

THE HORSE THERAPY

ACTIVITIES, ADUCATION AND HORSE TERAPHY

by Gilda Novelli - September/November 2013



The present horse therapy path is structured in accordance with the Integrated Equestrian Activity Methods and aims at preserving the end-user wellness involved into the project.

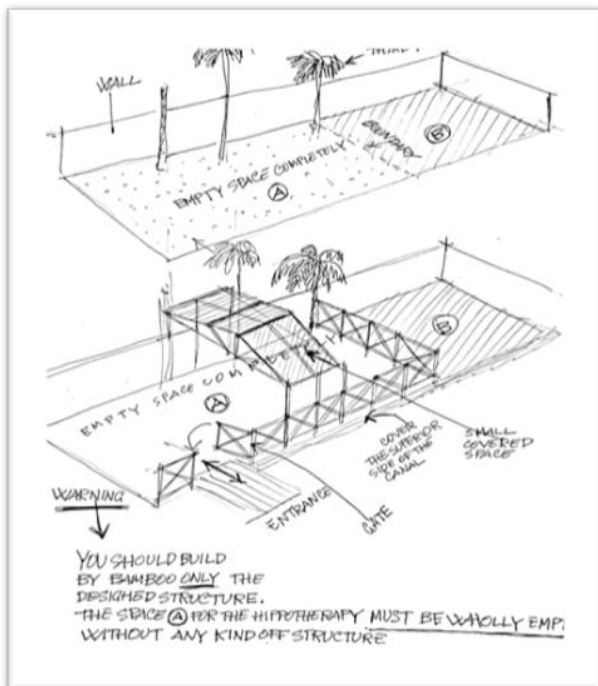
Space, human being and horse are the most important factors.

The project was organized in three different modules within a period of 3 months from September to November. It was characterized by several experienced phases developed in the centre where Anandagar children are received. These educational modules developed during the school time by practical lessons and therapeutic sessions and are marked by a direct contact with horses. Daily, an Indian woman supported me working as an interpreter by translating in Bengali my lessons to therapists, teachers and children. Moreover, a young boy looked after the horse, helping me to drive it in the different kind of pedagogic pathways.

MODULE 1 - THE SPACE

A dedicate space was equipped to create a well-structured and friendly environment wholly congruent to the rehabilitation project and to the needs of those who attended it.

For horse therapy lessons and activities, we realized a small circular space circumscribed with simple movable barriers made by bamboo tubes. This fenced area (10x12mt. diameter) was built in the exterior Anandagar school playground. The space was covered with white cloths to avoid sunshine and raining conditions.



MODULE 2 - THE HUMAN BEING



This module focused on person's needs and demands rather than on their pathologies, on the social group and on the integration between disabled and health people.

The 23th of September we began to work with both Apanjan and Anandagar children. Children were divided into groups (10 persons) according to age, weight and pathology. During this module a so called itinerant lab, titled "body and emotion" was created for both classes with the goal to develop educational and expressive activities concerning the horse project.





MODULE 3 - THE HORSE

The focus of this module was the animal meditation - which is considered as different and NOT as a foreign animal. The first step was a sort of “knowing phase” between children and horses. In these 3 months we taught children how taming and guiding an horse from the ground, thus. In a second step, children went up horses driven by a therapist and, all together, we started the horse therapy exercises.



Stretching Exercises in the saddle

This kind of exercises aimed at providing children coordination and balance.

Pelvis was the first part of body which was taken in consideration since it serves as a reference for both upper(trunk, head and superior arts) and lower arts (thigh, legs and feet).

At a late stage, we focused on distal positions. The wide range of exercises was realized to be accomplished by children in the saddle with the therapists' help.



Comprehension of simple and complex educational paths and of figures

To appreciate the visuo-practice skills, children were instructed to go in the saddle horse towards specific paths which are continually complicated. The goal is to achieve, gradually, movement control.

The horse therapy improves listening and comprehension skills. Children improved their behaviors and their attitudes such as practical faculties and the ability to discriminate the environment spatially (direction, laterality, balance etc.)

Children were able to distinguish between right and left hand. After an accurate training, children started to walk slowly.







THE GAME

For children, the game is the first way to discover their inner side as well as the word surrounding . By playing, they learn how things function, how putting together objects and, basically, they understand the existence of rules and behaviors to be respected.

With the horse, the children learn to be perseverant and to have confidence in a deep process of self-awareness and of word knowing, thus starting to find a balance between these condition.

The game is an useful tool for children growth. Through the game, “disable children” improved listening and communication skills.



A creative Lab was also created with the aim to allow children to know linguistically, the word of horse. To this aim, a “bogus horse” was realized and actually used during raining days.





The bogus horse





MODULE 4

This module aims at developing a training course about the main physiotherapy principles applied in horse therapy sessions to disabled children.

Course addressees are teachers and physiotherapists and the arguments are:

Relation between children and therapist – Indications and contraindications about horse therapy - Approach to the disabled patient- Clinical cases and simulations – Equestrian techniques.





**A special thanks goes out to all those who have collaborated on the
First horse therapy project in Kolkata (Bengal – India).**