

DISABLED ATHLETES

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Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Good evening.

Are we heard? Nice. Mr. Kouzelis, I am very glad to see you again. I remember last year how amazingly you translated our tale. I am very glad that we are all here together today. I now see Katerina Saranti and Mr. Vassilis Kasimatis [...] the end of these wonderful films, I try to speak slowly to help Mr. Kouzelis, although it is very difficult for me to speak slowly and we will all comment together on these movies we saw. It was shocking the end too, because the truth is, that I had a great feeling and until this very moment with the end of the last movie, where this wonderful man finally passed away from covid, it was really something that came as a punch in the stomach with all that we live today.

First of all, I will start -for those of you who do not know us, I am Giagazoglou, Voula, a special education teacher and I am also a professor at TEFAA, so we have a direct relationship with sports and that is why I think I am on this panel as well. And with us is Mr. Kasimatis Vassilis, a distinguished friend and also holding a TEFAA degree, of course and not only and is currently the director of the Down Syndrome Association and has done so many things. He is also at the Special Olympics. He is a man who knows very well both disability and sports in disability field. And Mrs. Saranti, whom I did not have the luck to know, but I read her CV and I consider that she is a human... Of course I think she will inform us about herself, because I do not know something beyond what I saw, that is an excellent athlete who makes us proud in triathlon. She is a photographer, she participated in the marathon and her goal is, from what I read in the CV, to bring integration of people with and without disabilities and I think it is in the movie we saw, with the tennis player, the "no difference", that saw how much this distinction really exists between athletes with and without disabilities.

I do not know Vassilis if you want to say something before we start commenting...

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Voula, excuse me a little bit.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Of course.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

We have the athlete from the first movie...

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Really?

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

We have here with us mister Jokic. Sorry that we don't have mutual translation also in English, but we are here in case we will make it if you want to take the word at stage to speak about your experience and we will translate that for you.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Hello. It is very nice to have you here with us. Your movie was really incredible. My son watched with me, he is not now here and he said "Mum vote for the movie and vote this guy". So I really want to tell us about your experience [...] everything. Thank you very much that you are here with us. (pause)

Lefki can he talk?

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Mister Jokic, you need to open your microphone.

Jokic Rastko:

Can you hear me?

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Yes.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Yes. Thank you.

Jokic Rastko:

I open now. Can you hear me?

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Yes, we can hear you.

Jokic Rastko:

Because I can not hear all very well, it's the signal lost all the time. It's signal lost. I can't hear.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

We can hear you. So, we can hear you very well. So, you can start to talk and we can hear you really well.

Jokic Rastko:

Oh, good good good, because I can't hear very.. in a sequence speaking. Can you repeat the question [...] the team?

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

The important thing is to hear you and we hear you very well. So, you can tell us the experience of what we see at the movie and it's a great honor to have you here with us. So, you can tell us about the experience that we saw in the movie.

Jokic Rastko:

Oh, yes, thank you, thank you. I hear really well now. Internet connection getting better now. Well, I'm glad I'm here. Thank you for the invitation. It's do it that by friend Dimitri who was the register of this movie so this email that this is the representing for today. The think about the movie is I wanted to do something to inspire and motivate people around the world, around the globe, around everywhere, at a place to do great things, to achive something, and to do the best for themselves, as they can do it. In any conditions, in any circumstances with support or without support. That is the most important thing. The movie was, we were doing it for two years because we were doing it very detaining, everyone was very very hard to catch up each other and I'm glad that we have finished it and I'm glad that we participate in this event. So, the movie, it was descriptive at one point do. Just to motivate, inspire the most people it can do. So, that's the only thing that it matters now. Because I did it with myself, I inspire myself, I did it myself, so I try to motivate other people to do it. To do it also. (pause) Your microphone is muted.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Yes, I know. What I noted about your...

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Voula. Mrs Giagazoglou can we please say in Greek too, πρέπει να μεταφράσουμε και στα ελληνικά. Ευχαριστώ. Έλενα;

Kyriakidou Elena, volunteer

Yes.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Make a summary. Παρακαλώ.

Kyriakidou Elena, volunteer

Mr. Jovik said that, Jokik, I'm sorry, I do not know if I say the last name correctly...

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Say athlete and ok, it's fine.

Kyriakidou Elena, volunteer

Or that he is very happy to participate in the festival. And that the purpose of his film was to inspire people, just as he inspired himself. In other words, he gave himself strength. That's the message of his film.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Lefki should I speak in English or will the girl translate? How do you want?

Kyriakidou Elena, volunteer:

If you want you can speak in English and I will translate briefly after each speaker.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Nice. It is probably better to speak in English about the person, about the guest. Now we translate what you said before. I would like to tell you some really important things that I noted when I was seeing your movie. The one thing that really impressed me was the fact that you said that "I had time with some people for two or three weeks and they haven't noticed that I haven't arm", something really important, because your personality was probably too strong that no one noticed [...] arm. And this is that I think it' a very strong message for all of us.

Jokic Rastko:

Yes, yes, yes. That, it didn't happened recently.. last year, it was like two weeks in a gym, it's four days five days per week. Yea, it's how you talk to the people, how you represent yourself, your attitude and yourself awareness is the most important thing and the energy you put around you. So, it happens that people do not notice, not for the first time, not even for the second or the third time. So, it's everything about yourself. How you deal with it, how you feel it. So, if you are acting like you have it, everybody can see that. So, you need to do it like there is nothing, because there is nothing different.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Exactly. Wait a minute to translate.

Jokic Rastko:

Yea, sorry. I can do it little bit slowly, you can translate. Sorry.

Kyriakidou Elena, volunteer:

Ms. Giagazoglou asked how it is possible that despite the loss of the limb, this not to be observed and the answer given by the athlete is that it has to do with the way you treat yourself, it has to do with the way you perceive yourself and

want to bring it out. So, if you, yourself think that there is no problem, there is nothing special and you face yourself without something that limits you, this is what you transmit to the outside and that is why it is something that people perceive this way.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Just a moment Elena to correct. In my part I said that it was part of the movie in which he said he spent two or three weeks hanging out with people who did not even notice his hand and said that this was a loud message. That explained to us. [...] To tell him one more thing. Another two points that they really impressed me, was the fact that you told us that all those victories was a result of many - failure, now I cannot remember the word. Please Elena help me.

Kyriakidou Elena, volunteer:

Disappointment?

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

No, failure.

Kyriakidou Elena, volunteer:

A, failure.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Ok. Thank you. About many failures that you had during your sports career and you never give up and after all these years you finally manage [...] the world record or all other victories because you never give up. And this is not a message only for the disability of course but for any people, because if you want something really really bad you can succeed it in any way. So, I would like to make a comment about this.

Jokic Rastko:

Yeah, the whole point of the movie is not just to focus on disabled people. It's just to focus on everybody around the world, around everybody.. all the people. So, because is the same thing for everyone. So, basically there is how you need to manage with it. So, the thing is, I wanted to present myself as a disabled who did those things, but it doesn't matter if you are disabled or not disabled. It's the same for everyone, you need to do it hard, you never need to quit. So, that's the only way to succeed and to get over. So, the main thing is done. It's very important not to break down or... Just keep forward. Ever if you lose the [...] keeping forward. Is a move up.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Ok. Let's translate.

Kyriakidou Elena, volunteer:

That the important part about the film and about achievements, with the achievements it has achieved so far, has to do with the general population and not just about people with disabilities. That they should always strive for the best possible result. They try to move forward, to aim higher to achieve more and that has nothing to do with disability. It has to do with the person trying to achieve several things.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

And a last point from me at least because maybe some other colleagues want says something to you and finished with that. It's the fact what you said in the movie "I'm an athlete but beyond of all these I'm a person" and this is I think the most important message. Beyond your disability all anything else, for everyone the most important thing is the personality of a man. So, if you would like to comment ...

Jokic Rastko:

Yes, about the thing. Everyone in life need do something, which it define themselves to be their personal [...]. I really want shooting or sport or any other thing to represent me, as to someone said my name and the next thing is athlete. My name is the first and the only thing that matters and my personality is the most it matters. The things I do is just the things I love to do and that's some my parts of life, many parts of life. So, this one is extending in public, but the things you do it doesn't define who you are. It define one part of what do you like to do. So all those medals, all these things are meaningless after competition because it's in the best and everybody uses to show other people who they are but they need to represent who they are really. That's important.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Vassilis, first Elena will translate and then.

Kyriakidou Elena:

The important thing is to be able to represent yourself. That these things you do have nothing to do with your wholeness, therefore, the things you do, do not represent who you are, but a part of yourself and that the important thing is that despite these medals I have won and the things I have done, I have achieved precisely because I just like this field and not for any other reason. That is, it is part of myself. So not everything is determined by disability, but is determined by who I am.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Vassilis do you want to...

Kasimatis Vassilis:

I will give the floor to the ladies. To Katerina and Anna if they want to ask something.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Nice. I think Katerina is the most competent...

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Katerina sorry for the singular but we all know each other in here.

Saranti Katerina:

Okay okay. Well let me say that I initially noticed that all the documentaries were about congenital disabilities. The first documentary, "Heartbeat", impressed me a lot because it started by pointing out the effort and training that one has to do to achieve a goal. And why do I say that? Because often, when in any case I started sports, I heard a lot of bravos because I do sports not for how good an athlete I am. So, pointing out how much effort it takes, that we have to persevere and all that, is important. Now to comment, to say other things about documentaries in general or to focus on the first one?

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

I think it's better to stay in this.

Saranti Katerina:

Ok.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

To give some time if we want Elena to translate, to give some time. We need to give some time to Elena to translate a little bit. Yes? Thank you.

Kyriakidou Elena, volunteer:

Should I start the translation Ms Saranti?

Saranti Katerina:

Yes, it's very important... This is basically what I would like to keep. How do we start, with how much effort it takes to achieve a goal for the goal itself.

Kyriakidou Elena, volunteer:

So, Mrs. Saranti told that it is very important to set goals and how much you have to try to achieve those goals. And she told about her experience as an athlete herself and how much she had to try and everybody would say that they are happy because she is an athlete and they could not realize how good she was as an athlete. They just focus on the fact that she practice athleticism in general and they didn't focused on the fact that she was a great athlete.

Jokic Rastko:

If the question is what's important to be an athlete and a successful athlete. The most important thing is to have small goals in your everyday and small goals in

your weekly day, and small goals in your monthly day and small goals in your yearling. The ultimate goal needs to be high and you don't need to think about it. You need to know what you want. But, to get there, you need to do five little things in one day, three average things in one week and one big thing in one month. So, it's most important to have to do situationally little things, to have little goals, you need to start with it, because if you start having big goals you will fail because you're not prepared for it. So, you need to manage yourself every day to do little things, next day little more, next day little more and always like that.

Kyriakidou Elena, volunteer:

So, about how you can be a good athlete, how you can become a great athlete, is to be able to set small goals every day and achieve them. One goal a day, then another, in the month to have a bigger goal, in time an even bigger one, so that the process goes by itself. And to be more general, to know what you want to do and to achieve some small goals every day, five small goals for example to get closer to what you want to do yourself. This way you can become a great athlete.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Okay, Anna do you want to ask Rastko something?

Antonopoulou Anna:

It was all very moving. I generally had fun with all the movies. The whole part of the movies attracted me a lot as an athlete. That is, I was shocked. I have nothing else to say.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Nice. Let me also ask my own question Elena if you allow Rastko. That in the film we saw two of his identities, one belonging to an athlete and the other to an employee, right? Which of the two identities would he hold if he had to keep one of the two? That is, his priority is the daily social integration / work there or to say that "to be a Paralympian"?

Kyriakidou Elena, volunteer:

Ok. So, mr. Kasimatis asked in the film we saw two identities. We saw a working man in everyday life and we also saw the athlete, the champion. If you would have the opportunity to choose one of those two which one would you choose. You would choose the first one or the second and why?

Jokic Rastko:

That's a very complicated question. The thing is, I don't know. Well, definitely if you can live doing... the main thing is to do what you love and if you can live from the thing that you love that's the most important either job or either the athlete. It doesn't matter. It matters that you do what you love and you need to have finally living goal of it. So, that's what I choose, what you love to do. So,

something can be your hobby but it doesn't have income so... it's important to do what you love. That is the important, the most important thing

Kasimatis Vassilis:

So, sports for you is a hobby.

Jokic Rastko:

Well, it started as a hobby but in Serbia you can live with it not so great but to be a normal average person. I mean in this sport, in shooting. So, we have still here our ministry of the sportsmen gives us like [...] for the champions and the metals in Europe and all the championships and Olympic Games of course. So, that's the goal of the most sportsmen, that is the achieve, that is the reward for giving your time spends to represent your country and yourself.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Ok. We would like to thank you very much because we have to...

Saranti Katerina:

Can I ask something?

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Just, Katerina because we have to continue with the other movies and we have taken enough time, we will not be on time at all.

Saranti Katerina:

Okay okay.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

So, we will continue with the rest. We would like to thank you very much...

Jokic Rastko:

Thank you.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

[...] of course in our company here and the girls will translate you in the chat what we are saying now, so you can interrupt us or something but you can see it on chat what we are discussing all this time because we have to make comments about the other movies also.

Jokic Rastko:

Yes, of course.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

All right. So, now you can translate Elena in the chat, okay? We will translate for you in chat. And to continue a little... I almost speak in English now, so long... To continue a little Vassilis with the girls. Sorry, but for Anna I did not know, nor do I know...

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Will you let me introduce her because she is my friend?

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Yes, I'm very happy about that. Nor do I know more information about Katerina and let the girl tell us a few words or you about them and then discuss the other movies and anyone who wants to ask us a question in the chat or whatever. So Vassilis we hear you.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Well, Anna is a great lady, who does a lot of things and works very hard for them. Anna tell us though, I do not want to say them.

Antonopoulou Anna:

Badminton is first and foremost, which has been my whole life for many years. And I am currently studying, doing my second year with my school and now I am starting my internship, to work...

Kasimatis Vassilis:

What school are you in?

Antonopoulou Anna:

I am in AKMI, second year and all is well.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Where are you going to do your internship?

Antonopoulou Anna:

I will do it in WE.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

What are you going to do at WE? Won't you come to the Down Syndrome Association to do your internship?

Antonopoulou Anna:

It's a soundtrack thing and because the boss is our friend too. He tells me come to me, do not think about it.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Nice. Katerina, tell us a few things about yourself.

Saranti Katerina:

Well, I do a lot of things too, now let's stay at the sports. I started playing sports after I was 19 years old. I started with swimming, as I believe we all start for recovery, endurance, etc. Then I continued with wheelchair fencing, where I belonged to the national team for two years. But then I wanted to do a little more demanding endurance sport, so I continued rowing, hand-racing and now I do triathlon. I'm mainly focused on triathlon.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Sportswoman. That is, of everything. Do you like sports?

Saranti Katerina:

I like sports. Also, when I was growing up in Rhodes, I am from Rhodes, for many different reasons I did not have the opportunity to try anything at all. It worked out for me and I wanted to try almost everything. Also, I want to say that it's not just that I liked trying things out. There are issues, but there were also practical problems that forced me to move from one sport to another. That's all. Now...

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Which movie did you like better than the ones we saw because I do not remember how many there were now. I am confused.

Saranti Anna:

It was four. I got something from all of them. That is, I wrote down something that I will leave behind. I was impressed by the first and the second, because it is closer to me and maybe I have an opinion. I liked the movie the first one for this reason I mentioned before. The fact that he first introduced me as an athlete and then as I watched him, I saw how his life is, how he trains. He was slowly giving me further information about the impairment, about his personal life and all that. The second film, okay it was short, but ok, for us athletes it is also very important to sound that, nice, we reach a level of equality in sports but we do not stay there. We ask for something more. Now for the others, for the third and fourth. Yes, I was very impressed with the role of the family.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

And that's a good point to make here. That really what role the family plays and we also have Anna here who has some amazing parents.

Antonopoulou Anna:

For me, my family is above all. I do not do anything before I ask, before I tell them.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Nice. Voula, which movie did you like?

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

This... The same... Vassilis... E, Anna which movie did you like? Did you like yourself with Katerina or another?

Antonopoulou Anna:

I like the last one that was with the blind man. I was shocked. I was shaken. Where he did what he did...

Kasimatis Vassilis:

The one with the Special Olympics, I did not like either, tell your mom if she is next to the one who is talking to you.

Antonopoulou Anna:

She is not with me.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Oh, I do not know who he is, nor me. Voula, which one did you like? I liked it as a movie but I did not like it most, let me clarify.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Well, I'll tell you now why I'm a bit of an artist, right? On the one hand, I have two qualities, one which is sports and as a special education teacher but also mainly with sports, as a subject to say that it was closer to sports and for me I liked the first and second. But as an artistically directing film, I liked this one with Special Olympics, the third one. And also the last one touched me a lot, because I have, you know, from "Odos Alkyonis" a special relationship with blindness. (mobile sound) It's the time my accountant keeps getting up and where to find them at other times...

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Better not be the cashier. It does not matter if he is an accountant. As long it is not the cashier.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

No, the accountant is. Well, as such, the last film touched me a lot because I was incredibly impressed by what both protagonists said that, if they could see even for a minute, they would like to see the faces of their family. The other said the child he would like to do and the other the gentleman said he would like to see his loved ones. So, basically they all had something different. Artistically I liked the third one. I do not know why you did not like it. Because it's not much... Why?

Kasimatis Vassilis:

No, you know I'll tell you the truth. I identified a little with the second and I will stay there with Katerina, that I do not like the labels and honestly sports and disability often go as a label together and "the hero of life". An era, a few years ago, you know, I read about the stereotypes we have on screen in general for people with disabilities and so one of the stereotypes is "the hero of life". These people, the amazing ones, the superman, well with the special skills that our prime minister had, some prime ministers even now they still use it, he became a linguist there at the time, I never liked it as an image. That is, we put a glass in front, a filter and we really leave the reality a little behind.

What Rastko has said before -and I really like what he said, that I am not the athlete. I keep it, I'm not an athlete. I remember Anna. I did not know Anna as an athlete. In 2010, however, in Poland he took part in badminton, in the Special Olympics in the European Games. Her coach had two games at the same time, with an athlete and with Anna and someone tells me to do the coach. I say perfect, badminton. I have as much idea as I have about quantum mechanics. So, I sat behind her and what I saw, I really saw a girl, a man, a young lady if you want, sorry Anna you were [...] ten years have passed since then and I saw a child really with her anxiety, with her need to win.

She was an athlete, right? But above all, it was Anna. It was Anna. And this is something that for me really is that it should follow us everywhere. That our personal identity follows us and not what we do. We can be athletes, we can be teachers, we can be teachers, but we also continue to be Katerina, Anna, Voula, Vassilis. This is who we are. And that's why I kept what he said and I was impressed by the fact that he did not even go to get his award because he tells you to sit down because we are heroizing a situation that is what it is. And let's say this political correct to see now in any show that a person with a disability or whatever. I'm not saying not to have. I'm not saying that necessarily they must have. You know it started somewhere and it bothers me a little because it's a bit hypocritical.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

I am very bothered, Vassilis, and in the first lessons I enter I say to my students, I will never hear you say heroes or special abilities because most people are terrified. They get scared when you call them heroes or with special abilities and I always bring to my class a student who is an athlete and he himself and finished TEFAA because the child had an accident with what he entered the university in the summer he hit with a dive and is quadriplegic now. Nevertheless, TEFAA ended because it passed before the accident. So, he graduated from university and I bring him to a lot of lectures and the first thing he says here is that we are not heroes. We just do the best we can.

I do not know if anyone in the audience wants to help us girls ask something to any of us girls. So, you can tell us if a question has been said in the chat or someone wants to ask something now either the girls or us.

Spanidou Sophia, volunteer:

Good evening from me too. There is no question in the chat. I just want to ask you a question. Having a friend of mine, a dancer, who after winning a gold medal in competitions, was going to Kavala for a swim and did a dive. He is now in a wheelchair. And then we were faced how many difficulties he suddenly faced, and that the infrastructure did not exist. Not even the sports infrastructure, so that this man can continue. Have you ever felt that there is no infrastructure to be able to do what you want? Of course, you have all the mood and all the will but does the state help you? And if not the state, let's leave it at that, does the community you live in help you? The neighborhood you live in? The stadiums you have around you? Thank you very much.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Katerina get the answer.

Saranti Katerina:

I would not say that anyone generally helps. However, if I compare today with ten years ago, I would say that things are much better. And even more difficult I would say that things are in the countryside, that is, it is what I said before. As long as I lived in Rhodes, I had no choice. Now okay, about whether there is money to go out racing, if there is money for our equipment. Because for some, not all injuries are the same. In some cases, the money to be given is outrageous. So yes.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Yes, I have the feeling too, Mrs. Sophia, I think Sophia was the lady who asked. Look, sports in Greece, the facilities are in disrepair. In other words, it is not something that is only for people with disabilities. It is something that is more general. A1 teams in basketball and play indoors that get water from everywhere. But what exists, there is a society mainly the civil society, which works a lot. In other words, I think the sports clubs do an excellent job and with very little money on the memorandum and on many difficulties.

I will say from the side of Special Olympics, that I have been active as a volunteer for exactly 30 years, they gave me a birthday party this year that a while ago we had an idea that wanted to close this space that Katerina said. The space of the province. It is what happens in the countryside. In Athens, instead of Thessaloniki, ten things happen. Go to Patras as well. Beyond that, however, things are a bit difficult. So, we had an idea to implement local voluntary exercise programs for people with intellectual disabilities in the Special Olympics, in twenty cities.

And we found a financier, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation is, which is behind us. Ten programs have already been done, ten more will be done and so twenty cities will have. There are ten others who have, right? Somehow a better tomorrow is being built little by little and it is very nice to see that the society, Skiathos, for example, that was interested in starting a local program there, did

not have a population of 15-20 children with disabilities, athletes with disabilities, adults with disabilities as you like say it, but it had three. And it was very nice to start a program for three and what I usually say is that even for one person it is worth starting something new. In other words, we should not say "you know, okay, a section should be created in Rhodes with fifteen athletes so that Katerina can do some time rowing there". They have to start slowly and with an athlete.

Saranti Katerina:

Ok I will tell you now. The equipment is really expensive, so it's better...

Antonopoulou Anna:

Too expensive.

Saranti Katerina:

So, if we talk about rowing we want at least three different boats. In order to be able to cover all the damages.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Yes. On the other side here next to me at 1000 meters at 1,500 meters there is the K2000, a brilliant rather than Olympic center which had a canal made for sailing and rowing boats, to be able to do training, which is falling apart. That is, do not forget where and in what country we live.

[...]

Saranti Katerina:

Mr. Kasimati, you are right about the unions. Because I also have a lot of support from there. So, let's say that too.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

But how does this space run? From someone running, he can not.

Spanidou Sophia, volunteer:

We have two questions in the chat. The first is by Mrs. Ioanna Sivridou. "Good Evening. Great placements, thank you very much. Mrs. Saranti, a question for you. Regarding your participation in the marathon, how would you describe your experience? How acceptable was your participation? Thanks".

Saranti Katerina:

Nice. Well to say that until 2019 we were not allowed to participate in the marathon by hand. So, of course, until then we did not even discuss it. Now, reaching 2021, I am happy that I just declared my participation, without... I

entered the site, that is, and I registered without much fuss. Of course, there is still a lot to be done. Like starting at the right time, not getting involved with runners, having access to the start, toilets. All these practical issues after all. Beyond that, it was my great pleasure that from where we could not participate, I was able to complete it.

Spanidou Sophia, volunteer:

Another question from Mrs. Diria Aretaki to Mrs. Katerina Saranti. "Do you think that you have seen the removal of disability in the sports in which you participate at a competitive level? Are there still labels?"

Saranti Katerina:

When do we say removal of disability? I do not understand it well.

Spanidou Sophia, volunteer:

In quotation marks. It is written in quotes whether there is a "removal" of disability in the sports in which you participate.

Saranti Katerina:

Yes, now to say... We do not want... I mean me.. I would not say... Disability is there, it exists. Now I try to understand the question, if there is a lifting. What I would say, which I perceive as the removal of disability, is that if they start judging us, if they start to see our performance, if we start talking. That is, when they interview us, do they ask us about our training? How long did it take us to achieve this result? Or are they asking us to find out about our harm? Because they are curious only about this and not about the rest of the sport. I perceive this as lifting.

Spanidou Sophia, volunteer:

Mrs. Diria Aretaki gives a clarification and says, "does the lifting cease due to the categorization of athletes? is fair play achieved? ».

Saranti Katerina:

Yes, now this is a very big issue. Does classification obviously mean?

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Most likely.

Spanidou Sophia, volunteer:

Yes.

Saranti Katerina:

Now I, personally, have a lot of negative experience in terms of classification. Yes, the best that can be done is done. However now I am a special case. That is, one of the reasons I change sports was because of classification. The fact that he does not realize my harm is not very well understood. Did I answer?

Spanidou Sophia, volunteer:

I think you answered.

Saranti Katerina:

Yes, yes, things are now exactly fair based on classification, but it is ok. They cannot be perfect.

Spanidou Sophia, volunteer:

Mrs. Aretaki, thanks you very much. You answered your question.

Saranti Katerina:

Okay. Thanks.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Anna, give us a day of your training, of your schedule.

Antonopoulou Anna:

We are also of the unlucky ones in the stadium we are in in Thessaloniki now. They took us down from four pitches we had, they left us two guys.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

What stage are you at?

Antonopoulou Anna:

In the palace, in the basement we are. And the coach tells us in a way, he gathers us all. He says, "guys listen a little, from the four stadiums we enter two". I say to him, "Coach, are you sure?" you cannot change the whole stadium from one moment to the next ". And he says he goes down the track with fencing.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Anna, where do you train with Special Olympics athletes or with other athletes?

Antonopoulou Anna:

And with the club that I am in the national federation, because I am still in both and this is not going to stop. Both are a very important circle for me.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Very nice.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Of course, there should not be two, Anna, there should be one.

Antonopoulou Anna:

But I cannot go to just one, that's the point.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Yes, I understand, but I tell you that there is a bit of a the...

Antonopoulou Anna:

Yes, yes it is difficult.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

However, I would say that sport is the best mean of raising awareness. Voula I do not know how you see it there in university, it is I think the best mean of awareness and education for disability. That is, there is no better way. Yesterday, when the national team of visually impaired people was playing football, it was the first time that my son told me to go to a stadium. He wanted us to go to the stadium and we went to the stadium because he says I want to see this; I want to see it. It brings the world closer.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Yes, the truth is that through events that will be played together by people with disabilities and without, of course now Vassilis I want to say something that I say this and in [...] the truth is that apart from sports with disabilities, what happens. I will tell you the following as a person without a disability. If I was at the moment the best basketball player in Greece, without disability, the best basketball player in Greece. How many do you think know who the best basketball players in Greece are. Tell me, to drive me crazy. You know? No. Do you know a woman basketball player from Greece? No. If I tell you now to tell me about Kolopetinitsa basketball players, you will tell me. So, the truth is that because it is not the sport that does not have the value it needs but the truth is as it is for me if I were the best basketball player in the world I would never make money nor would I ever come in to become Antetokounmpo as good and to be. Even if I was the best basketball player to ever go through the world, not from Greece, there was no way I could ever become Antetokounmpo. So just like sports and why it is, I will also ask you the other, not only for that. Do you know a handball player or not and you can know why you are like that, now ask Mr. Kouzelis there if he knows a handball player, Ms. Kartasidou who listens, there is no way he knows, right?

This means that the sports, anyway, are football and basketball, which are basically men sports that offer the spectacle. So let's not put the label because it cannot be done by itself, this is the truth. A sport with such to have the same audience as here. But sports at the level of sports for everyone whether you go to school and do the programs we have done so many times and the kids go crazy when we put them on and play goalball. We invite a blind, as many times as I have brought to my class a friend of mine with blindness and this child of our -graduate student is now with a mobility disability, they are excited. The truth is that this is the first time they hear, here they come to the university and the first question I ask them is what do you know about disability and they know

nothing. If they know and say something we had a child but I do not know what exactly he had. They may have had a child with Down syndrome in their classroom...

Antonopoulou Anna:

I went through a lot.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

...and not realize it. I think that sport should go more into how they say it, the need for inclusion and inclusion which is the best means because it is a game essentially sport and not because ... Okay what to do, I tell you that about me too is unfair like many others is unfair and I am 1.60 and I would like to become a model can I? I cannot.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

You know that all the time we chat but also in the movies inside, we talked about any athlete we talked about victories and we talked about medals. We were talking about games, we were talking there. But this is not a sport. To be honest this is one tenth of sports. It is a sport for me that every morning I will go out at 7 o'clock in the morning to ride a bike for 14-15 kilometers and at that time there are around 50-60 people in front of the beach jogging, someone who is swimming. All this is a sport. And it's a sport, it's another big piece of sport that exists in people with disabilities and in people with disabilities.

The people who are in the Down Syndrome club in the day center do a lot of sports for you every day, whether they are swimming or not. will take part in medals, will travel, will go to Paralympics, will go to the Special Olympics world. It is a wrong mentality and what a mystery in the field of disability to do that if someone with a disability Katerina says I play basketball with a wheelchair, I bet we will ask him in which category his team is and where he is and what he does. That is, we have identified it a bit and that is wrong.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Yes, that's right. We totally agree my Vassilis.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Katerina, tell us, is it true? It's like that?

Saranti Katerina:

Yes, from now on I think many things through this. In the past, anyone with a disability who did a sport would probably be distinct. It is not like that now. We distinguish between those who do mass sports and those who do championships. And I'm glad we got to that level and developed it further.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

It's very important, very important but it's essential for society and for inclusion and for people to integrate and for the other person to understand that he or she has a classmate who has a particular disability and I saw that in a movie but I do not remember in which was, who said you have to understand it. This is really a research project that we are working on now in young children, that in order to accept something you have to understand it and you have to understand the strengths, the weaknesses. Understand that beyond disability above all is the personality of the individual. I often say, what will he say if the other person is blind and disliked as a human being. You are a human being and you respect him when really what he lacks from birth or from an accident anyway, you will help him find his place, to cross a road, you will need to give him an instruction, yes. But if a person with a disability is invidious going to coffee with him just because he is blind I think it's the worst

Kasimatis Vassilis:

At the moment we are talking, a good friend who writes that "have you ever dared to say this to the parents of the club? That their children will not receive a medal and that they only do that ... ". I take it for granted. If something drew me to Special Olympics Katerina, Voula knows me better, what I always admire is that you see a pedestal with 8 stages, we have stairs with 8 on our pedestals. It is not only first, second and third is also one but. That is, everyone goes up somewhere. I have a photo in seminars that I do, at some point I will show it to you, where the first one is a little depressed and turns and looks at the seventh one who is celebrating and who is happy, celebrating and jumping on the podium.

And that's what drew me to this field and to the sport of people with disabilities because it really is what we call sport. It is a sport. When it starts and leaves, when it starts and enters the championship, not that it is bad, you do and do championship very well and I admire you and I envy you, I wish I could do championship too, I cannot. But what I'm saying is that it's not something I like. It's not something I would do.

And I really remember because you said that before about this Voula, do you know what attracted me? I say this for your students. Do you know what drew me to the field of education for people with disabilities? It was that we went with our good teacher then Dina, we went to KEAT in the center for the blind in Athens and there they played football and put us, they closed our eyes and we also played football. Needless to say, we were "killed". But it was the first time I sat down and thought and said oh, this is a nice place because I do not. And the students' contact with the space and the field is really nice. It brings out very nice things and it also gives the right to coexist because now I do not know how to take the students, to take the white students and go to a department that makes people with vision problems quantum mechanics, I will say it again, there I think that their coexistence will be very communicative. While playing goalball, playing football or doing something, say ping pong is very beautiful.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Vassilis, because we have done this so many times, the truth is that even for the young children that we have done in schools and do through sports games that you bring or typical athletes, when there is this coexistence, the children really have fun. And it's the only moment you can really realize and say that yes these people can coexist and understand what we are saying, that in addition to the difference that everyone can have, they are also a person with a specific personality and they are on of all he beyond his disability. So, I think it's the best of all. I do not know if...

Kasimatis Vassilis:

To put Anna in our conversation. Anna, tell us about a moment that stands out from all the time you play badminton. A victory you made, a medal, something...

Antonopoulou Anna:

The experiences that I have lived all these years. They are magical. I cannot say more. It's a full chapter of my whole life.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Tell me something beautiful you remember.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

A moment that stood out, a moment.

Antonopoulou Anna:

In Abu Dhabi, for example, when we got the gold. There...

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Did you get the gold in the double?

Antonopoulou Anna:

Yes, yes, yes.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

With whom;

Antonopoulou Anna:

Jason and I were a couple together.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

And coach please?

Antonopoulou Anna:

Mr. Alexandros Katsoras.

[...]

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

I thought you were the Coach again.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

No, no, I was not. I only once sat like that in badminton [...] but because Alexander is a man who is 20-25 years old and he does this job and he does it at the base and he does it very well, I wanted to applaud him and give him praise for really going to another part, to go to the coaches part, that there are great people. Katerina, who is your coach, your coach?

Saranti Katerina:

Aris Mavropoulos.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Aris Mavropoulos... I think I know him, but ...

Saranti Katerina:

But in general I had a hard time finding a coach who understood the disability. That is, the standards were a bit low sometimes or not, exactly the skills that ...

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Well, this is a very difficult part Katerina, to know it because anyway the studies you do, let's say at TEFAA that I tell you and that I also teach, I can tell you that I am a teacher and I teach at TEFAA I could not tell you I'm training. But I know how to say everything to my students to show them how to do what we said before mass sports, how to do [...], but to train in something specialized or to be an athlete in it, to get to a championship we are not talking about mass exercise. Why tell you now and basketball to the typical kids I can do very comfortably now at basketball school. Can I go play basketball at Panathinaikos? It's just like what we say, a child who ends up with a specialty there can teach mass sports, but he cannot train you and reach you high. Or he will be an athlete who will not know the disability and will have to learn and actually learn with you and it is really very difficult and all of them learn together with the athletes and little by little they can also develop, because it is still a very new part.

Saranti Katerina:

Well, I would prioritize knowledge and perception of disability and then how good a basketball coach he is, for example, or triathlon or I do not know what. I would make it a priority.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Yes. It is not very easy...

Saranti Katerina:

Right now at least.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

He wants the championship even if you know, I tell you I know disability very well but because I do not know triathlon at all I could not train you. So, it is not so. Even in basketball I know basketball better than I know triathlon again I could not train to reach a level and be very good athletes to play [...].

Kasimatis Vassilis:

When we go to this part I always say, I like stories. I grew up, Katerina, and I always tell stories, right? You know the story of Bella Carroll. Bella Caroli was a Romanian handball player, played handball and later coached small teams and schools. He worked as a physical education teacher at a center in Bucharest and was a handball player. His wife was a rhythmic gymnastics coach in the Romanian national team and at one point she got a transfer to a sports school somewhere outside but it was an honorary transfer because she would get good athletes. And he said to him, that, you know, you must come with me and he says let me come and do there what? There is a fitness center. He says come and you will find something to do. So, when Bella Carroll went there, they gave him the little children 7/8 y.o there and trained them in gymnastics. It is the famous Romanian gymnastics team. He is the coach of Nadia Comaneci, who was a handball player like that and who trained Comaneci and more. In that school there were ten very good athletes, ten athletes who would be in the top six at the Olympics. He went to the West and did it again, he repeated it with the American school, in the American school of gymnastics.

So even there we must not put labels, neither to be good in disability nor to be good in rhythm, to fit the person to have an appetite to work to... The matching. I think there is the most basic of all. Chemistry between people. I wish Mavropoulos to be, to have the chemistry and to do very well. I wish you good luck.

Saranti Katerina:

Thanks.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Well because I think the conversation is endless and because I see people are already tired and we start and leave, in the end we will be alone and we will talk. So, I think we have to close slowly. To thank above all the girls here, the two athletes.

Antonopoulou Anna:

You are welcome. It was my pleasure.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Mom, many many kisses.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Thank my friend Vassilis and above all Lefki, who does not appear, only by hearing her voice, Ms. Kartasidou who is the soul of this conference and I have said to her countless times, I admire her unconditionally for what she does. It is a huge effort, a huge job to set it all up and she tells us a thousand times thank you, even though we do nothing comparing to what Lefki does. So even though Covid, it never stopped and continued last year and this year. We hope next year -we said this last year as well- for for next year to be closely Lefki. Thank you very much, all of you who were here, who watched us. We hope, you gain something from this experience. Thank you, if he is still online, I do not know girls, our athlete from Serbia. Let us also thank him for his presence and I really hope to see you again, to be closely next year and to keep in touch again and again though such organizations Lefki. Thank you very much.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Mrs. Giagazoglou, you are champions in sports.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Yes...

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Here the athletes are mine are the volunteers.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

This is certain.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

Exactly. So I am not the soul. A heart may beat but the soul is all these other souls that give strength to all of us, because it really is a purely voluntary offering that we make with great joy and we are glad to have people who...

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

You are very right Lefki, but I will say it again. Without this someone, someone to inspire them, there could not be all those volunteers who want to do that. So, this is you, you are the inspirer just as the coach can be the inspiration and you try so hard and you are the inspirer of this thing.

Kartasidou Lefkothea:

No, OK. I see it a little bit the other way around.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

[...] That inspires you, is not the same. So, you inspire them and the girls do not stop and of course, thanks to them very much for them [...] and to continue as long as you have the motivation and the soul to do it, to be by your side. Thank you all very much. Vassilis, if you want to say something about the closing.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

I will say that tonight and I want to thank Lefki very quickly not too many thank you, but to say that we really talked about three very favorite things of mine. The dance which I work in, people with disabilities, the thing I love so much about sports and of course volunteering which is really a very good part and I always remember the world we want to deliver... Volunteering is the process that leads us from the world we live in the world we want to pass on to our children.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Correct. I thought you would say that I was the other third.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Well, when Lefki said that we will be with her I said to say that I tell her we cannot be together, we are fighting. He says "right?" I say "yes, we do not talk, I do not know why, Voula does not speak to me". She says "I do not believe it", "now what will I do?" I say let me not tease you anymore, I love Voula very much and she is an amazing teacher and really every student I meet tells me the same thing. I do not know why he says that of course.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

I pay them. Thank you very, very much.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Katerina, I am glad to meet you.

Saranti Katerina:

Glad to meet you too.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Katerina all the best. I wish you strength in whatever you do. I hope you try for as long as you can and have many and only successes. The same to you, my little Anne. Many many more successes for as long as you can bear.

Antonopoulou Anna:

Thank you very much.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Anna happy birthday for the day after tomorrow. I will call you.

Antonopoulou Anna:

Ok, ok.

Giagazoglou Paraskevi:

Mr. Kouzelis, what can I say about you? Thank you very much, you are fantastic. I could not watch you today. Thank you very much. Good night.

Kasimatis Vassilis:

Good night.

Saranti Katerina:

Good evening.

Antonopoulou Anna:

Good evening.