

Sport Ireland (DAF) Funded Disability Gymnastics Development - Summary

Background

In 2016/2017 Gymnastics Ireland was awarded funding through Sport Ireland and the Dormant Account Fund (DAF) with the specific brief of developing opportunities for people with disabilities to access gymnastics.

The plan had two specific objectives:

1. To create a brand for Gymnastics Irelands Disability Programme - GymABLE, create awareness around disability gymnastics and begin the development of a National Disability Programme.
2. To engage with members clubs and provide support and funding to help the development of club disability inclusion programmes - The Club Inclusion Project.

National Disability Programme

Gymnastics Irelands GymABLE brand was developed and launched in November 2016. The key message of the brand is accessibility to gymnastics and a positive focus on everyone's ABILITY to engage with gymnastics i.e. Inclusive Gymnastics.

Some of the areas of development in the GymABLE Programme included...

- ✓ **National Disability Groups:** Gymnastics Ireland engaged with a wide variety of National disability groups to directly promote disability gymnastics
- ✓ **CARA Inclusion Awards:** GI were runners up at the CARA National Awards for Inclusive NGB
- ✓ **Irish Sports Industry Awards:** GI were also shortlisted at the Irish Sports Industry Awards (February 2018) for the GymABLE programme.
- ✓ **Coach Education:** Gymnastics Ireland successfully licenced a gymnastic-specific Disability Awareness Module from British Gymnastics and ran the first module for coaches in December 2017.
- ✓ **National Disability Day:** The inaugural Gymnastics Ireland National Disability Day was held in the National Gymnastics Training Centre (NGTC). This day was to provide the clubs involved in the club inclusion project and their participants with a fun-filled gymnastic session led by a disability expert as well as the thrill of training on the National Training centre (and using the pit!). This event also facilitated the production our GymABLE promotional video, the objective of which will be to showcase the fantastic work being done by clubs around the county and to promote to everyone how accessible our sport it.

- ✓ **National Ambassadors:** From the clubs involved in the Club Inclusion Project, three gymnasts were chosen as Gymnastics Ireland Ambassadors to 'Tell Their Stories' to help motivate and inspire others with disabilities to take part in gymnastics. The three gymnasts chosen were:
 - Aoife Kinsella - Coolmine GC
 - Niamh Moriarty - Trojan GC
 - Scarlett Beecher - Cork Acro GC
- ✓ **Online Resources:** the development of disability-related resources commenced, which includes:
 - Disability Policy
 - Membership Form Template
 - AAI Screening Resource
 - Disability Organisation Contacts

Club Inclusion Project

Project details and expression of interest forms were sent to all member clubs (April 2016), and from 12 clubs that expressed interest, 6 were recruited to take part in the project.

The two key parts of the project for each club were to

- i. engage with a local disability group of their choice and
- ii. link up with their Local Sports Partnership (LSP)

The main objective was then to work together to develop and run a specific disability gymnastics club inclusion programme within the club structure.

Each club developed their own programme to suit their club's needs, set up and current structure.

The 6 clubs recruited were:

- Coolmine GC
- Cork Acro GC
- Ennis GC
- Excel GC
- Trojan GC
- Wexford GC

Funding

Each club was provided with funds to support the running of their new disability programme which included coaching fees and venue hire costs, as well as one-year membership for each participant involved.

Coaches were also provided with funding for training/ education through the CARA Disability Inclusion Training Course and the new GI Disability Awareness Module licenced from British Gymnastics. Places on this Gymnastics Disability Course were also offered to other coaches in other member clubs.

Events

The final part of the project culminated in the first Gymnastics Ireland National Disability Day, held on Saturday 13th December in the National Gymnastics Training Centre (NGTC). All clubs and their participants were invited to the NGTC for a fun-filled gymnastic session.

Ambassadors

From the clubs involved, three gymnasts were chosen as Gymnastics Ireland Ambassadors to 'Tell Their Stories' to help to motivate and inspire others with disabilities to take part in gymnastics.

The girls gymnasts chosen were:

- Aoife Kinsella - Coolmine GC
- Niamh Moriarty - Trojan GC
- Scarlett Beecher - Cork Acro GC



Reflection and Feedback

All clubs and coaches were asked to provide feedback on their experiences, including their reflections on how the project went for them as a club. This information was compiled as Case Studies for other member clubs to provide motivation and support to develop similar programmes.

END