



Tralee, 5th October 2015

Universal Fitness Innovation & Transformation (UFIT) Official Launch 19th October 2015 Marseille

UFIT is a UNESCO Chair led, programme which champions inclusivity by developing awareness and delivering leading-edge transformational programmes to the worldwide fitness industry. UFIT is designed to transform the way the fitness sector engages with and provides for people with disabilities through its service offerings in practical, affordable and positive ways.

The main goals are:

- To *inclusivize* the fitness industry and *mainstream diversity*.
- To enthuse and support fitness club owners, managers, training organisations, instructors and personal trainers about working with clients with disabilities.
- To provide tailored training & UFIT inclusion toolkit.

How does UFIT work? The UFIT programme is extremely comprehensive and includes a range of resources designed to be used by competent authorities and training providers to guide fitness clubs through a systematic transformational process that will increase the *UniversAbility* of a fitness club. All resources will be available in English, French, Spanish and Czech. The UFIT programme respects the fact that change takes time. The terms *Inclusivize* and *UniversAbility* both are respectful of this journey. UFIT guides club managers and fitness professionals in setting up partnerships at local level that will facilitate ongoing and sustainable collaborations with disability service organisations. This approach will enable the club to develop at a level and scale that can grow as confidence, experience and capacity within the club grows. The programme guides the centre staff to develop practical, workable and realistic service offerings, in partnership with user groups who will avail of these services. The managers' training focuses on the application of the *Universal Transformational Management Framework (UTMF)* to devise an implementation plan for their facility. The fitness professionals' training builds on existing competence by developing 10 core competencies for inclusive practitioners. UFIT e-branding and certification options are available to competent authorities, training providers and UFIT approved facilities and staff. Guidelines on alignment of UFIT with National Qualification Frameworks are available via the UNESCO/UFIT office.

The UFIT Project has been developed by the Partnership



The UFIT Project is a European Commission Supported initiative under the Lifelong Learning Programme



UNESCO Chair "Transforming the Lives of People with Disabilities, their Families and Communities, Through Physical Education, Sport, Recreation and Fitness"



When and where to get more information?

The official UFIT launch on the 19th of October 2015 in Marseille, France, will provide an exclusive first hand opportunity to see what the training and associate toolkit is like. Join us and be part of this important social change movement.

We encourage you to have a look at our websites www.justdoufit.com and www.unescoittralee.com or contact us directly:

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LetsInclusivizeFitness

Please include us in copy/link if you report about the UFIT launch or the UFIT initiative. Many thanks the UFIT team.

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Why UFIT?

Background information

The evidence base regarding the role of fitness and physical activity as contributors to healthier societies is well established. However, opportunities for people with disabilities to access services in the fitness sector are limited; making this a matter of social justice. Considering that human movement has physical, cognitive, social and emotional health benefits – the fitness sector has a key role to play in democratising health.

The fitness sector caters for all age groups in individual and group settings, adapting to the needs and interests of the clients it serves. It is based in communities for communities and its scope to respond to the inclusion call is vast. Increased professionalisation of the sector over the last two decades has led to the emergence of defined job roles, associated occupational standards, career progression options and increased recognition from allied professionals. Geographical variation in this sector development is evident internationally, however what is also evident is that the sector is growing, responsive, and best practice is quickly modelled from one geographical area to the next. The fitness sector, however not unlike other sport, recreation and physical education offerings, did not develop in a very inclusive manner. For this reason the UFIT initiative emerged in response to the:

- Industry need
- Community need
- Social justice call
- Opportunity for all

'Inclusivizing' requires comprehensive local solutions to the global challenge. Discussions and research revealed that successful change require:

- A cultural change within the organisation
- A behavioral change on the part of individual stakeholders at all organizational levels
- A sectoral & societal change in terms of perception.

So: # LetsInclusivizeFitness

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