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Zero Waste Blue is a project that, thanks to the involvement of local communities assisted by public and private stakeholders, has the mission of organizing sustainable zero-impact events in areas that are considered “fragile”. The goal of Zero Waste Blue is to organize sporting events in fragile areas (historic centers, parks / nature reserves), considerably reducing the environmental impact, but increasing the social and economic benefits for local communities. In the Italy-Croatia cross-border area, for years there have been several mass sporting events that attract thousands of people creating an enormous use of water and energy, pollution and food waste, often causing irreparable effects to the environment. Furthermore, these events rarely focus on ensuring an access to everyone, including people with disabilities. On the other hand, large-scale sporting events that attract a lot of tourists have a huge media impact that is able to enhance positive results, local heritage and knowledge of sustainability.

The creation and differentiation of Zero Waste Blue is due to the desire to increase the natural and cultural value of the territories, making the destinations more attractive considering social inclusion and involvement of all the ages, sharing methodologies and cooperation strategies for the realization of sustainable sporting events, understood as “laboratories” within which public and private actors work together on innovative solutions with the main aim to reduce the social and environmental impact.

The main intent is to exploit the potential of natural assets (parks and protected areas, lakes, forests, beaches) and cultural attractions (historical centers, monuments), in terms of inclusiveness and usability (disadvantaged / with special needs / elderly) in order to increase tourist flows throughout the year and not only during the high season periods. The solutions implemented in the project can be used in different types of sporting events (marathon, bicycle, nordic walking) which assume strategic importance for the development of territories and social inclusiveness.

THE CURRENT CONTEXT

In recent years, from every point of view, accessible tourism has become a social need, a tool to allow and guarantee to people with specific needs to travel and stay in a totally practical and functional way.

Within this context, the numbers that emerge are absolutely positive, giving hope to the nearest future increasingly based on accessibility and creation of For All events.

According to a CENSIS report (2014), there will be 4.8 million people with specific needs in Italy in 2020, destined to become 6.7 in 2040. This projection has calculated the increase of accessible tourism in our country thanks to a classification on general accessibility levels, evaluating the current one as a level 3 on a scale from 1 to 10.

The first step to be reached will be level 5 where many municipalities - in addition to those already considered accessible - will reach a level of excellence followed by others that will begin to adapt.

At this level, in addition, the communication of the offer of accessible tourism in Italy must begin to be more structured and organized in consideration of the services that will be offered.

Subsequently, the second step will focus on reaching level 8 of accessibility, favoring the emergence of some incremental factors such as a longer stay of tourists that have already been acquired, identification of Italian cities or places for conferences of international importance about disability and, to conclude, identify Italy or some areas, as an ideal destination for tourists with specific needs.

Considering the important union that may exist between accessible tourism and sporting events, it is essential to analyze the potential of this segment of tourism by consulting the data of ENIT (National Tourism Agency).

Considering some data concerning the tourist flow linked to the “sporting” holiday, what emerges is:

- more than 10 million trips and over 60 million overnight stays in Italian accommodation facilities
- estimated turnover of 6.3 billion euros
- 1.5 billion euro is the expense dedicated in Italy to water sports such as sailing, canoeing, diving, etc.
- 1 Italian out of 4 chooses holiday destination also by virtue of the sports offer
- there are about 27 million Italians who practice sports (20 million sport lovers, 6.5 million amateurs and over 10 thousand professionals).



WHAT IS AN ACCESSIBLE EVENT?

Nowadays there is no system or certification to accredit an accessible event, thus all the events that define themselves like this respond to these principles.

An event becomes accessible when it presents all the conditions (attention, services, technical and technological solutions, organization, management) suitable to allow any person, without any kind of discrimination, to know, access and interact dynamically with the initiatives and activities proposed by the event.

In other words it means an event that allows everyone, regardless of their specific needs and / or abilities, the possibility of active participation, creating a pleasant, fulfilling and satisfying experience in conditions of comfort and safety.

There are therefore three macro-themes to be analyzed when we speak about a completely accessible event:

- Structural accessibility: possibility for everyone to access, move and use places where an event takes place on an equal, inclusive and non-discriminatory basis.
- Access to the experience: possibility for everyone to participate, enjoy, communicate, understand and make the best of the proposed event.
- Access to the information: possibility for everyone to find clear, reliable and up-to-date information about the accessibility, the services and the available solutions, through communication tools usable by people with and without disabilities.

WHY ORGANIZE AN ACCESSIBLE EVENT

For Zero Waste Blue the quality of the visitors' experience is the most important part of the event.

By organizing an accessible event the cities will increase their value from the point of view of environmental protection, aiming to encourage greater involvement of public authorities, seasonally adjusting and increasing tourist flows in low-season periods, stimulating the adoption of requirements for sustainability, spreading a behavioral change and raising awareness among organizations and tourist facilities in event destinations. In addition, initiatives will be activated that will have to lead to greater synergy between the operators of the supply chain, leading to the promotion of sustainable and inclusive services.

An accessible sporting event is a For All event.

The For All event is based on four specific points:

- Overcome the logic of the product “dedicated” to people with disabilities; solutions that are often not functional to respond to real needs
- Overcome the logic of full regulatory compliance
- Overcome the common place for which the person with specific needs is just the person in a wheelchair
- Overcome the common place for which accessibility is just a question concerning people with specific needs and their associations

The CERTIFICATION



THE BENEFITS OF THE ZERO WASTE BLUE CERTIFICATION

The key to the success of an accessible event lies in the coherence of behavior and in the totality of the organizational, structural and productive elements of the event, set according to the full usability of all the aspects of the experience. Below

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

Improve the levels of accessibility and the opportunities for active participation; expand the catchment area of the event by exploiting positive economic impacts on the induced.

POSITIVE REPUTATION

An “accessible” event is a clear demonstration of the commitment of a territory on the topics of inclusion and the social responsibility in a wide sense of the term.

GREATER AWARENESS

Great system to unhinge preconceptions, prejudices and false fears toward the diversity and the disability promoting good ideas and good practices that translate progressively in attentions, approaches and behavior more and more inclusive and equal.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE QUALITY OF THE EVENT

To achieve an event accessible according to the approach For All it means to improve the overall quality of the manifestation as what is accessible is, in general, more comfortable and easy for all.

SOCIAL BENEFITS

An event accessible for all can represent a benefit for the surrounding territory, creating solutions and opportunity that can improve the accessibility and the usability temporarily, or rather, permanently (for example, the arrangement of a fixed ramp in a square or a mobile ramp for the entry into a Café can definitely be positive heritage which the event leave on the territory.

CULTURAL INNOVATION

The commitment in the sustainability practices contributes to promote techniques and technologies, which help to use resources more efficiently.

PROPAGATION OF GOOD PRACTICES

Many of the management choices and the initiatives implemented to make an event accessible, they can also be relevant to the company's daily activities. It's important to overcome the logic of the product “dedicated” to the people with disabilities, which very often are not actually functional to respond to the real needs.

GREEN SOUL

In addition to the maximum recycling capacity of the event, the proposals will have to relate two specific points: to be paperless, therefore not using any type of paper, implementing the use of everything that is “sharing” (auto, bicycles, electric vehicles and hybrids). To be branded Zero Waste Blue increases its value from the point of view of environmental protection, aiming to encourage greater involvement of the public authorities, focusing on focusing on encouraging adoption of requirements of sustainability spreading, moreover, a behavioral change raising awareness of the organizations and the structures in the destinations of the events.



CRITERIA TO IDENTIFY AN EVENT AS ACCESSIBLE

THE LOCATION AND THE STRUCTURAL ACCESSIBILITY:

- Any presence of architectural barriers.
- All spaces open to the public must be accessible
- When possible a location inaccessible or with restricted accessibility can be improved and made available also with temporary solutions, implemented for the duration of the event.
- To foresee in particular cases where the fruition is very difficult or restricted the use of technology (live streaming, video or teleconferences rather than social media like Facebook and Twitter).

THE TECHNICAL DIRECTION AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL SECRETARIAT

- Establish profitable collaborations with technicians of the accessibility and the associations for the protection of people with disabilities.
- Toilet cleaning, the respect of the normatives and the planned dimensions
- Dedicated Services on reservation (eg. LIS interpreting services for conventions or tourist accompaniments, equipped shuttle services, etc.)

MOBILITY

- Accessible transportation and waiting areas
- Provide exceptions and specific authorizations for vehicles with disabled mark
- Guarantee the autonomy of movement of all participants in the internal movement at the event (elimination of steps and differences in level with the introduction of removables ramps, passages, gates and entrances free of bottlenecks and obstacles, avoiding revolving doors and turnstiles, proper attention to the passability of the funds avoiding disconnections, sinking grounds, holes, etc.)
- Provide an effective directional and identification signage to facilitate all the participants (solutions with text and icon side by side/integrated, proper color contrasts between text and background and use high readability parameters).

THE FITTING AND THE SERVICE

- Workstations for structurally lowered cash registers
- Agreements with reliable suppliers for alternative communication services:
- Interpretation services in Italian Sign Language;
- Subtitled systems, over-titling or real time translation of the speech/sound into captions for deaf people with texts on display in sitting points;
- Electronic Stenotyping solutions, re-speacking;
- Use of new specific technologies

SUPPLIERS AN EXHIBITORS

- Selections of suppliers sensitive and attentive to the issues of the diversity
- Definition of a protocol for the control and criticality management procedure throughout the entire life cycle of the event

CATERING AND RESTAURANT SERVICES

- Maximize diversification both with respect to food and to the method of administration
- Development of alternative to the classic gastronomic offer with sensorial experiences (close eye tasting, perfumes and odors enhancement, etc.) also in collaborations with associations for the protection of blind people, developing inclusive activities for all.
- Provide differentiated culinary proposals with attention to the dietary need of people with intolerances, allergies and specific diets
- Provide ad hoc services for children and families
- Professionally trained and prepared staff

THE INFORMATION MATERIALS AND THE GADGETS

- The promotional and the informational material of the event must be usable in multiple formats (paper, digital, MP3) and with alternative methods (braille, large print, etc).
- The information material must have characteristics of high legibility and comprehensibility (readability and legibility).
- For the readability of the text it is good to consider:
 - Type, size and characteristics of the font
 - Text size/reading distance ratio
 - Contrast between text and background, color contrast
 - Interference with the background.
- Use “highly readable” fonts (eg. ProFont, Biancoenero, EasyReading etc.), as linear as possible, with effective color contrasts and a body of the text of sufficient size to allow reading.
- As for gadgets, propose alternative methodologies that can provide
- Virtual Gadgets: discount vouchers, gift vouchers, reductions for visits to museums or purchase handicraft products
- Home made Gadgets created directly during workshops to be scheduled during the event, with the involvement of local associations for the protection of the people with disabilities and the use of recycled materials
- Solidarity Gadgets coming from social cooperatives, also for the protection of people with disabilities, indicating the reason for the choice.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

- The event website must be made accessible to everyone in accordance with the W3C certification parameters (<http://www.w3c.it/>)
- It is fundamental to guarantee the supervision of contacts in the various communication methods (telephone, mail, chat, etc.)
- Adapt to the type of communication with the prescriptions of the UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities that uses the term “person with disability” or, alternatively, visitor with “specific needs”.

SAFETY IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

- Have emergency procedures with specific indications for the safety of disabled persons, the elderly, children and their evacuation, organizing an accessible escape route
- Make the elements connected to safety in emergency situations easily recognizable
- To guarantee duly trained emergency and evacuation personnel for the management of people with disabilities
- It is necessary to foresee and provide auditory and visual alarms to always guarantee the reach of all types of audience

DYNAMIC WORKSHOPS AND ACTIVITIES

- Organize workshops and experiences that enhance sensory aspects during the event
- Experienced staff who knows how to approach, interact and adequately and effectively involve the participants with specific needs
- The inclusion of artists, athletes, dancers with disabilities or theater companies and mixed musical groups that also include people with disabilities is a way to offer stimuli and food for thought to the public

THE RECEPTION SYSTEM

- It is essential to raise awareness and train, as much as possible, the reception staff, including exhibitors, suppliers and food and accommodation service staff, on the principles and good reception practices.

