

REPORT ON THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

"Inclusion of the deaf sports community in academic education and academic sport"

The project was implemented in 2020-2023 by the Institute of Physical Education of the Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz. The project is led by Dr. Adam Szulc, who is the author of books and scientific articles on the sport of the deaf.

The project was financed by the Ministry of Education and Science.

The project partners are:

- Polish Deaf Sports Association,
- Academic Sports Association,
- Polish Association of the Deaf,
- European Deaf Sports Organization,
- Glusi.TV television.

The purpose of the Project is to increase the interest of athletes in academic education so that they can participate in competitions together with hearing students, and in the future become deaf coaches in clubs for deaf athletes.

The project investigated the interest of deaf athletes in pursuing higher education and academic sport. Scientists from the Kazimierz Wielki University on Bydgoszcz met with deaf athletes from sports clubs all over Poland and participated in 10 training camps of the Polish national team: football, volleyball, basketball, sailing, swimming. In total, about 100 athletes from Polish representation and nearly 200 players from sports clubs took part in the meetings.

During meetings with deaf athletes, deaf athletes were presented with opportunities to continue their education at higher education institutions, as well as to participate in academic sport.

There are six Academies of Physical Education in Poland with around 25,000 students. In addition, many universities in Poland educate physical education teachers, trainers and physiotherapists. During the meetings with the athletes, the scientists from the Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz put special emphasis on the possibility of studying by deaf athletes. Deaf athletes who are studying or will be studying can become coaches in sports clubs for the deaf. Their knowledge will be based on modern knowledge of human physiology, biomechanics, theory of training and cooperation with hearing coaches, academic teachers and the Academic Sports Association.

A very important role in the development of sport in Poland is played by the Academic Sports Association (AZS). AZS has about 30,000 members - mostly students, associated in 200 sports clubs throughout Poland. Every year, the Academic Sports Association organizes Polish Academic Championships, which promote sport among the academic community. Over 15,000 students from over 150 universities from all over Poland participate in the championships.

The best student players compete in the European Universities Championships, the World University Championships, as well as in the largest sports events for students: summer and winter World University Games.

In the academic year 2018/2019, the Office for Persons with Disabilities of the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn conducted a survey entitled „Deaf and hard of hearing students at a university” on the still existing problems with the education of the deaf in higher education and how to make further changes in order to adapt the study conditions to the needs of students. In addition, an attempt was made to show the tasks of the Offices for Persons with Disabilities, i.e. how the employees of the Offices try to help and understand Deaf and hard of hearing students to facilitate their access and full participation in academic life. Only 9 out of 28 surveyed universities in Poland completed the questionnaires. The total number of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students at 9 universities was 164 people. In total, in the academic year 2018/2019, about 140,000 students studied at these universities, which means that people with hearing disabilities account for about 0.1% of all students. At the same time, the surveyed universities do not have information on the degree of hearing loss, only a certificate of disability marked with the symbol 03-L - voice, speech and hearing disorders. The surveys show that these students most often choose majors related to finance, i.e. economics, finance and accounting, as well as law. Three people chose tourism and recreation, and one person chose dietetics and physiotherapy. None of the people chose physical education¹.

W ramach projektu „Włączenie środowiska sportowców niesłyszących w edukację akademicką i sport akademicki” pracownicy Uniwersytetu w Bydgoszczy oprócz wykładów wykonali badania:

- ankietowe dotyczące sytuacji rodzinnej, edukacji i sportu,
- sprawności fizycznej sportowców niesłyszących, zbadano m. in. poziom tkanki tłuszczowej, szybkość biegu na dystansie 20 m oraz wysokość wyskoku.

¹ „Deaf and hard of hearing students at a university” - Office for Persons with Disabilities, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, 2019.

SURVEY RESULTS

67% of the surveyed deaf athletes attended a kindergarten for the hearing, and 23% attended a kindergarten for the deaf. At a later stage of education, 50% of the respondents attended a primary school for the deaf or a boarding school for the deaf. In the case of secondary school education, the number of people who continued their education in a school for the hearing decreased to 37%. 63% of the respondents attended schools for the deaf. After high school, 32% of adult deaf athletes went on to college. 46% of current high school students declare their willingness to start university.

The fear of continuing education in higher education may be due to the fact that 62% of deaf athletes had difficulties at school. Almost 70% of parents of deaf athletes do not encourage their children to study. Only 18% of parents of deaf athletes graduated from college. The majority of parents have vocational education.

Another factor influencing the small number of people taking up studies may be the awareness that during studies they should demonstrate independent reading of books. As many as 10% of the respondents said that they hated reading books, 12% indicated that they did not like reading because they did not understand the meaning of many words in books. 62% of athletes said they like to read but rarely read books and only 15% of people said they like reading a lot. It should be noted that in the last 6 months 33% of respondents have not read any book, and 32% have read only 1 book. The research shows that the Polish language is a foreign language for deaf Polish children (in terms of the method of acquisition) because sign language is the first language they use and become proficient in it. Theories about the free assimilation of the national language by a deaf child only through the written code are not true. Writing is secondary to speech and mastering it is not learning a language, but learning how to write it².

21% of deaf athletes declare that they will encourage their children to study. 77% of respondents will not persuade their children to study.

Continuing higher education (after high school) is associated with the need to establish new contacts with the environment of hearing people. The small number of deaf people entering university may be affected by the fact that 62% of those surveyed were mistreated because of their hearing loss, and more than half of those surveyed admit that they have trouble meeting new people. When asked about examples of discrimination in high school, deaf athletes indicated the following examples: ridiculing wearing a hearing aid, calling names - knowing that the respondent will not hear it, ridiculing slurred speech and misspelling words in statements, lack of friendly help.

² M. Januszewicz, M. Jura, J. Kowal, Everyone has the right to education. The right of the deaf to access language and education. Deaf education (conference materials). Commissioner for Human Rights.. Warsaw 2014.

37% of respondents admit that the use of a hearing aid only partially helps in understanding voice communication, and as many as 23% believe that a hearing aid does not help in communication.

The fear of studying may result from the fact that in offices and public places, deaf people encounter problems that make it difficult to settle various matters - as many as 44% of respondents struggle with such problems.

RESULTS OF BODY COMPOSITION AND PHYSICAL FITNESS TESTS

Fitness tests were carried out using professional equipment for testing physical fitness. The results of the tests in the form of averages are presented separately for athletes training only in clubs and for Polish representation - separately for women and men.

- Age of women training in sports clubs - 25 years, men - 24 years,
- Age of women from the Polish national team - 25 years, and men - 26 years,
- Body height of women training in sports clubs - 165 cm, and men - 177 cm,
- Body height of women from the Polish national team - 170 cm, and men - 182 cm,
- The amount of body fat of women training in sports clubs - 29%, and men - 17%.
- The amount of body fat of women from the Polish national team - 22%, and men - 14%,
- Time to run over a distance of 20 meters: women training in sports clubs - 3.90 seconds, men - 3.30 seconds. Women from the Polish national team - 3.5 seconds, and men - 3.20 seconds,
- Jump height: women training in sports clubs - 25 cm, men - 34 cm. The jump height of women from the Polish national team - 28 cm, and men - 37 cm.

SPORT RESULTS OF THE POLISH REPRESENTATION DURING DEAFLYMPICS IN BRAZIL in 2022

- Swimming - 4 gold medals, 12 silver medals, 5 bronze medals;
- Athletics – 2 gold medals, 4 silver medals, 4 bronze medals;
- Cycling – 2 gold medals, 4 silver medals;
- Judo – 2 silver medals;
- Women's football – silver medal;
- Women's basketball – bronze medal;
- Table tennis – bronze medal;
- Men's basketball – fourth place;
- Men's volleyball – fifth place;
- Women's volleyball – sixth place;
- Men's soccer – eighth place.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The above research shows that the most efficient deaf athletes are appointed to the Polish national team. Poles participating in the Deaf Games in Brazil won a total of 42 medals. The experience of deaf athletes gained during international competitions, e.g. European Deaf Championships, World Deaf Championships, or during the Deaflympics, is an important basis for gathering sports and coaching knowledge.

According to the authors of the project, parents, schools and educational centres should to a greater extent mobilize deaf athletes to learn, take the matriculation examination, and finally to study at universities.

Deaf players do not decide to continue their studies due to learning problems as well as bad experiences in contacts with the environment of hearing people. Many deaf athletes tried to participate in training in clubs for the hearing in their early youth, unfortunately, negative experiences in contacts with peers-athletes and with coaches in hearing clubs stopped the competitive development of deaf athletes who were content with training in clubs for the deaf. In addition, deaf athletes do not have family support that would encourage them to study or participate in academic sports. Regardless of continuing education at university, greater emphasis should be placed on cooperation with the Polish Deaf Sports Association and the Academic Sports Association, then additional experience gained in training with hearing peers would have a positive impact on the level of training and achieved sports results.

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