5rmqXbG8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Miy-xTifl7c>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0VGKoMMYwc>

#### **Workshop and more:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VT47wGDk4z4>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbV\\_o00XwSY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbV_o00XwSY)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEXIWNVVI0g>

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[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mSdMFB\\_S-Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mSdMFB_S-Q)

### **Photos**

<https://www.facebook.com/CompagniaDellaMiaMisura/>

[www.lamiamisura.it](http://www.lamiamisura.it)

### **Other materials**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wUXqn7zORg>

**Testimonials** (i.e. interviews to participants, families, stakeholders, etc.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GwBrij8tZKk&t=12s>

Video interviews.