



Creativity Festival for disabled persons, "Creativity without barriers" (Poland)

Summary

The "Creativity Festival for disabled persons - Creativity without barriers" is an annual event organised by the NGO T•cza (Rainbow). It is an event gathering all the associations working with disabled people together with the public authorities of the Szczecin region. The festival is a creative event encouraging disabled children and teenagers to show their potential and skills. The artistic activities empower the participants and provide them with a role to play within the social and artistic life of the region. Moreover, the Festival raises the awareness of the local population about the issue of disability.

The project

Disabled people have to deal with life problems and face many barriers which hamper their social integration. The "Creativity Festival for disabled persons - Creativity without barriers" is an annual event organised by the NGO T•cza (Rainbow) where all associations working with disabled people in the Szczecin region get together with the public authorities. The aim of the Festival is to foster the empowerment and social integration of disabled people, especially children and teenagers, and release their creative potential.

Sector(s) covered

Arts and Creative Industry

Other sectors covered:

Society

Education/Training/Lifelong learning

Business and Entrepreneurship

Public Administration

The main issues faced by disabled people in Poland are:

- Lack of social initiatives for the integration of disabled people and their families;
- The difficulties experienced by disabled people in realising their aspiration in social, cultural and professional life;
- Lack of financial resources to support disabled people;
- Limited knowledge amongst disabled people about available support and services.

Approach

The festival consist of the following activities:

- **A craft fair** – stands with crafts made by disabled people (such as Christmas decorations, ceramics, paintings, collages, and so on) have been organised. These products are sold and the money gathered is used to organise support actions for disabled people;



- **Concert and theatre** – performances are given by Polish artists and disabled children and teenagers. The performances involve singing, dancing and theatre plays; and
- **An information-counselling point** – where disabled people receive information about work opportunities and employers learn about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

The festivals organised in 2006, 2007 and 2008 have been attended by a wide range of associations dealing with disabled people, disabled people themselves (children, youth and adults), artists, regional authorities and the wider public.

Element of innovation – the process

The Festival stimulates creative thinking through artistic performances realised by disabled people. These performances unleash the hidden artistic skills of people with disability to the wider public. The event empowers the participants by giving them the possibility to participate actively within the social and artistic life of the region.

The Festival brings people together, creates bonds and connections and challenges stereotypes and discriminations that still persist within the society.

Moreover the event gives rise to a creative space of debate and exchange of opinions between disabled people, the wider public and NGOs, and provides these groups with networking opportunities.

The Festival has been promoted widely through local media (local radio and television) as well through the websites of the public authorities involved.

Key successes

(outcomes, results, impacts)

The number of beneficiaries of the first edition of the festival (2006) was impressive: 23 organisations (associations, NGOs supporting disabled) involved, 152 disabled children and teenagers and 85 disabled adults actively participated and a total of over 43,000 people attended the event.

Feedback from the participants remains very positive for the 2007 and 2008 editions. According to a survey, 91% of the participants stated that the activities carried out were well-grounded, and 97% thought that the festival improved the social image of the beneficiaries within the local environment.

Challenges

The main challenge has been to convince NGOs and organisations dealing with disabled people to actively participate in the development and realisation of the event. In order to encourage that, an award for the best project was organised. To increase attendance, free access to the activities of the Festival was guaranteed.

Transferability and sustainability

The Festival is a sustainable initiative as it received the support of local and regional public authorities. Since 2006, it is organised each year before



Christmas. The initiative will be continued in the future, including a wider range of stakeholders. The festival has gained popularity as well as funding from public bodies participating in the event.

Special Highlights

The events organised by the NGO T•cza (Rainbow) targeted the elimination of common stereotypes of disabled people and discrimination towards them. The Festival stimulated the creativity of disabled people through their involvement within artistic performances, which empowered the participants and gave them the possibility to participate actively within the social and artistic life of the region.

Moreover, the Festival set up a creative space of debate and exchange of opinions between disabled people and the wider public. It also created an innovative exchange platform for NGOs and associations and provided networking opportunities.

Key characteristics

General purpose of the practice	The practice stimulates innovative/creative behaviours in people and implements an innovative/creative solution to society problems
Target group	Disabled children, young persons and adults, public administration and NGOs working with disabled persons, the wide public, all ages
Type of learning	Non-formal
Level of implementation	Regional
Funding	Public
Time frame	The first Festival has been organised in 2006. It takes place every year since
Leading organisations	T•cza association

Further information

Website of the project

www.tecza.org.pl

Contact details

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