

(PP) QUALITY CIRCLES OF LOCAL SPORT SERVICES IN THE PROVINCE OF BARCELONA

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Introduction

The *Barcelona Provincial Council* is a local supramunicipal entity whose basic mission is the assistance and co-operation with the municipalities of the Province of Barcelona (311 town councils and more than 5 million inhabitants). The *Sports Area* looks for the improvement of the quality of life of the citizens of the Province of Barcelona through a sport and physical activity, and it is responsible for developing events and sports programmes of local interest, for setting up a network of local sports facilities and for training local sport agents.

In the last years, the Public Administrations search ways to contain the growth of the expense, and they search a more efficient use of the public resources. Likewise, there is an increasing interest of the citizens about physical activity and sport, and at the same time they claim for an improvement of the quality of the public services.

The Provincial Council of Barcelona has promoted the creation of Quality Circles of (QC) pursuing the meeting of several municipal experts of the province of Barcelona with the following goals:

- Measuring, comparing and evaluating results
- Exchanging experiences and good practices
- Promoting the improvement of the services.

Project

Nowadays there is a total of 10 QC in the Provincial Council of Barcelona, one of which is dedicated to the sport sector.

Through the QC it is agreed the indicators for measuring the management in four dimensions:

- Political order/strategic dimension
- User/Client dimension
- Worker dimension
- Economic dimension

The QC focused on the sport sector it has been carried out thanks to the cooperation between the Sports Area, the Programming Service of the Area of Local Government of the Provincial Council of Barcelona and the municipalities of the province.

The concrete goal of the QC at the sport level is to promote the improvement of the municipal sport services following the lemma:

"What can not be measured, can not be evaluated, and the one that can not be evaluated, can not be improved"

The QC for the sports sector and it has had a total of 3 editions in which local experts of the province, through focus groups, have been working together:

- In the **first edition** (2001-2003) a total of 6 town councils, in an initial way, defined the management indicators and the variables that affect the management indicators.

According to the obtained results, were created 6 improvement plans of certain municipal sport services.

The obtained results were sent to all the participant town councils.

- In the **second edition** (2004-2005) a total of 15 town councils participated in the QC and they worked in two workshops:

- o Workshop with focus group to improve the management indicators.
- o Workshop with focus group for the application of an example of improvement plan focused on the "follow-up of the registration process in a sport service".

As a result, a report was made for each town with their strong points and weak points.

The **third edition** (2006) has a participation of 31 town councils, working in two workshops:

- o Workshop with focus group to present goals, contents and methodology.
- o Workshop with focus group to exchange experiences among towns.

A specific characteristic of this third edition is that it gave emphasis on the participation of municipalities outside the metropolitan area.

The participant municipalities **in** the Project are characterized by having more than 10.000 inhabitants and have or are in the phase of elaboration of a Sport Facilities Plan.

Expected Results

Once the indicators are agreed, each local expert collects the data of its own municipality and introduces the data in the software specially created for this project.

It is foreseen that there would be an intermediate report with all data obtained in each town, with a SWOT analysis and proposing a phase of improvement of the lacks that it will have to be implemented by each town.

During the presentation in the Congress details will be given about the results obtained in the different dimensions analyzed. For example, below some of the indicators analyzed in each dimension are listed:

- Political order/strategic dimension: Percentage of physical population over the total population, number of uses for sport space, m² of sport space per inhabitant.
- Customer/user dimension: Suggestions received per each 100 inhabitants, opening hours of the facilities per week
- Workers dimension: General satisfaction of the employees, percentage of days of absence of the workers over the total working days.
- Economic dimension: Deficit or surplus of the service per inhabitant, ordinary expense per use, ordinary expense per sport participant.

Discussion

This project is unique in Spain in terms of the scope of the project, that means, a Quality Circle focused in the local sport services.

A stable work is foreseen until attains a number of some 45 town councils of the province of Barcelona, revising the management indicators in periods of 4 years.

With the QC, it is intended to inculcate a working system based on the improvement of the work processes in the town councils which allows to measure with criteria, achieving an improvement of the sport services and consequently to improve the offer to the citizens.

According to the experience, we have noticed the need to work for a glossary of common sport terms in order to compare the indicators to other territories.