

SUHANJ! Fitness barrier-free, integrative gym
A SUHANJ! Foundation is an NGO that has been operating since 2010.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/suhanjalapitvany. Short films: www.vimeo.com/suhanj

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Why is the project new?

Our initiative is new and original: there is no such place in Hungary, and the idea is a novelty in Europe as well. It improves the sport opportunities for people living in Budapest and nearby, and there are many who do not have any possibility to partake in recreational sport.

We give a new and original answer to the known problem of society, the marginalization of people living with disabilities. With the help of sport physically or mentally challenged people have a chance for creating new relationships, improving their self-esteem, so that in the eyes of the public they can become someone to be admired and not someone pitied.

The target group is an active, important participant of the project. Disabled people are not only the consumers; they participate in the everyday work of the foundation. In the society built up around the foundations it is considered natural and automatic that handicapped people are active volunteers of full value. They are also represented in the gym as employees.

We are talking about a social enterprise operated by a non-profit NGO. When the gym becomes profitable it will fundamentally alter the financial abilities of the foundation. Grants from companies and individuals will no longer be spent on operational costs, but on equipment, programmes, and on building up a national network. This model can become an example for other NGOs, as in Hungary most foundations depend on the support of the state.

The individual donations give the spine of the running costs of the gym, which represents a donation culture and a close relationship between sports and charity that could be adapted in other areas as well.

SUHANJ! Fitness – we give power

SUHANJ! Foundation opened in July 2016 as the first gym in Hungary which is open for not only healthy people but also for the visually impaired and the physically challenged as well. The Europe-wide unique project was created mostly from donations by individuals and private companies. The aim of the project was to provide opportunity for recreational sport for people with disabilities.

Budapest did not have an accessible gym before. Someone with disability found it hard – if not impossible - to access such services. Unfortunately they were not welcome in some of the gyms that were relatively reachable for them. Outside of SUHANJ! there are no integrative trainings available, and even special trainings for handicapped persons are rare and far between.

Special equipment can be found in our gym that can not only be used by visually impaired or physically challenged people, but they can also be used – with supervision – by handicapped children to improve their strength.

Under the phrase ‘accessibility’ we are not talking about the entrance alone. The showers and toilets are for wheelchair users as well. We have taken steps to ensure that visually impaired people are able to use the gym too. Our classes are integrative; our coaches receive special training so that they are able to provide the necessary help for handicapped athletes. Some of our classes – open for healthy people as well - are held by a coach in a wheelchair.

The gym operates as a social enterprise, and we welcome disabled persons as employees. We hope that we will be able to broaden our services in time: organizing skill- and motor-development classes for disabled children, and add new sports to our resume.

An important objective is sustainability: that the income of the gym will be able to finance the foundation’s administrative and storage needs. The SUHANJ! Fitness will be open for awareness-raising events, trainings for our volunteers and social events as well.

SUHANJ! was founded in 2010 with 200 000 HUF, and in the first 5 years it has built up an equipment park that is valued over 15million Ft. It includes indoor machines (spinning bikes, cranking machines etc.). These were stored in different places with little usage until 2015, and storing our outdoor machines (tandem bikes, handbikes and sport wheelchairs) became challenging as well. This is why we looked for a place near Margaret Island so that these outdoor machines can become rentable.

Financing

The foundation created the gym exclusively from private donations. We could build a wide-ranging union, where the small donations count as much as the volunteer work, or the financial support and equipment contribution from enterprises. The construction of the gym lasted 8 months. The total value of the 2 year long investment exceeds 60 million forints. By far we've received more than 30 million forint from businesses. Some of our supporters helped us not only during the construction, but they've provided financial aid in the first years of the social business. Many of the companies supported us with services, or preferences – their contribution reaches more than 15 million forint.

Beside of workers of the building contractor, the volunteers took an active part in the creation of the gym. More than 200 volunteers spent more than 2000 hours to help the initiation.

The main sponsors of SUHANJ! Fitness are Budapest Airport and Etalon Informatika.

The SUHANJ! foundation took part in the "Make a step with us" social innovation program of UniCredit Bank (2015/2016), and as one of the winners, we've received an essential donation. Within this program we could start the sourcing of the special weight machines convenient for wheelchair people. Furthermore the tender provided a half-year long mentorship program, where the work of SUHANJ! is supported by the professionals of NESsT Magyarország and UniCredit Bank.

The interior design and image works were performed pro bono by Noppa Design.

Other important upholders: Mapei, MagnetBank, Knorr-Bremse, IT Service Hungary, Libra Szoftver, Hewlett-Packard, Orlai Produkcio's Iroda, Batorfi Fogaszat, Emerald Development Kft.

The construction was supported with material help by: Fitness Life Kft., a Mapei, a Zalakerámia, a MART, a Trilak, a Gerisoft, a Simon Wellness.

A public fundraising was also held. People could buy a 10.000 forint worth brick-ticket. 212 supporters raised a total of 3.650.000 forint for the construction. Their names will be shown on the gym's wall during 10 years.

Achievements:

Person entered	Able	Disabled	Total
August	369 (68%)	176 (32%)	545
September	409 (62%)	256 (38%)	665
October	598 (65%)	319 (35%)	917
November	755 (74%)	261 (25%)	1016
December	812 (78%)	224 (22%)	1036
January till the 23	1170 (83%)	234 (17%)	1404
Total	4113 (74%)	1470 (26%)	5583

Income	
August	828 310 Ft
September	1 006 900 Ft
October	1 202 500 Ft
November	1 248 300 Ft
December	2 431 460 Ft
January till the 23	1 717 300 Ft
Total	8 434 770 Ft

Financial aim

Our aim is to generate profit for the social business by the end of 2017. To achieve this we would have to acquire a more than a 3 million forint monthly income. At the moment the gym is used on 25% capacity. The cafeteria, equipment renting possibilities and the massage services will attract more incomes. The therapy sessions will also contribute to the sustainability. Based on these components our project can be sustained on long term efficiency.

Short summary

The SUHANJ! Fitness is going to be the first gym in Hungary which is available for visually impaired and disabled people. It is going to be an integrative gym as it comes from our basic principles and our five years of operation, able people can visit it too, of course.

There are going to be special machines for strength training which cannot be found anywhere else in Hungary and can be used by people in a wheelchair. These fitness machines -with the help of an expert- are excellent developmental equipment for disabled children too and provide an opportunity for visually impaired people to train in a barrier-free environment.

When we say barrier-free, we do not only mean the entrance, we are building toilets and showers that can be used by people

in a wheelchair and we also keep in mind visually impaired people. Our training sessions are also going to be integrative, we create our timetable accordingly. The coaches get a special training to enable them to provide an appropriate service for the people who live with disabilities. We are going to have trainings even for able people that are held by our coaches who are in wheelchair.

SUHANJ! Alapítvány (founded in 2010) – the joy of sport is for everybody

SUHANJ! is a non-profit, public benefit organisation that shares the joy of sports with people living with disability. It's an integrative sports club where disabled and able people can do sports together. It is a movement that consists of the community of committed volunteers and amateur sports people. It is a fund raising foundation, which provides regular, weekly training opportunities in several sports for visually impaired and disabled people. SUHANJ! organises sports programs for visually impaired and disabled people and for mentally handicapped people. Its volunteers take part in running, swimming and triathlon competitions together with the participants with disability. It has trainings in several sports weekly and organises awareness raising, attitude shaping actions and sensitizing programs.

The public benefit aims of the foundation

1. Health care, disease prevention: broaden the variety of sports available for children with disabilities and their families by organising events which provide sports opportunities for them and purchasing the necessary equipment.
2. Promoting equality for disadvantaged social groups: organising activities and campaigns against stereotypes and disadvantages that people with disability meet every day, building bridges between able helpers, volunteers and children with disability.
3. Sport: organising sports events that support the aims of the foundation.

The weekly trainings that are organised by the Foundation:

Running with visually impaired and disabled people and mentally handicapped children and adults.

Tandem cycling with visually impaired and mentally handicapped children.

Spinning (indoor cycling workout with music in a group) lessons for visually impaired and mentally handicapped people, first and until now the only in Hungary

Krinking (upper body cardio training with music in a group) lessons for disabled people: unique in Hungary: disabled sports people among the trainers

Swimming: teaching swimming to children with a missing limb, the professional leader is Dóra Pásztor double Paralympic champion, and swimming trainings for visually impaired people

SUHANJ! Fitness barrier-free, integrative gym and runners' club

A SUHANJ! Fitness – social enterprise

SUHANJ! Foundation is going to open an integrative fitness club in February 2016, it's unique in Hungary, and it's going to be barrier-free for both visually impaired and disabled people and is going to be available for able people too.

The aim is to have a base where the foundation can use its fleet of devices more. We are moving our offices and storage rooms here. Sustainability is an important aim: the gym is open for everybody, its incomes are going to cover the expenses of the offices and the storage rooms too. The SUHANJ! Fitness is going to be appropriate for attitude shaping and volunteer trainings, and organising community programs.

After opening the gym, we can expand our range of services: we are planning to organise skill and motoric developmental sessions for children with disability, and we can organise regular trainings in new sports for disabled, visually impaired and mentally handicapped people.

In our social enterprise we are going to employ people who have changed work skills (e.g. people in wheelchair at the reception, or visually impaired masseuses).

Why is it necessary and what have we done so far?

There isn't any totally barrier-free fitness club in Budapest. It's very difficult for visually impaired or disabled person to use its services. Unfortunately, it's an existing problem, that they are not welcome in the partially useable and accessible places. Nobody organises integrated trainings apart from our foundation and such regular trainings that are organised for especially people with disabilities are hard to find.

The Foundation, which was founded in 2010 with a base capital of 200 thousand forints, has built an equipment fleet worth more than 15 million forints by now. Some of these are indoor fitness devices (spinning indoor cycles, krank-cycles). Now they are used at different places, their benefits are hardly taken advantage of. We had a little room in the School for Movement Development, it was used for spinning classes for visually impaired and mentally handicapped children and kranking classes for disabled children but the school is not able to provide the room for us anymore. The storing of our outdoor devices (tandem bikes, strollers for running, sports wheelchairs, handbikes) is a bigger and bigger challenge. We would like to make them available for rent for others, which is not possible in our present circumstances.