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ACROSS

POLICY

RECOMMENDATIONS



MOVE IT



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Policy recommendations - Introduction

This document is drafted in the framework of the project "ACROSS - Age: Connecting & Revitalizing thrOugh SportS " which is supported by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. It is a collective effort of the project's Consortium, consisting of the NGOs «Move It» (Greece), «Libero» (Serbia) and «Idea» (North Macedonia) and the sports clubs «AC Panorama» (Greece), «GroBasket» (Serbia) και «SC Aleks-Delfini» (North Macedonia). These policy recommendations are the result of extensive analysis of the data collected through an online research, as well as integration of concrete feedback received from participants in pilot activities, which gave us the opportunity to explore, map and understand the current challenges faced by all target groups: children, senior citizens and sports providers, in the context of intergenerational sports activities. As such, we strongly encourage all relevant stakeholders to take these policy recommendations into serious consideration and join forces towards fostering intergenerational dialogue through sport.



Promote the benefits of intergenerational sports towards all target groups

We **urge** local and national authorities, sports clubs and sports associations, organizations active in the field of sports, civil society organizations, institutions for the elderly and ***all relevant stakeholders, to promote the beneficial character of intergenerational sports under the prism of fostering intergenerational dialogue and interaction.***

Sport is not only a means to achieve a healthier lifestyle and better physical conditions. Neither is it limited to offer pleasure, joy and some entertaining leisure time. It is the path towards reaching self-development, promoting societal principles, bringing civil and cultural change, positively affecting active ageing.

We firmly believe that sport can be used as a channel to foster intergenerational communication, a way to break existing stereotypes across generations, limit social anxiety, prevent social exclusion and marginalization of senior citizens, as well as restore community disharmony and ensure solidarity.

As such, we ***invite stakeholders to acknowledge the multi-dimensional character of intergenerational sport activities and foster social integration for senior citizens through sports.***



Create bonds and cooperation channels between sports associations and institutions for the elderly

We encourage all relevant actors of the intergenerational spectrum to build bonds and create links in order to foster their cooperation and achieve the successful intergenerational dialogue through sport.

The benefits of intergenerational sport as a response to different societal challenges are uncountable: promoting mental and physical health, developing positive attitudes towards other generations, increasing motivation in learning and contributing to the social inclusion of seniors as a marginalized group and therefore promoting the sense of community and equality. Provided that both beneficiaries, children and seniors, belong to completely opposite age groups and are hosted by different service providers, it is significant that the latter create strong links and foster their cooperation, in order to provide opportunities for interaction among their target groups. Besides, only they have the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to ensure that their beneficiaries are handled properly, with respect to their specificities and requirements of their age range.

As a result, *we urge sports associations, institutions for the elderly and all other involved key-actors to join forces in the effort to implement intergenerational sport initiatives by creating strong links, close cooperations and exchange of expertise.*



Encourage the inclusion of intergenerational sport activities in the regular planning of sports clubs and associations

We *invite sports clubs, sports associations and organizations active in the field of sports to integrate intergenerational sports activities in their regular training curriculum*, as a response to the current lack of opportunities and similar initiatives, and become real life communicators and supporters of the importance of intergenerational dialogue through sports.

Nevertheless, apart from the self-explanatory benefits of such initiatives for the direct beneficiaries, (children and seniors), they can be equally beneficial to the sports providers themselves. Providing a well-rounded approach to sport, developing an innovative profile compared to other organizations, attracting more people in their events, gaining reputation and acknowledgement, and raising the interest of stakeholders to support their work are only a few of the benefits they could enjoy.

Consequently, we *encourage sports clubs, sports associations and organizations to include intergenerational activities on a regular basis* in order to contribute to the effort of bridging the gap between generations, offer innovative services to their target groups and enjoy the benefits of their own transformation into socially responsible key-actors of their communities.



Take measures to facilitate the participation of the elderly in sports activities

We urge authorities to support sports clubs and associations in the process of transforming into intergenerationally-friendly service providers and facilitate the participation of senior citizens in such activities.

There is no doubt that intergenerational miscommunication, stereotyping across generations and lack of solidarity, under the prism of sport, can be fought through exchanges between the generations (where the seniors can pass their experience and knowledge to the younger, who can offer skills, energy and dynamic force), mutual assistance (where both sides empower and acknowledge the value of one another), and/or through common activities (creating strong bonds and combating stereotypes), as also marked by the “**Mapping study on the intergenerational dimension of sport**” by Ecorys, published by the European Commission, in December 2020. However, it is a fact that sports providers are struggling with structural deficiencies, a significant barrier to developing intergenerational programs on a regular basis. Inadequate equipment, lack of infrastructure, untrained staff and other such obstacles, discourage the sports providers to include such initiatives in their regular agenda.

For this reason, we *invite stakeholders to support sport providers to integrate intergenerational initiatives by providing adequate funding, structural improvements, capacity building and any other necessary support, for a successful transformation.*

