

SailWise

Sailing activities for disabled people

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ABOUT THE ADDED VALUE AND EVALUATION FORMS OF SAILWISE (SUMMARY)



Commissioned by the Science Shop (Dr. F. de Jonge)

CONFIDENTIAL

[Sailing holidays for people with a disability: an experience for life! \(1550\)](#)

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Source of the SailWise logo: <http://www.sailwise.nl/>

Executive Summary

Due to societal changes disabled people are increasingly participating in society. It is argued that this inclusive society has an added value to the lives of disabled people. Accessible tourism is a type of tourism that follows this trend of a more inclusive society, as it allows disabled people to participate in leisure activities and holidays. SailWise is an organization which makes accessible tourism possible: SailWise offers water sport activities to disabled people, mainly to those who are physically disabled. SailWise wishes to understand the added value of their water sport activities, as it is assumed that access to such information will enable the organization to optimize their sailing activities in relation to the needs of their participants, to maximize the potential added value of SailWise activities for the daily lives of disabled people, and to ensure a sustained existence for SailWise as an organization.

SailWise evaluates their activities themselves by evaluation forms distributed among their participants. However, according to SailWise these do not give much insight into the added value of their activities. In order to get more information about and scientific proof of this added value, SailWise asked the Science Shop of Wageningen UR (later referred to as Science Shop) to start up a research. This research will last until December 2016, consisting of multiple smaller research projects.

This exploratory research aims at getting a clearer insight into the problem and to direct further research questions for the SailWise project. Additionally, this research can be seen as a stepping stone for the Science Shop on which further research can be based. The main purpose of this research project was to provide insight into (1) the added value of SailWise activities for the daily lives of disabled people and (2) the evaluation of their activities. In order to reach this purpose, semi-structured face-to-face interviews have been conducted with six volunteers and two employees of SailWise. Also, interviews have been done with two volunteers of other accessible tourism organizations: Flow Reizen and Sailability. Finally, the evaluation forms were reviewed with the use of literature on the key features of a good evaluation form.

From our study, it can be concluded in general, that the interviewed volunteers were very positive about SailWise. This conclusion was based on several aspects, mainly on the vision (focus on abilities), policy (e.g. let participants do as much as possible and help wherever they can - freedom and independence), water sport activities (e.g. expertise, boats) and the social aspect (e.g. equality between volunteers and participants). It was also concluded that nature had an added value. These results suggest that psychological, physical, social and nature aspects strengthen participants GRR's (Generalized Resistance Resources), which enhance SoC (Sense of Coherence) and eventually increase the participant's overall health and wellbeing. However, it cannot be excluded that more critical opinions do exist among other volunteers, for instance among those that drop out after their first year. In addition, additional qualitative interviews with participants and/or their formal and informal caretakers are required in order to further corroborate this notion.

Our study also showed that the evaluation forms used by SailWise do not comply with general scientific standards. Thus, the questions in the evaluation forms were found to lack validity and reliability. Also, inconsistencies were observed in the evaluations. It was therefore not possible to carry out a scientific analysis that could lead to valid conclusions about added value and areas for improvement. Some key issues were identified that may help to effectively construct and conduct an efficient evaluation that may be used by SailWise in order to evaluate and improve the sailing activities more adequately.

The recommendations made in this report were given to the Science Shop. The main recommendation is that there is a need to conduct interviews with participants and/or formal or informal caretakers. This has to be done in order to research if participation in sailing activities of SailWise may have an added value for health and well-being in normal life of disabled participants. Additionally, it would be interesting to research if differences in “nannyng-attitude” between formal or informal caretakers on the one hand and the volunteers of SailWise on the other hand, may result in an added value in terms of a change in perception in relation to possibilities of “self-management” among participants. Also, it is suggested to research the overcoming of social stigma in relation to how SailWise composes the groups exactly. In addition, it is recommended to interview volunteers who dropped out in the first year as an interesting stakeholder, more in particular in relation to possibilities for improvement within SailWise as an organization. Finally it is recommended to make a clear distinction between participants from rehabilitation institutes and others. Recommendations were also made on SailWise’s evaluation forms. Firstly, it was recommended to adapt and use the evaluation forms in a more consistent way and use (similar) answering categories to make it more reliable. Besides, added value could be better evaluated by using pre- and post-measurements. Also, it appeared from the interviews that there were roughly two groups of participants at SailWise: participants who come individually and in a group, for example with a revalidation group. During the interviews it rose that participants of revalidation centres might be different and this should be taken into account when doing further research. There were also some recommendations based on the organization SailWise. In that respect, it is advised to establish a reliable database of participants and volunteers in order to get insight in who stayed and who left. Additionally, it came up during the interviews that evaluation forms for volunteers may further support SailWise to improve its organization. It is therefore recommended that SailWise should organize feedback sessions, especially for new volunteers. Such evaluation procedures will not only benefit SailWise but also the volunteers since the expressing of voice is very important to keep ‘happy volunteers’. A last recommendation in this respect, is to make a so called “suggestion box” for creative ideas from volunteers.

SailWise noticed a trend of aging and expressed the wish to include more young participants. However, the question is if it is a real problem to have an aging population, because as an employee of SailWise stated: *“SailWise has enough participants already”*. Therefore, it might not be a problem to have an aging population when there are already enough participants. SailWise should evaluate that question and evaluate if it would not be better to focus on other things. Finally, according to its vision, SailWise treats disabled people not as a victim and tends to push participants to not perceive themselves as a victim as well. However, it should be taken into consideration that it may be more empowering to let participants choose how they want to feel or perceive themselves.

Key words: Accessible tourism, added value, disability, empowerment, inclusive society, salutogenesis, water sport activities.