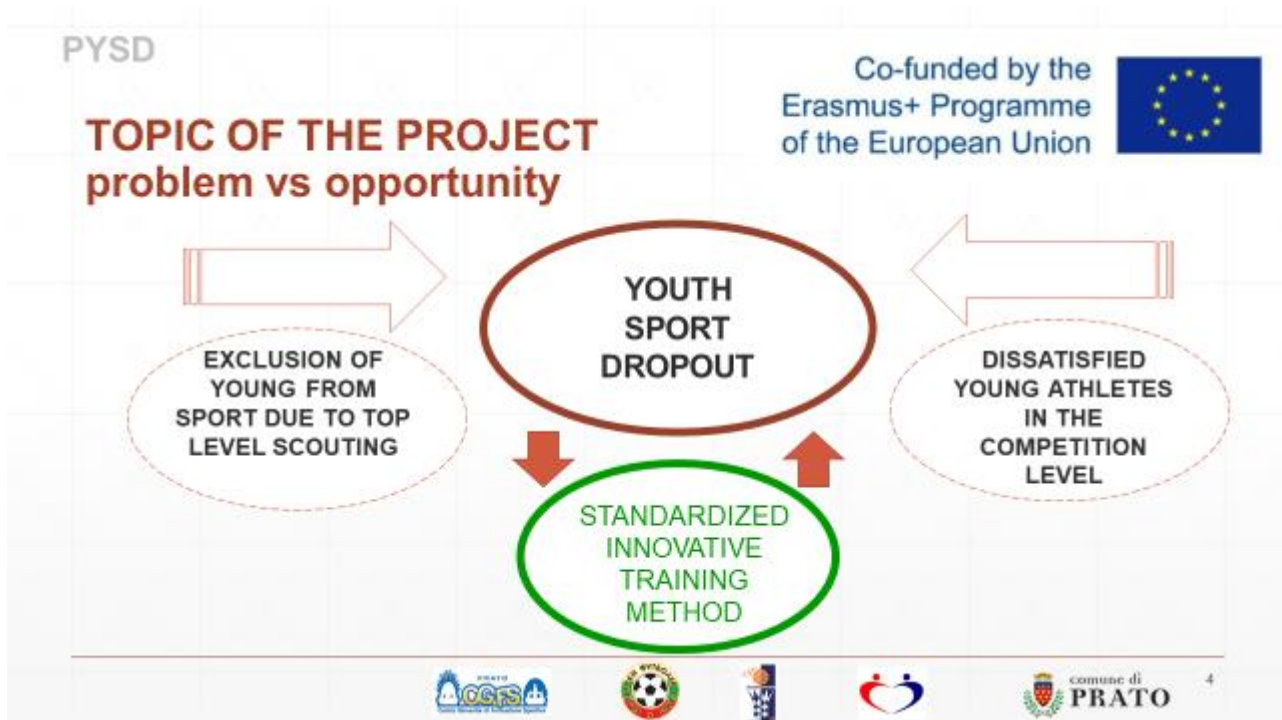


CGFS BEST PRACTICE OF PREVENTION SPORT BURNOUT AND DROPOUT



CGFS context

CGFS sport model works with children and no professional young athletes, because the mission of the association is the promotion of a sport as key element of healthy lifestyle of children and future citizens.

Swimming is one of the most important sport CGFS offers.

Since 2009 CGFS is developing a teaching sportive model preventing the sports dropout of young people about the swimming activities. Every year, there are 2800 children which participate to CGFS's swimming courses and only a little part of them undertake the federal competitive practice, due to the current tough scouting. Towards the problem solving, CGFS established specific swimming groups, called in Italian language GS "Gruppo sportivo" in order to prevent the water sports dropout, adopting a different method of athletes involvement.

The range identified is from 12 to 19 years old, just since few years the range is wider and the sportive groups are open also for the children from 9 to 12 years old. This unwanted and involuntary development is, despite the positive appearance, a negative consequence of the current local federal competition level system that indeed anticipates the range of age on which the selection of swimming professional level takes place.

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Number of athletes involved in GS

Swimming: 105

- N. 70 young athletes from 12 years old
- N. 35 under 12 years old

Finswimming: 80

This group includes also a little portion, about 10 young professional Finswimmers, which use the same methodological approach except for the frequency of the training.

The selection:

Internal CGFS selection: the mainly tool is the *communication between sport educators of GS and other CGFS swimmers sport educators*.

The educators of GS at the end of the season scout new participants for the future sport season in accordance with the mission of preventing sport dropout. The scouting focuses on the traditional frame of basically swimming activities, where the teenagers, after many years of swimming practice, could lose the motivation due to, above all, the lack of skills, capabilities and incompatible age to be involved in competitive championships.

This process of scouting involves the swimming educators, and the young people through a simple talking after the swimming lessons. The questions that the educators of Gs groups used are very simple and in general focused on the motivation and expected results by the athletes.

The attractive proposal of taking part a new group, where a potential burn out young people can put in practice their capabilities and where they could have a possibility of satisfaction, is in general a strong motivating factor in this frame, outside the federal competition level.

The system of selection isn't well-standardized, but the network of communication between sport teachers and the large pool of participants in swimming courses is well organized and it is successful, even if we would like to have the perception of the number of young people that we aren't able to intercept in the process.

The steps are:

- The identification of a burn out ongoing phenomenon among young people of CGFS swimming courses at the end of learning process.
- Creation of new sport and human relationships for the athletes within a new group and grounded on new motivations for the young people
- Communication with the parents of the young people involved.

In the internal scouting process, the first and the second steps are the mainly key points.

External selection: the mainly tool is communication with parents of burn out young people and young people themselves, involved in professional federal competition swimming clubs

This process is more complex, because more subjects, more ambitions and different aspects play an important role.

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The communication between CGFS sport educators and trainers of competition level team is sufficiently organized, because in many cases the trainers are the same and share a similar educational approach. In this case the step of communication are organized in the same way of the internal selection:

1. Between CGFS GS trainers and with clubs coaches.
2. Between CGFS GS trainers and young people potentially affected
3. Between CGFS GS trainers and parents, to which the mainly scopes of GS group is explained.

When the communication between coaches is not clear the step could change the order and put first sometimes the communication with the athletes and sometimes the communication with parents.

Also in this case the system of selection doesn't have a defined application protocol, but can be considered a solid good practice. However the goal is the improvement of a standard system with different actors involved. In this case the participation of the young people is less easy, but we have a good rate of successful.

CGFS approach:

The keyword of the approach are: motivation and funny, awareness, responsibility, sport and lifeskills

- **The training sessions** are organized on weekly basis, in order to have a total of 3-6 hours of water training every week; the frequency is higher than traditional basic sport techniques learning process, but it is lower than a high competition swimming level where the pressure of several workouts is very strong.
- **The Planning of training session** is implemented with young people: at the beginning of the years, the coaches share with the group and with young people involved the steps of the process. In this phase the young athletes play an active role, because all people involved fix the expected results of the group and the individual goals that can be different from the standard awards of the traditional competition level. Moreover, there could be even different expected results for each individual. Generally, GS groups identify a technical award and a psychological goal. The group check with the trainers, the trend of the training dedicating one session every two or three months where they discuss together about the rate of satisfaction during the workouts.

The young people are involved in this process of learning with reference to their age, through different games or tools or strategies of teaching, which are proposed several times during the years.

Below some example:

- One of the most successful activities is "One-day teacher" experience for each young athlete
- Video making during the training with cameras placed into the water and jointed analysis of swimming improvements to be implemented
- One hour every three months is dedicated to free-talking (e.g. school issues) between athletes and coaches, in order to improve the human factor and relationship within the training group.

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- One hour every month is addressed to no swimming training but to other sport exercises.
- Twice per year, the parents are involved in swimming relay race with their children, in the championship.

These activities are easier for the young people, which are accustomed to this specific exercise and are attending the group for some time. About the new engaged profiles, the communication and the follows tools used are very important to develop this process of awareness and identity:

- **Alternative training pattern:** meeting with sports VIP, national athletes and trainers, experts in the fields of nutrition and psychology, sports health and safety; every years, the group organizes an open interview with a sport doctor. A recurrent experience proposed every year is the training session with dog lifeguards, in order to sensitize the young people about safety rules in the water.
- **Multi-day sportive trips** to encourage and strengthen the young people participation and sharing;
- **Soft Sport Tourism** through journeys to help the young people, and their families, to know and test sports national innovative realities; (a frequent one is to Padova by Y40 the deepest swimming pool in the world.)
- **Summer camps** about dissemination of theoretical and practical awareness of all swimming disciplines played also in outdoor contexts in touch with natural environment; in July there is the summer camp where the GS young athletes are involved. They keep training after the standard season, improving the knowledge of other different water sport: diving, training in the sea, kayak, synchro and water polo.

The transversal competence and multi-field capabilities of the trainers are key factors, since the specialists and experts involved are not only “trainers” with some technical applied skills, instead they actually represent proper sportive educator tutors, who work in the schools and kindergartens in close cooperation with other teachers, and who lead to the promotion of sports as way of life.

The experimentation in the swimming field has led CGFS to achieve excellent results, even well beyond expectations. In many cases, in addition to preventing the dropout phenomenon, the activities that have been put in place have led young people to achieve superior sports results than those achieved in the “traditional” competitive context. In general, the perception of operators is that of a general improvement of the approach to the real values of sport not only by young people, but also by coaches and the family context.