



#3 Women Swimming pool

Leading organisation: UISP Torino APS

Country: Italy

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Type of discrimination

- Gender Discrimination in Sports
- Religious Discrimination in Sports

Target group

Women from 5 to 100 years old. Italians and different background or religions

Problem/Solution

In 2009 UISP Turin received a request from women dressing hijab to have the possibility to swim without going against their religious dictates. This practice shows an opportunity for all women who want to practice swimming without having any reason for discomfort due to the presence of men, and to feel safe to express themselves. Moreover, it is organised at a time when women are more willing to think about themselves - Sunday morning. It gives an opportunity to woman to have a space dedicated and attentive to their needs and particularities.

Objective

- Including women dressing hijab, who are unable to attend normal swimming courses due to religious dictates.
- Include women of all nationalities, ages, disabilities, religious and political beliefs to sport activities
- Doing activities and thanks to this, getting to know each other with all the differences, the habits, the difficulties.
- Defining a point of support, of mutual aid, especially during the pandemic period.
- Over the last two years, the women's pool has opened its doors to Syrian women who have come to Turin thanks to the humanitarian corridors and is ready to welcome new emergencies.

Description of activity

- 2 hours of swimming lessons for beginners and advanced swimmers, free swimming, aqua aerobics each Sunday morning
- Activities are planned respecting the women's need (eg mothers and daughters same hour in different courses), creation of a kindergarten assistance to give opportunity to mothers to swim.

- Each woman must have a medical certificate to be able to practice, UISP provides female medical staff and a cultural mediator are present.

Results

Initially, it was important to succeed in creating an atmosphere of trust and mutual desire to overcome ideological barriers together, considering different needs and helping to increase knowledge among the members. Without the women's trust in us, everything would have been solved in a crude swimming course. Having gained trust, the real goal began: the exchange of ideas, problems and solutions, initially linked exclusively to the swimming aspect and then, little by little, the exchange became more intense, more intimate. Thanks to the hours spent in the pool and the parties organised where each woman brought her own food or food that another woman might like (couscous, pizza, vegetarian food), the women were able to share experiences, ideas, and discuss different ideologies.

The inclusion of some particularities, the girl with a different ability, the Iranian woman who has removed her veil, the Syrian refugees, meant that the "sisterhood" was born and became a real support and help group. Thanks to a whatsapp group, important information was exchanged during the pandemic: food parcels were collected, information on how to get to or return to the country of origin, city solidarity points, and help and support for women victims of violence.

Top tips

- Exclusion of male presence from any place of sport centre, only female personnel
- Find a pool that did not have visibility from the outside.
- Listen to different needs and problems and find a solution together.

More

Web site: www.uisp.it/torino

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_zhBfHCrlU



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