



EUROPE ON THE MOVE

Promoting EU Priorities through Physical Activity

DISCLAIMER



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SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY – EU AND PRACTICE

More Europeans are getting older, which is a financial challenge.

More Europeans are not physically active enough, and have poor health as a consequence.

More Europeans tend to be excluded from social interaction, and long term volunteering is challenged.

What are we going to do about it?

Nobody can meet these challenges alone. But by working together, they can be overcome.

I believe the grassroots sport sector has a key role to play. With its widespread, community based structures all across Europe, there is a framework to engage all citizens; young and old, rich and poor into regular physical activity in a socially inclusive setting.

Grassroots sport is engaging 40 % of all Europeans in physical activity on a regular basis. If we add to this the number of Europeans who are physically active in other ways than sport, 65 % identify themselves as active on regular basis (Eurobarometer, 2010).

However, there is a considerable gap between European countries in regard of the degree of involvement of the citizen in public life in general, and in sport in particular.

If all European societies reached the participation level of the countries with the highest grassroots sport participation, 150 million Europeans more would be regularly active in sport. Let us set ourselves a goal:

Vision: 100 million more EU citizens active in sport and physical activity by 2020

Such a vision would be the core of more inclusive, healthier and economically viable European societies.

It would guide the actions that are needed to address the European *Years of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion* (2010), of *Volunteering* (2011), and of *Active Ageing* (2012).

It would harness the potential of the grassroots sport sector to the benefit of societies and individuals.

It would be a political guidance on a European level. A guidance that has relevance in individual Europeans' every day life. A guidance that in a few words tells all stakeholders what steps to take and where to prioritize.

In cooperation with other sectors, grassroots sport can deliver on the promise. The SANTE project involves 17 partners from grassroots sport and beyond. In this magazine you can discover snapshots of what they are doing to play their part – and what still needs to be done.

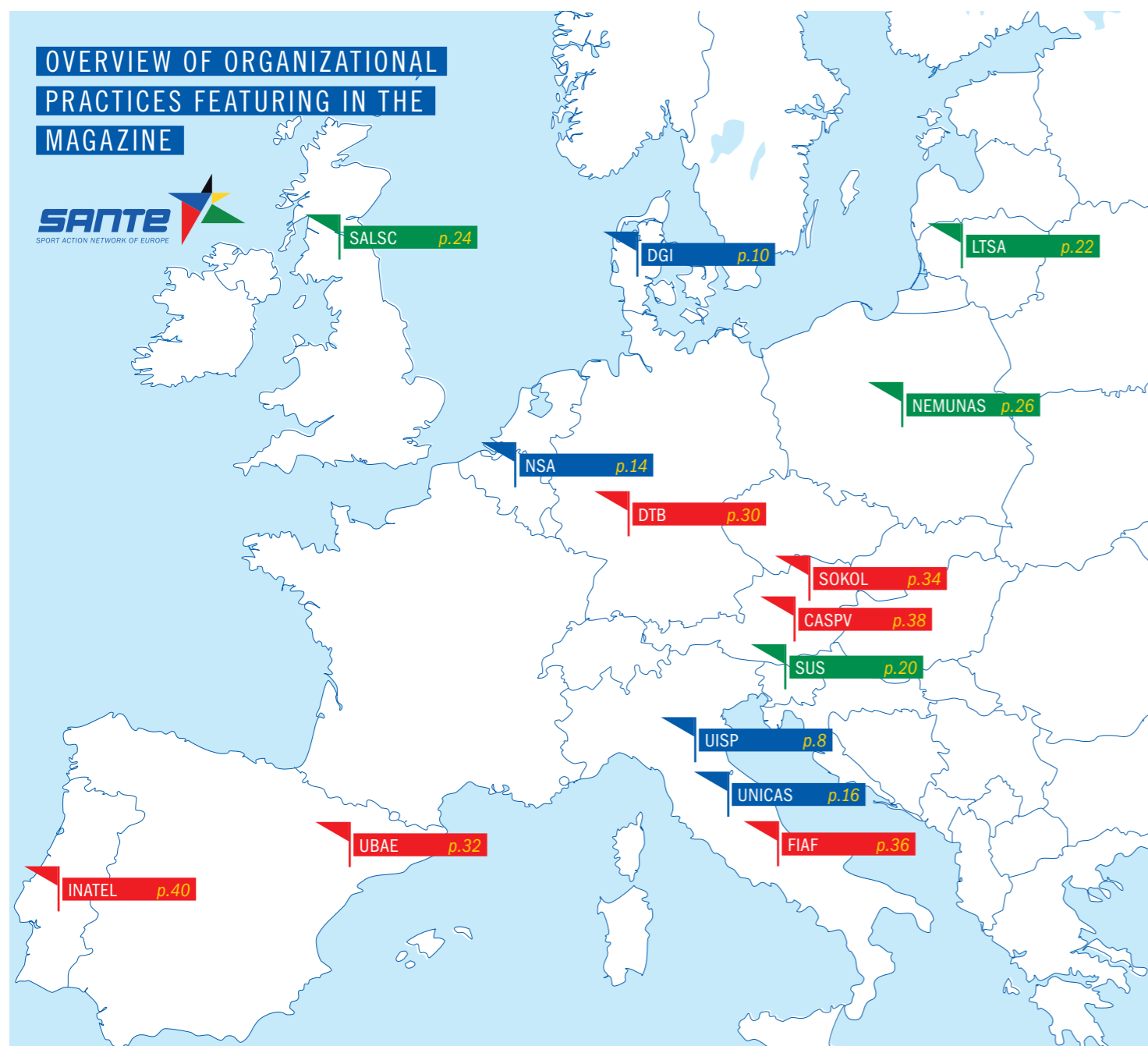
I wish you good reading!

Mogens Kirkeby, ISCA President



OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES FEATURING IN THE MAGAZINE

SANTE
SPORT ACTION NETWORK OF EUROPE



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SPORT SHOULD BE A REAL OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYBODY

INTERVIEW WITH THE HUNGARIAN EU PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION. MR. ATTILA CZENE, STATE MINISTER FOR SPORTS OF THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL RESOURCES.

eu 2011.hu



During the first half of 2011, Hungary holds the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union for the first time. ISCA used this occasion to talk to State Minister Attila Czene on the future of sport in Europe and take the temperature on sport's role in the ongoing 2011 European Year on Volunteering.

The Hungarian Presidency is committed to not let sports fall victim to the current economic crisis in Europe.

ISCA: In light of the recent COM Communication about EU's the future sport policy, what are the main ambitions of the Hungarian EU Council Presidency when it comes to sport?

Attila Czene: All of us are aware that sport falls under member state competence. EU does not and can not impose to Member States any sport strategy or sport activity. We have to be aware of what we can expect and what we can do to promote sport's situation in Europe. In the Council Working Party on Sport my colleagues are working on the preparation of an EU Work Plan, which is meant to provide guidance for joint efforts for the next coming 3 years.

We also support the idea of a sport programme, because we are convinced that there are fields of actions which can help European sport to strengthen its position in society. The world and Europe are going through an economic crises, but this does not mean that because sport is one of the youngest EU competences, it shouldn't receive EU funding like those available to other fields of similar competence – for example youth, culture or education.

The 2011 European Year on Volunteering has recently been launched. What role do you see for the sport sector here?

Volunteering is an active expression of civic participation and strengthens common European values such as solidarity and social cohesion. Volunteering also provides important learning opportunities, because involvement in voluntary activities can provide people with new skills and competences and can even improve their employability. This is particularly important in this time of economic crisis. Volunteering plays an important role in varied and diverse sectors, especially in sport. Volunteering has a great, but so far under-exploited, potential for the development of sport in Europe. The European Year of Volunteering should help volunteers and volunteering organisations from everywhere in Europe to meet and to learn what is done best in other countries, in particular if we see the 8 million Euros budget allocated by the Commission for the European Year.

Where do you see opportunities and challenges for the volunteer sector today?

I think that there is a number of challenges faced by volunteering in Hungary and throughout Europe, like the lack of statistical data or targets; insufficient awareness of the benefits that can be achieved by encouraging volunteering; the lack of specific legal framework (e.g. tax exemptions) on volunteering in sport. Another problem is that there is insufficient training for volunteers in sport and also I think that those people who think that volunteers in sport are merely 'a group of people who assist in the organisation of sports events' are wrong.

What role do you see for non-governmental organizations in achieving these ambitions?

I truly believe that structured dialogue at different levels between governmental and non-governmental organizations contributes to the discovery

and establishment of the future common fields of action. Our aim is to reach as many European citizens as we can because sport should be a real opportunity for everybody in all days life.

“OUR AIM IS TO REACH AS MANY EUROPEAN CITIZENS AS WE CAN BECAUSE SPORT SHOULD BE A REAL OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYBODY IN ALL DAYS LIFE.”

SOCIAL INCLUSION

2010
European Year
for Combating
Poverty and
Social Exclusion

“SPORT, LIKE NOTHING ELSE, EMPOWERS PEOPLE. IT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO INSPIRE AND MOTIVATE, SINCE IT SHINES A LIGHT ON WHAT PEOPLE CAN DO, RATHER THAN WHAT THEY CANNOT DO [...] SPORT CONNECTS PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES. IT KNOWS NO DISTINCTIONS OF RACE, LANGUAGE OR CULTURE...”

— Androulla Vassiliou, 2010: European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth

“SPORT HAS A STRONG POTENTIAL TO CONTRIBUTE TO SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND NEW JOBS THROUGH ITS POSITIVE EFFECTS ON SOCIAL INCLUSION, EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND PUBLIC HEALTH.” — European Commission, 2011: Developing the European Dimension in Sport

It's important to stay healthy, both inside and outside of the prison walls

"FOR A SHORT WHILE IT FEELS AS IF YOU AREN'T INSIDE A PRISON"

Twice a week the inmates from Italian prison – Rebibbia – engage in a game of football. The activity helps the inmates to avoid the alienation of life in prison. The Italian Sport for All Association (UISP) hopes to provide inmates with the possibility of increasing their wellbeing and assist in re-socializing by participating in activities resembling life on the outside.

Football coach Marco Iori loudly blows his whistle, and the sharp sound echoes amongst the tight prison walls. Shortly after, the match ensues. The grown men filling the court are all pacing up and down the artificial grass in an attempt to score a goal.

"FOOTBALL TRAINING IS A HELPFUL TOOL IN REHABILITATING THE INMATES" — UISP



Marco Iori has been a volunteer football coach for children and young adults for a number of years via UISP. Twice a week he visits the inmates at the Rebibbia prison, situated in the Italian capital Rome. The prison houses lifetime inmates as well as inmates with minor misdemeanors on their records.

"I was very surprised to learn that the inmates are just like you and me. Which is ordinary people who have been in unfortunate situations and therefore ended up in prison", says Marco Iori.

He adds:

"Some of the inmates share their fears and problems with me. Others tell me nothing. It's very different from each individual. Common for them all, however, is their willingness to cooperate and learn. I've never had such an easy coaching job. It's much easier than coaching children for example, because they actually listen when I speak".

Project Manager at UISP – Andrea Ciogli – explains that it is very important for the inmates to interact with someone from the outside. Ciogli has been specifically assigned to the Rebibbia project.

"A prison must always be accessible to people from the outside. This is important to ensure proper conditions for the inmates. However, it is far from all prisons in Italy that offers facilities similar to ours", Ciogli says.

BEYOND THE WALLS

Apart from football the inmates at Rebibbia also play tennis, volleyball and chess. On weekends, their families are sometimes invited to join in on the activities. Most of the events are being planned by a group of inmates known as Associazione Sportiva Dilettantistica 'Albatros'. Valter Gobetti – convicted of robbing a bank – is in charge of Albatros, and explains that the activities is a positive way for the inmates to interact, whilst distracting their thoughts.

"For a short while it feels as if you not inside a prison. You are beyond the walls, so to speak", says one of Gobetti's inmates, who is following the game in the courtyard.

Furthermore, the football training is a helpful tool in rehabilitating the inmates and preparing them for the life they can expect once they leave Rebibbia. Spending years in a prison away from one's everyday routines can create a sense of alienation from 'normal life'. Through sporting activities UISP hope to provide the inmates with the possibility of re-connecting with themselves by participating in something that resembles life on the outside.

The game is over. The players are making their way towards the prison building. One of them is 26 year old Rocky, who is looking forward to being released soon. He explains that it's also nice to be in good shape.

"It's important to stay healthy, both inside and outside of the prison walls - and when you go to the beach it's always good to be in nice shape", he laughs.

ITALIAN SPORT FOR ALL ASSOCIATION (UISP)



- is a national organization dedicated to extending the right to practice sport to everyone
- works in several professional spheres, including having national and international capacity on activities of solidarity, education and social inclusion of populations at risk
- is formed by more than 1,2 million members and 17.000 Italian sports clubs



Former football player Pelé

A photograph of Pelé, the legendary Brazilian footballer, smiling and holding a yellow Brazilian national football jersey. He is standing next to an older woman with grey hair and glasses, who is also smiling. They are surrounded by a large crowd of people, many of whom are also wearing Brazilian football jerseys. The scene appears to be outdoors, possibly at a stadium or a public event.

Where would Suell Osmani be today had it not been for football? This question has often lingered with the 30 year old Copenhagenener.



— Frederik Sperling



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- SANTE MAGAZINE | SOCIAL INCLUSION

SOCIAL INCLUSION

It also has significant value for the overall physical well-being of the children, as well as in developing their motor skills

PLAYGROUNDS ARE AN ESSENTIAL SOCIAL GATHERING POINT

It is important for children to engage in physical activity with their peers. At the playground, children are faced with playmates from different cultures, and this expands their horizon on differences in lifestyle and social belongings, states Alberto Bichi, Secretary General at the Federation of the European Play Industry (FEPI).

Swings, seesaws and roundabouts. Stickball, fresh air and animated conversation. The central theme at most playgrounds is fun and games. However, it is also a place where children – and adults alike – can expand their social circle. Alberto Bichi sees this is one of the primary reasons why playgrounds should be easily accessible to everyone and increased in numbers.



“Playgrounds are an essential social gathering point for different groups, and allow for interaction transcending differences in age and social backgrounds. It goes without saying that these relations have a great influence in contributing to the development of friendships, and serves as an essential catalyst for meeting new people.”

Bichi adds:

“They actively contribute to a reinforced social cohesion, and allow for a smooth and personal handling of possible societal hurdles and difficulties, through discussions and interaction among citizens”.

INSPIRATION TO MOVEMENT

In contrast to time spent indoor, glued to the computer and other electronic immobile devices, playgrounds can make children move and at the same time build social skills through the interaction with other children.

“This kind of play allows children to learn how to work in groups, how to share, how to negotiate, and how to resolve conflicts. It’s essential for learning how to make new friends and how to get along. It helps the development of problem-solving skills and other competences that lead to enhanced confidence, and the resilience they will need to face future challenges”, Bichi says, and also adds:

“It is through play that children learn to subordinate desires to social rules, cooperate with others willingly, and engage in socially appropriate behavior - all vital in adjusting well to the demands at school”.

“PLAY ALLOWS CHILDREN TO LEARN HOW TO WORK IN GROUPS, HOW TO SHARE, HOW TO NEGOTIATE, AND HOW TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS.”

— Alberto Bichi

Bichi goes on to explain that it also has significant value for the overall physical well-being of the children, as well as in developing their motor skills. He references statistics gathered by the World Health Organization (WHO), which shows that physical activity as part of play, provides fundamental health benefits for children and younger people.

Among some of the health advantages are increased physical fitness and muscular strength, reduced body fat, favorable cardiovascular and metabolic disease risk profiles, enhanced bone health, and reduced symptoms of depression.

“An overall evaluation of evidence, suggests that important health benefits can be expected to accrue in children and youths who accumulate 60 or more minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily”, Bichi adds.

FEDERATION OF THE EUROPEAN PLAY INDUSTRY (FEPI)



- was created in 2002 as a non-profit association at European level comprising European-based companies and European national play industries federations
- represents the interests of the most responsible manufacturers and distributors of both outdoor and indoor play equipment and safety surfacing
- exists to raise awareness of the importance of children's play for all and the well being of children at the European level

SOCIAL INCLUSION

The real art is to get the parents more involved within the sports club

Silvia Crevels, NSA

LET IMMIGRANT GIRLS HAVE A SAY

More than five hundred Dutch sports clubs have successfully managed to attract immigrant girls through a project named 'All youth participate through Sports'. The challenge is now to keep these new members. Silvia Crevels from Netherland's Sports Alliance (NSA) believes that parent/coach conferences and all-girl groups can lead the way.

According to Project Manager Silvia Crevels of Netherland's Sports Alliance (NSA), sports clubs need awareness on some key conditions in order to keep immigrant girls as members of their club. One of those is to have physical activity offers for 'girls only'. It might not be that important at an early age (primary school), but the issue is considerably bigger for older girls.



"In some situations it is desirable that girls remain unseen by men. This applies to swimming clubs for instance. Because of religion or culture some immigrant girls are not allowed certain things by their parents, nor do they want to do these things themselves", she explains.

However, Crevels stresses that the situation varies considerable from person to person – and from family to family.

FUN AND PERSONAL ATTENTION

For many adolescent girls the coach often plays a vital role. It is important that this is a person they can relate to and they can trust. Often the girls will join not only to practice but also to absorb everything that goes beyond what is scheduled. This is why a positive and welcoming atmosphere is of outmost importance.

"The most important thing we can offer the girls is fun. Of course this is being accomplished by playing soccer, but also by organizing sideline activities like a movie night or a barbecue on a regular basis", says a female coach of the girls' division at a soccer club in Utrecht.

Giving the girls personal attention will develop trust, again leading to a feeling of closeness and connection with the sports club.

CONTACT WITH THE PARENTS

However, focus should not solely be placed on the girls. Many immigrant parents are not familiar with Western traditions of sports clubs. The clubs therefore need to make an extra effort in explaining parents how the club functions and what the house rules are. For instance through

an interview prior to registration, Silvia Crevels explains.

And it is equally important that the parents become acquainted with someone at the sports club.

"When immigrant youth members are involved, the club can consider inviting a member with the same cultural background to the interview. This person can act as a guide, an adviser, and as a confidential counselor for the parents", she says.

Once contact has been established, the real art is to get the parents more involved within the sports club. One way to do this is to organize parents' evenings, but at a large sports club this could turn out to be too comprehensive an event. Smaller scale alternatives could be organizing a social gathering with coffee/tea for parents every six weeks.

Silvia Crevels elaborates:

But regardless of which strategy to apply, some things are pivotal; such as listening, observing, questioning, and never drawing swift conclusions, she says.

"It is important for trainers and coaches to find out what the situation for the girl or group in question is. Assumptions should never be made".

"IT IS IMPORTANT FOR TRAINERS AND COACHES TO FIND OUT WHAT THE SITUATION FOR THE GIRL OR GROUP IN QUESTION IS. ASSUMPTIONS SHOULD NEVER BE MADE"

— Silvia Crevels

NETHERLAND'S SPORTS ALLIANCE (NSA)



- is a value-oriented sports organization that focuses on the development, renewal and the implementation of a sustainable recreational sports and exercise culture in the Netherlands
- individuals and groups organize themselves into communities that are sustainable and derive their identity from shared values and norms
- has over 80 years experience in developing, coordinating and implementing projects in the field of sport and physical activity in many social contexts

The key is creating exercise friendly spaces in the city. The city needs, in other words, to be inclusive

Antonio Borgogni,
University of Cassino

THE CITY SHOULD INSPIRE MOVEMENT

More children would walk to school if the roads weren't crowded with fast cars. Safe pedestrian streets would also encourage more senior citizens to go for a stroll. According to the University of Cassino, a trend of better utilization of urban spaces to promote active lifestyles is fortunately gaining momentum.

Exercise? A question that should not only be considered by each individual. Politicians and architects also need to reflect on this when developing urban plans. A city can inspire movement by incorporating the required space in city planning, which in turn will affect the general public health, explains Antonio Borgogni, Assistant Professor at University of Cassino's Faculty of Sport Sciences, Department of Sport and Health Sciences.



"If you build a city with excellent bicycle paths, wide pedestrian streets and plenty of parks, you create an incentive for people to be more active. The key is creating exercise friendly spaces in the city. The city needs, in other words, to be inclusive, and urban planning subsequently used as a tool to catalyze social cohesion processes", says Antonio, who's main research is centered around the relevance of informal sport facilities in urban settings.



THE SAFE ROAD TO SCHOOL

The road to an active and healthy city is not necessarily secured by spending billions of Euros on modern sports stadiums. Less is more. The most important thing is that the surrounding environment is created to facilitate the use of the body in everyday life, Borgogni explains.

If the road leading to school is safer with speed reducing bumps, more parents would allow their children to walk to school. And if a city offers free use of public bikes, it reminds people that there is an alternative to taking the car or the bus. Vert ramps for skateboarding encourages young people to move, while wide pedestrian streets inspires senior citizens to take a walk using Nordic walking sticks, yet still being able to keep a safe distance to other pedestrians. These are all things that are fairly easy to implement in city planning.

"The older parts of the cities can be rehabilitated in this sense, and the new parts can be planned to match these requirements", he says.

A GREEN WAVE

Borgogni's research shows how the idea of space for the body within a city has changed historically. Up until the first half of the 20th century, the body was considered the protagonist of the city. Many handicraft works were carried out in the streets, and the sidewalks embedded true life, hosting dozens of social functions including children's play. However, following the Second World War a process of the body's disappearance from

public space began. Mainly because the cars – a status symbol of the new affluent society – started to dominate the urban scene. Since the 70's a green wave of environmental friendly movement has emerged, however, and it will only increase in the future, he explains.

"In the last decades, there has been a clear direction in city planning. Sustainability in city planning and architecture as a paradigm is nowadays holding the same role that hygiene held in the rehabilitation of the city centers in the 19th century. This means having less polluting buildings and infrastructures, to use sources of renewable energy, and to decrease the use of cars".

Mr Borgogni expects that this will pave the way for more movement.

"If - as I presume - the sustainability trend will continue as a need for improving urban livability, the role of the body will continue to be crucial. It will probably be more recognized in the future, because the sustainability trend is also related to the healthy cities approach - an approach combining thoughts on social cohesion, the need for accessible physical activity facilities, and an encouragement of active citizenship".

"THE SUSTAINABILITY TREND IS ALSO RELATED TO THE HEALTHY CITIES APPROACH - AN APPROACH COMBINING THOUGHTS ON SOCIAL COHESION, THE NEED FOR ACCESSIBLE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACILITIES, AND AN ENCOURAGEMENT OF ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP"

— Antonio Borgogni

UNIVERSITY OF CASSINO (UNICAS)



- the University's Faculty of Sport Sciences was established in July 2002
- current research fields include: health and its determinants in modern society with particular focus on sports and physical activities, participatory processes on planning public spaces facilitating physical activities and social inequalities in health and lifestyles.
- is collaborating with a wide range of Italian and European universities on the topic of sport for all

VOLUNTEERING



The European Year of Volunteering 2011

“VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDES MANY OCCASIONS FOR NON-FORMAL EDUCATION WHICH NEED TO BE RECOGNIZED AND ENHANCED. SPORT ALSO PROVIDES ATTRACTIVE POSSIBILITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE’S ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT IN SOCIETY AND MAY HAVE A BENEFICIAL EFFECT IN HELPING PEOPLE STEER AWAY FROM DELINQUENCY.”

— European Commission, 2007: White Paper on Sport

“VOLUNTEERING IS FROM THE HEART BUT IT’S ALSO VERY IMPORTANT FROM AN ECONOMIC POINT OF VIEW. IT HAS A PRICE TAG [...], MOST OF WHICH COMES FROM SPORT, SPORTS CLUBS AND SPORTS EVENTS.”

— Ylva Tiveus, 2010: European Commission’s Communications Department

All of the ambassadors have made a truly significant contribution to the expansion of recreation and volunteering

Miro Ukmar, SUS

VOLUNTEERS GAIN AMBASSADOR STATUS IN SLOVENIA

Volunteers make a huge difference and this deserves to be acknowledged. At the Sports Union of Slovenia (SUS), a group of volunteers has recently been named honorary citizens. The purpose is to create broader awareness regarding volunteerism.

'MAKE A DIFFERENCE - VOLUNTEER!'

A slogan that the Sports Union of Slovenia (SUS) is currently trying to promote. Part of the campaign has been assembling a panel of devoted volunteers and naming them 'Ambassadors of volunteering', in hopes that their example will inspire other citizens to volunteer.



With an official, honorary title - SUS wishes to pay homage to the volunteers, whilst turning the attention towards the societal impact of their work, says President of SUS, Miro Ukmar.

"Through many years of volunteering and being active in various kinds of sports, all of the ambassadors has made a truly significant contribution to the expansion of recreation and volunteering", he explains.

Being made an ambassador of volunteering is no easy task. It requires a background of at least 10 years of volunteer work, and adhering to a specific set of ethical rules such as never imposing one's political or religious view onto someone else as part of the volunteer practice.

A CLAP ON THE SHOULDER

70 year old Milan Bricelj is one of the Volunteer Ambassadors. An economist by profession, but now retired and president of the sports club Zadvor. As a volunteer, Milan Bricelj has been working successfully in the area of sport for nearly 40 years. He considers the ambassador title a clap on the shoulder, fueling him with renewed enthusiasm.

"For me, being appointed an ambassador of volunteering is not only a personal recognition, but also an acknowledgment of the various committees and teams that I have led and am still leading. It is also a commitment to keep doing the hard work and transferring the knowledge and experiences to co-workers and younger volunteers", he says.

Why did the Sports club Zadvor nominate Milan Bricelj for this prestigious title?

"The club found that my work had a positive influence on the development of the club. From 1981-2011 the memberships grew from 20 to 500 members, who are currently participating in 15 different kinds of sports", he explains.

A POSITIVE SIGNAL

The work of volunteers are poorly reflected in Slovenian society, he says, and refers to official statistics that show that volunteering contributes with 5% of the country's gross domestic product.

"In comparison with state authorities, volunteering is still in a subordinate position when it comes to pivotal decision makings that are essential to all citizens. It is necessary to financially evaluate volunteering in order to give it the recognition it deserves".

Hopefully a change of attitude is emerging. In the beginning of February 2011, the volunteers gained national focus, when the deputies of the National Assembly unanimously voted yes to the new - long-awaited - law on volunteering. The law defines rights and duties of volunteers and volunteer organizations. Miro Ukmar believes that it also have a significant symbolic value.

"We see this as the first step in encouraging volunteering on the national level. It is a symbolic recognition of the importance of volunteering, and it is important in creating better living conditions for all our citizens", Milan Bricelj concludes.

"WE SEE THIS AS THE FIRST STEP IN ENCOURAGING VOLUNTEERING ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL. IT IS A SYMBOLIC RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEERING, AND IT IS IMPORTANT IN CREATING BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS FOR ALL OUR CITIZENS"

— Milan Bricelj

SPORTS UNION OF SLOVENIA (SUS)



- includes 320 sport clubs and 95.000 members
- is striving for Slovenia, as a country, to function as a best case European country when it comes to legislation promoting sport for all
- among its most acknowledged initiatives is the quality label "HEALTHY CLUB", which has inspired sport for all associations in several European countries

It's uncommon for families to bond via shared physical activities

THE GOOD LIFE IS ALL ABOUT SHARED EXPERIENCES

In Latvia, family members rarely exercise together. That's got to change, says head of the Latvian Sport for All Association LTSA, Galina Gorbatenkova. Living a healthy life only requires small adjustments.

Communal activities in Latvian families normally revolve around the television set or doing the daily grocery shopping. Rarely do these activities include physical exercise. Head of the Latvian Sport for All Association LTSA, Galina Gorbatenkova, explains that as a matter of fact, approximately 80 % of Latvian families never indulge in such activities.

"Often people are too busy, or they might not have the necessary energy. In some instances the mother may attend aerobic classes, and the father plays basketball whilst the children play computer games. However, it's uncommon for families to bond via shared physical activities".



Galina explains that this is one of the main reasons for establishing a family orientated festival revolving around exercise. The purpose is to gather families as teams - sometimes consisting of up to 12 members - competing against each other in various disciplines.

Normally there are 20-25 activities - such as volleyball, where the net is covered with a black cloth so the other side of the court won't be visible, and the teams have 2 balls in play. The festivals are mainly driven and inspired by volunteers.

LTSA Project Manager - Aiga Salmane - emphasizes that since it is a festival, the purpose is not to compete against each other in a manner similar to a sports competition. Instead the goal is to increase a sense of community amongst family members through these shared experiences - building social capital in a healthy way.

"We consider all of the families being winners. And because it's first and foremost a bonding experience, we give out medals to those who seem to be having the most fun, or to those with the most peculiar name. The activities we offer are varied. One might be designed to challenge your mind, while another one stresses your speed or flexibility", she explains.

LTSA has developed this strategy to promote knowledge about exercise and health, Gorbatenkova explains. Most recently the organization, in cooperation with municipalities, launched a number of happenings during Latvian Health Day. This initiative took place in

selected locations throughout the country - all at the same time. In that way people could take part in different activities close to their homes, such as Nordic walking, running and cycling.

"We thought this would be a good opportunity to display a number of different health and exercise options. Thereby giving each individual a fair chance to discover something to ones liking", Aiga Salmane explains.

Galina Gorbatenkova adds that the LTSA is very engaged in sharing the message; living a healthy life only requires small adjustments.

"It is not necessary to join a club in order to play football or basketball. The majority of people are also unable to afford such a membership - senior citizens for example. But there are many roads leading to a healthier lifestyle. A walk in the forest every now and then is one", she adds.

"Furthermore, we hope that people will socialize during these events. Often people stay in their homes, but if they read in the newspaper that on Saturday there's a Nordic walking event at the local park, they might decide to join. Let's face it - the good life is all about shared experiences".

"THERE ARE MANY ROADS LEADING TO A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE, A WALK IN THE FOREST EVERY NOW AND THEN IS ONE"

— Galina Gorbatenkova, LTSA

LATVIAN SPORTS FOR ALL ASSOCIATION (LTSA)



- was founded in 1991
- exists to promote physical activity schemes in Latvia and work towards improved health and wellbeing among Latvian citizens
- currently counts more than 20.000 paying member

VOLUNTEERING

A ‘sports mentality’ is a good thing to carry around in many different aspects

Millar Stoddart,
SALSC

VOLUNTEERS ARE LOCAL HEROES

According to Millar Stoddart from the Scottish umbrella organization SALSC – the work of volunteers is pivotal. Stoddart is convinced that in this day and age, sports organizations would not be able to exist without the tireless work of devoted volunteers and that now is a crucial time to provide role models for the younger generations, who can inspire to exercise.

The immense presence of television, the internet, and video games in young people's lives leaves less time for sports and other traditional activities that used to be a favorite pastime for many youngsters. Millar Stoddart from the Scottish Association of Local Sports Councils (SALSC) says that nowadays it takes a certain finesse to gain the attention of younger people, in order to get them to put on their sweat suit.



“When I was growing up, it was never a problem for us youngsters to organize a football match or a game of cricket and other physical activities. Today, however, there are a growing number of other attractions to compete with”.

Stoddart adds:

“In Scotland, it's not uncommon to see the football fields completely deserted during day-time and school holidays. At night though, this changes, and the young people will show up to participate in games and coaching sessions prepared by our volunteers. At this moment in time it is crucial to have someone doing the organizing for you because most young people won't show up otherwise”.

Igniting the spirit of the younger generations Millar Stoddart stresses the importance of the role of the volunteers in terms of motivating young people to engage in sports organizations and getting them to turn up week after week. He emphasizes that these volunteers engage in their work with a spirit and dedication that encourages the kids to become more involved. Tournaments during weekends would also be scarce, if the volunteers were not there to manage them.

“I guess you could say that volunteers are local heroes. They are devoting their spare time to helping these kids develop their skills and provide physical activity opportunities” he says.

In his statement, Stoddart is not only referring to the talent one might have on the sports field or in the swim team. He explains that a number of personal skills can also be developed, which in turn can be of help in future work-related situations and in general.

“It's skills of a lifetime. A ‘sports mentality’ is a good thing to carry around in many different aspects. Many companies are looking for young employees with a competitive attitude. Someone willing to develop their skills and looking for advancement”, Stoddart says.

Stoddart also believes that the volunteers gain as much as they give.

“Well, for example, if a volunteer would like to develop his abilities as a coach, we offer several courses through the local sports councils and local authorities, and it's not necessarily courses relating to the specific sport. It can also be a course in psychology and so forth”.

Stoddart adds:

As a volunteer you have the opportunity to participate on a local level and if you're willing to pursue this further, it's also possible to develop your resume on a regional, national or even international level. It's lifelong learning”.

Millar Stoddart is no “newbie” having been a badminton coach for many years. His involvement as a volunteer at the local sports council is what has led to his current position in SALSC and his 20 years in sport through local authorities.

“Speaking from my own personal experiences, I feel as if I have been blessed with a number of great experiences because I had the support of the volunteers when I was younger. I will always be grateful for that. It means a great deal to me that I am now able to be in a position where I can hopefully provide the same kind of support for others”.

“AS A VOLUNTEER YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE ON A LOCAL LEVEL AND IF YOU'RE WILLING TO PURSUE THIS FURTHER, IT'S ALSO POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP YOUR RESUME ON A REGIONAL, NATIONAL OR EVEN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL. IT'S LIFELONG LEARNING”

— Millar Stoddart

SCOTTISH ASSOCIATIONS OF LOCAL SPORTS COUNCILS (SALSC)



- is a „not-for-profit” national organization supporting our member Local Sports Councils to deliver quality local sport and physical activity opportunities to their local communities
- has a member pool of more than 50 Local Sports Councils spanning across Scotland, in total representing almost 10,000 sports clubs
- works in partnership with key bodies such as SportScotland and the Scottish Government to develop sport and volunteering in sport at the local, grass roots level

“We want the law to not obstruct, but to encourage voluntary activities for organizations such as ours”

Kestutis Levickis, Nemunas

VOLUNTEERING? MORE INFORMATION IS NEEDED

2011 is the European Year of Volunteering. Inspired by this the sports organization LCSC NEMUNAS hopes to increase the number of volunteers in Lithuania. Kestutis Levickis, the Chairman of NEMUNAS especially hopes to recruit amongst the older population. Levickis believes that their skills are greatly underestimated in modern day society and is crucial to mobilize for the benefit of the older people themselves and the society in general.

According to the NEMUNAS Chairman, the number of volunteers in Lithuanian sports organizations would increase significantly if only the population was better informed on the subject.
“Most people are unaware of the volunteering options available, and they also lacks encouragement”, he says.



Recent statistics on the situation in Lithuania show that shortage of information is the main reason why 60% of Lithuanians have never considered volunteering. Approximately 25% of respondents state that lack of spare time would be an obstacle in volunteering. Furthermore, some people have already done volunteer work but later on quite it because volunteers were not needed in their particular area of residence, or because they were unable to volunteer within their specific field of interest.

“These statistics clearly indicate that we need to establish a public dialogue about the importance of volunteering. NEMUNAS plans to provide a big effort in this area. We will especially focus on all the rural communities in Lithuania as well as in educational and training institutions. One of the aims will be to promote volunteering in leisure events in rural areas”, Levickis says.

He adds: “In Lithuania volunteering is not regulated through legislation. Therefore, one of the most important steps is to prepare and submit a Volunteer Bill to the Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas), where volunteering will be clearly regulated. We do participate in the preparation of the Volunteer Bill as we want the law to not obstruct, but to encourage voluntary activities for organizations such as ours”.

YOUNG PEOPLE LENDING A HELPING HAND

In 2010, more than 2000 volunteers participated in a massive cultural and sports events held by NEMUNAS in Lithuania. The volunteers were primarily between 15 and 29 years old.

“MOST PEOPLE ARE UNAWARE OF THE VOLUNTEERING OPTIONS AVAILABLE”

— Kestutis Levickis

LITHUANIAN COUNTRY SPORT CLUB UNION NEMUNAS



- was established in 1956 and has carried its current name since 1991.
- unites 97 sports clubs with more than 30.000 individual members.
- its main activities today are within sport for all, training of leaders and instructors, camps and hosting festivals.

ACTIVE AGEING



“THE OLDER GENERATION IS GROWING AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THEM HAS TO GROW IN TANDEM. [...] WE NEED TO HELP CITIZENS MAXIMIZE THEIR LIFE POTENTIAL TO REMAIN ACTIVE, INDEPENDENT AND HEALTHY AS THEY GROW OLDER.”

— John Dalli, 2010: European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy

“LEADING AN ACTIVE AND SOCIAL LIFE WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND PROPER NUTRITION FROM YOUNGER AGES IS AN IMPORTANT PREREQUISITE FOR HEALTHY AGEING WITH GAINS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY THROUGH DELAYED ILLNESS AND DISABILITY.”

— Council of the European Union, 2009: Council Conclusions on Healthy and Dignified ageing

“Hopefully I’ll continue exercising until I’m 120 years old”

Waltraud Weis, 95 years old

“I’M NO LONGER AFRAID TO FALL”

‘Active up to 100’ is a socially inclined training programme encouraging senior citizens in Germany to exercise. One of them is 95-year-old Waltraud Weis, who now feels steadier on her feet. “In my age it’s important to stay fit”, she says.

Tuesday equals workout for 95-year-old Waltraud Weis. Every week a shuttle bus brings her from her home in Achem to the training room in a centre for assisted living. Here she works out for a full hour with a group of high aged senior citizens. And despite never having done any sports prior to signing up, Waltraud Weiss states that the community at the gym has proven to be a joyful discovery.

“Unfortunately, I’m no longer very mobile, which makes it difficult for me to see people. But during that hour at the gym, I interact with the other participants and it feels really good. I’m always looking forward to gym class and experiencing something new. At my age it’s important to stay fit in order to minimize the risk of falling down and causing severe injuries”, Weis explains.

The participants are all pensioners around the same age as Waltraud Weis, and that’s part of the motivation, she says.

“You’re not afraid to make a fool of yourself when your classmates share similar difficulties such as reduced mobility. I signed up because of the shuttle service as I feared that going there on my own would prove to be too challenging”.

ONE OF MANY ACTIVITIES

The ‘Active up to 100’ programme is one of many activities initiated by the German Gymnastics Federation (DTB). All the participants in ‘Active up to 100’ are aged +80 and the training of muscles, balance and flexibility is integral in postponing illnesses and reducing the risk of dementia. Executive Petra Regelin explains that the goal is to preserve the independence of the senior citizens for as long as possible, hence avoiding long-term care.

“Due to the current demographic development here in Germany, we will experience a significant increase of elderly people, in the years to come. This also increases the expenses of society. Through the implementation of a

comprehensive range of exercise activities for the elderly, the care and health costs are drastically reduced”.

Regelin adds:

“Furthermore, this project also aims to maintain the quality of life for as long as possible. The elderly prefer to lead a life at home and not in care homes. To achieve that goal, this project is an important contribution. We’ve learned that overall the participants feel fitter, and it’s easier for them to climb stairs and walk long distances independently”.

Fortunately that’s also the case of Waltraud Weis. She is now more conscious of her body.

“The gym-coaching has inspired me and given me an incentive to exercise - also when I’m not in class. Currently it’s easier for me to move around, and I feel steadier on my feet. I’m no longer afraid to fall and hurt myself”, she explains.

Weis adds:

“Hopefully I’ll continue exercising until I’m 120 years old”.

“I’M ALWAYS LOOKING FORWARD TO GYM CLASS AND EXPERIENCING SOMETHING NEW. AT MY AGE IT’S IMPORTANT TO STAY FIT IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF FALLING DOWN AND CAUSING SEVERE INJURIES”

— Waltraud Weis, 95 years old



GERMAN GYMNASTICS FEDERATION (DTB)

DTB 
DEUTSCHER TURNER-BUND

- was founded in 1848 and today involves more than 5 million members in 20.000 clubs all over Germany
- has organized the “Turnfest” since 1860, the last festival in 2009 attracting more than 100.000 participants in Frankfurtis intensively involved in working towards European standards for the fitness sector
- has for almost 20 years worked systematically with Quality Management Systems as a cross-cutting organizational priority

If 80-year old Tony suddenly has not attended classes several times in a row, the others might call him to inquire if he is doing all right

Toni Llop, UBAE

FITNESS CLUBS ARE IMPORTANT SOCIAL NETWORKS

Festive dance parties, homemade Tortilla Espanola and family discounted swim classes are amongst the wide variety of activities that can be found at UBAE Eurofitness - one of Spain's premier fitness club chains. UBAE seeks to strengthen a sense of community, which in turn is reflected in a growing list of members, says Development Director, Toni Llop.

Nowadays it's easy to improve your health by going through advanced fitness in the comfort zone of your own house. Specific equipment such as free weights, pilates balls, and workout DVDs are easy to come by in any fitness store. Toni Llop explains that fitness clubs must offer more, much more, than just exercise in order to attract members. In UBAE, there is no doubt what this 'extra' entails.



"Of course people join the club to exercise, stay in shape and improve their health, but this is far from the only reasons. The social interaction is just as important when people come here," he says.

According to Toni Llop, a study conducted amongst 25-40 year olds show that many of the people in this demographic hope they may find their future partner at the fitness club.

"Even though most of our younger members are always seen working out alone with their headphones in place, they are still keeping an eye out for potential partners. The fitness clubs are important for social networking. In particular amongst our older members who are not as accustomed to Facebook, Twitter and other online social networking sites", Llop says.

SENIOR CITIZEN DISCOUNT

UBAE offers a number of classes, fitted to meet the needs of senior citizens. On top of this, a special senior citizen discount is offered. During these classes a special team spirit often emerges.

"If 80-year old Tony suddenly has not attended classes several times in a row, the others might call him to inquire if he is doing all right, and perhaps ask him if he needs help getting to the fitness club. We've seen this happen a number of times", Llop explains.

In order to strengthen such feelings of unity and a sense of belonging, UBAE every 3rd month arrange lunches where each member brings a homemade Tortilla Espanola,

and every 3rd month parties are organized. These events fosters a positive atmosphere and, equally important, serves to recruit new members.

"In our experience, senior citizen members love to dance. We have women-only classes, but when we throw a party these women bring their husbands. This makes these social events important because they include the whole family, and in that way we expand the network", he explains.

All family involvement is part of UBAE's strategy. Therefore, family swim classes are offered where children can join their parents free of charge.

"We draw similarities to McDonalds. The parents may not enjoy the place or the toys that comes along with the meals. But if the children love it, the parents will go along", Llop says.

UBAE wishes to be a topic of discussion when the family is seated at the dinner table.

"If a grandmother and her grandchildren attend the same fitness club, it's likely to be discussed when they meet. This might lead the parents to also consider joining our club. It's a family thing - and a healthy one".

"IF A GRANDMOTHER AND HER GRANDCHILDREN ATTEND THE SAME FITNESS CLUB, IT'S LIKELY TO BE DISCUSSED WHEN THEY MEET. THIS MIGHT LEAD THE PARENTS TO ALSO CONSIDER JOINING OUR CLUB. IT'S A FAMILY THING - AND A HEALTHY ONE"

— Toni Llop

UBAE EUROFITNESS



- has for more than 20 years managed sports facilities in Catalonia and lately also internationally
- currently operates 12 wellness centres, serving more than 70.000 people
- has over the years refined a distinctive management system that combines business and social objectives

“The senior citizen category – although this may seem paradoxical – is one of the most promising categories”

Vladimir Dostal, Sokol

SENIOR CITIZENS WITH A LICENSE TO THRILL

It seems that age is no longer an obstacle. At Czech Sokol Organisation (Sokol) one out of 4 members are +60 and the average age of members keeps rising. According to CEO Vladimir Dostal, the senior citizen members are the most interesting member segment today. Sokol has specialized itself in educating senior to become instructors for their peers.

An increasing number of senior citizens stay active in their golden years. This trend is evident at Sokol where 23 % of their members are past the age of 60, and CEO Vladimir Dostal explains that the average age keeps going up. This development provides the sports clubs with a number of interesting opportunities for expansion.



“The senior citizen category – all though this may seems paradoxical - is one of the most promising categories”, Vladimir Dostal says.

Sokol has established a specific training programme, where volunteers can train to become a senior citizen instructor. The programme has garnered much attention amongst the older members, and currently half of the senior citizen instructors are 60 years or older. This is quite an accomplishment, since the training programme is rather demanding.

“One of the most important parts of our system is education. We place emphasis on thorough education of our senior citizen instructors. That way they will be able to prepare practices and exercises matching the senior citizen gymnasts’ age and individual health state”, Dostal explains.

NEW INSPIRATION

Each senior citizen instructor must go through a basic course consisting of 50 lessons. Afterwards the organization offers further complementary educational events, such as one-day seminars, a recreational one-week course, and social meetings between the instructors.

“The main focus of the seminars is to teach the instructors to maximize the effectiveness of their lessons with the seniors. To minimize

health risks and to provide them with new inspirations for their lessons”, says Dostal.

The one-day seminars mainly focus on health improvement exercises, as well as physiotherapy, relaxation and breathing exercises. They also include amusing games, Chinese inspired health strengthening exercises, flexibility exercises and slow aerobic exercises with music.

HIKING AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

The senior citizens who become instructors get to experience numerous others activities. The one-week recreational courses include hiking, various cultural and social activities, and of course regular sports and gymnastics exercises. These courses takes place at Sokol’s own facilities situated in the mountains or adjacent to some of the Czech Republic’s many lakes.

Following completion of the training programme, the instructors are not only capable of teaching general fitness lessons. They can also provide advice on individual sports suitable for seniors, teach games and hiking, and other outdoor activities. Dostal emphasizes that due their age and experience, many of the instructors greatly excel above average.

“Let us not forget that most of them are lifelong trainers so to speak – our volunteers have extensive knowledge from different backgrounds.

Here they are free to chose the seminars according to their interests”.

According to Dostal, this also makes them a source of inspiration for the older people in their classes.

“Certainly their role as instructors encourages seniors to stay fit, and to serve as role models for other seniors. Many of them participate in various complementary events, seminars courses etc., to broaden their knowledge and skills”.

Dostal emphasizes that this provides seniors with new approaches to life quality.

“Many of the instructors have retired from their previous professions. This activity provides them with a sense of ‘a new life’ besides fulfilling their social needs.”

“CERTAINLY THEIR ROLE AS INSTRUCTORS ENCOURAGES SENIORS TO STAY FIT, AND TO SERVE AS ROLE MODELS FOR OTHER SENIORS”

— Vladimir Dostal

CZECH SOKOL ORGANISATION (SOKOL)



- is a volunteer driven sports organization that organizes sport and exercise for all
- operates programs and facilities throughout the country and have over 275.000 individual members
- has organized the “SLET” festival since 1882.

“When you go to work afterwards, you feel strong in your body and soul. The music makes you happy. It’s healthy fun”

Anna Orofino,
fitness enthusiast

WE ALSO TEACH SEDUCTIVE EYES

Work out with a smile, and you’ll walk out with a smile, says Technical Director and Lifetime Fitness Instructor Mimi Rodriguez Adami. Dance-fitness is not solely about keeping the body fit, the social interaction in the dressing room is equally important. Health is also about having fun and being among friends.

Loud Latin music is pumping through the speakers at the gym. Fitness instructor Mimi Rodriguez Adami is moving her hips to the sound of the beat and shaking her shoulders dramatically while shamelessly flirting into the opposing mirrors. Behind her a group of seven dancing women in their late forties and early fifties are imitating her every single step. “One, two, three and, one, two, three..”, Mimi shouts with a big smile, while running her purple nails through the short dark hair.



“WE ALWAYS FIND SOLUTIONS. WE TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER AND SHARE OUR PROBLEMS, AND THAT’S EQUALLY IMPORTANT”

— Mimi Rodriguez Adami

Twice a week these women attend ‘Salsa Fusion’ for seniors in Rome. The fitness inspired dance classes are offered by the Italian Aerobic and Fitness Federation (FIAF). One of the attendees, 50-year-old Anna Orofino, explains that after 60 minutes of upbeat, sweat-provoking steps - beginning at eight o’clock in the morning - she is more than ready to face a hard day at the office. “When you go to work afterwards, you feel strong in your body and soul. The music makes you happy. It’s healthy fun”, she laughs.

DANCING IN THE STREET

Fellow ‘dancer’, 49-year-old Stefania Cigarini, wasn’t familiar with any of the other women before signing up for the class. But now she feels integrated as part of the group both inside and outside of classes.

“We often get together at dinner parties, we drink wine, we exchange recipes and we talk about our careers, husbands or whatever might be on our minds”, she says.

Recently they also participated in the Susan G. Komen race against breast cancer - but they were dancing in the streets instead of running. “We’re all mothers, working full-time and leading busy lives. But these women are like sisters to me. Our motto is: ‘Bright eyes and flashy smiles’. It was actually written on our T-shirts, when we participated in the race. People were animatedly cheering for us, and it was great fun”, Stefania explains.

However, Salsa Fusion is not just about fitness in a physical sense, Mimi Rodriguez Adami explains.

“One can gain health benefits by going to the doctor. However, I also like to make these women feel good about themselves. We work a lot on our attitude and keeping a good posture. During class I will often tell them: ‘you’re wonderful, you’re beautiful, you can do nothing wrong’. Because if you work out with that kind of attitude, you’re more likely to walk out of the

class with a sense of empowerment”.

That’s why she emphasizes that they do “all that women stuff”, as Mimi calls it - working their shoulders and hips.

“We also teach ‘seductive eyes’ and ‘flashing smiles’. Outside the gym, in our everyday life, we cannot display these attitudes as they may be misinterpreted. But during class we can do whatever we want, without any judgment. The exercise is healthy and it is fun, but we have even more fun in the dressing room”.

It’s important for women to be around women, Mimi elaborates:

“We have a special kind of support system that you rarely encounter outside a circle of women. For example: if somebody has a problem with her mother she might say: ‘Do any of you know of someone who can take care of my mother?’ We always find solutions. We take care of each other and share our problems, and that’s equally important”.

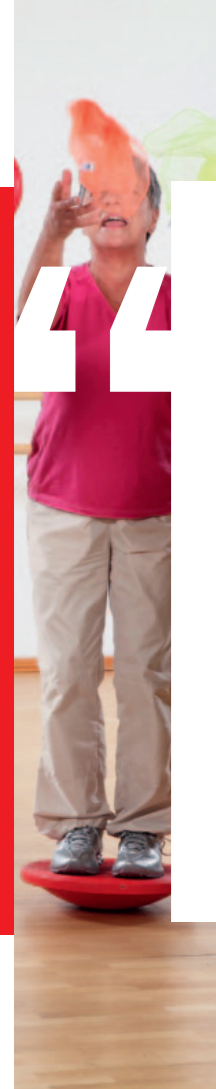
ITALIAN AEROBIC AND FITNESS FEDERATION (FIAF)



- is a non-profit national organization that promotes fitness and wellness based activities as the optimal means for enhancing psychophysical health, education, personal growth and social integration.
- has been operating on a national basis since 1990
- is intensively involved in working towards common European standards for the Health and Fitness sector

Mimi Rodriguez Adami





44 *The regularity is pivotal as we seek to move seniors from a sedentary to moderately active lifestyle in order to maximize health benefits*

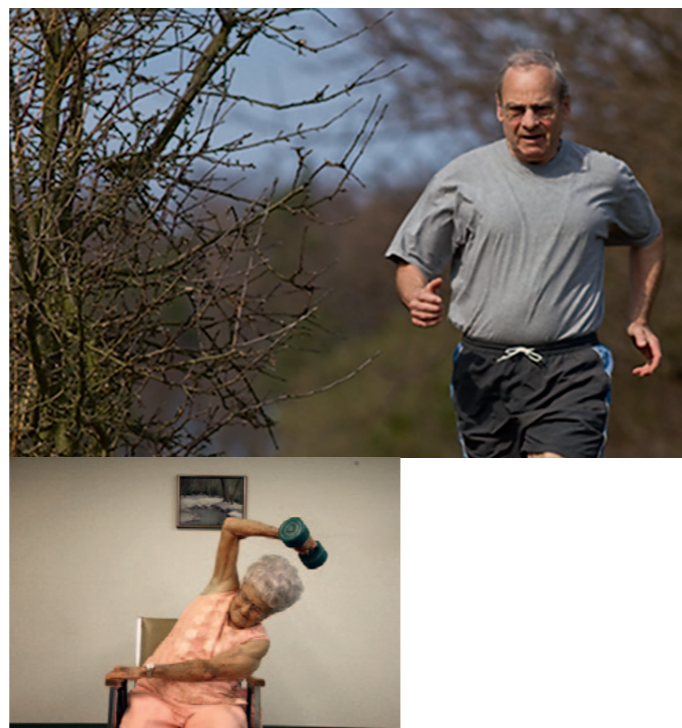
Miroslav Zítko, CASPV

SENIOR-EXERCISE IN THE LIVING ROOM

Exercise on a regular basis increases self confidence, and it boosts elderly's self-reliance capacity and ability to cope on their own in their homes. Czech Association Sport for All (CASPV) is providing senior citizens opportunities to work out at home, supervised by a special educated senior citizen instructor. Seniors assisting seniors.

According to Secretary General - Miroslav Zítko - this greatly increases their quality of life.

Everyone benefits from regular exercise. However, for senior citizens with reduced mobility, it's often a challenge just to make it to the gym.



At CASPV they have found an ideal solution to this predicament. They offer specific senior citizen exercise classes, taught in the comfort zone of one's own living room, and aided by special trainers. Miroslav Zítko explains that this has proven to be very successful in terms of visible, positive feedback from the elderly.

"Many senior citizens are less likely to embrace major changes with enthusiasm. And in addition to this, many fear for injuries if they have to spend a lot of time commuting from one place to another. This is why we provide seniors with a regular opportunity to exercise at home. The regularity is pivotal as we seek to move seniors from a sedentary to moderately active lifestyle in order to maximize health benefits", Zítko explains.

He adds:

"It is through exercise that we can help improve their self confidence, which inevitably leads to greater self-sustainability".

NEW FRIENDSHIPS

In a long term perspective Miroslav Zítko hopes that the exercise will result in fewer visits to the doctor. However, it is not only the physical aspects that the exercise is aimed towards. The mind is equally challenged during training sessions as the training also contains memory exercises designed to improve cognitive skills. And since many senior citizens live alone,

the visit from a personal trainer is further a welcome opportunity for social interaction, Zítko goes on explaining.

"Many of our senior citizens may not have many friends left, and due to reduced mobility it can be difficult to maintain social relations".

He explains that the volunteer trainers provide the senior citizens with the company they may lack in their daily life. But it is not one-sided as the volunteers receive as much as they give. "In our experience the visits evokes joy amongst the senior citizens. I cannot stress how important it is for everyone to experience a 'friendly feel' in your everyday life. We also see new friendships prosper amongst the senior citizens and the volunteer trainers, so everyone benefits".

"I CANNOT STRESS HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR EVERYONE TO EXPERIENCE A 'FRIENDLY FEEL' IN YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE. WE ALSO SEE NEW FRIENDSHIPS PROSPER AMONGST THE SENIOR CITIZENS AND THE VOLUNTEER TRAINERS"

— Miroslav Zítko

CZECH ASSOCIATION SPORT FOR ALL (CASPV)



Česká asociace
Sport pro všechny

- is a voluntary based association aiming to promote members' health condition and socialization through high quality physical activity
- currently has more than 260.000 members
- offers a myriad of physical activity options, spanning from exercises for pre-school children, over intergenerational activities to exercises in senior houses for seniors 80+

“It’s about being active, make social connections and learn through non-formal education – all this is certainly also possible, indeed desired at an advanced age”

Luis Grosso, INATEL

SPORTS ACADEMIES LEAD THE WAY TO A BETTER ‘TOMORROW’

In Portugal, the INATEL Foundation is administering highly popular sports academies. Children are here introduced to healthy ways of living through fun and games. Building on this experience, INATEL is looking into a new initiative to fight loneliness amongst senior citizens.

Athletics, basketball and rugby. These are just a few of the vast number of activities INATEL offers kids at their sports academies, seeking to promote a healthier lifestyle. When healthy and active ways of living are introduced at an early age, it is significantly more likely to stay that way when the kids grow up, states Luis Grosso, Director of Sports Department.



“The purpose of the sports academies is for the kids to develop healthy routines and habits. Our academies provide physical activity offers to young people, based on playful, informal training. Overall, we would like to help the implementation of a healthier lifestyle – a healthier Portugal”, he says.

UNITY IS IMPORTANT

Besides the aforementioned activities, INATEL also offers lessons in badminton, soccer, karate, judo, swimming and tennis. However, Grosso emphasizes that living healthy is not solely about sports and stamina. It is equally important to be able to listen, to be a good friend, and to make room for others.

“We find that a sense of unity is very important. We promote cooperative rather than individualistic behavior. By participating in many different sports, we want to strengthen the young people’s ability to work together as a team. Our academies should be more than a place of learning, they should also be a place where friendships grow and thrive. We hope our young people will develop skills that can be of use in the future, and we hope to lay a foundation for them to grow as responsible citizens”. He adds:

“The sports academies are of great importance to INATEL. We are very aware that we have to include many factors in this process of shaping the values and stimulating the sociability of

these young people. Our objective with this is to empower and train them for a better ‘tomorrow’”.

FIGHTING ISOLATION

INATEL is now seeking new ways to expand their work. Inspired by the EU’s year of ‘active ageing’ in 2012, the Portuguese foundation hopes to initiate sports academies for senior citizens aged +55. On offer will be a variety of activities such as badminton, fitness, aqua aerobics, tennis and hydrotherapy. “The sports academies for senior citizens are key in promoting active living and improving the quality of life for this population segment. For instance, the exercise will have a major impact on the reduction of risk factors for developing cardiovascular diseases”, Grosso says. But perhaps even more important, the sports academies will play a vital role in improving and sustaining the quality of life for the senior citizens.

To this he adds: “The academies are essential in the fight against isolation and loneliness found among older people. It’s about being active, make social connections and learn through non-formal education – all this is certainly also possible, indeed desired at an advanced age.”

“THE PURPOSE OF THE SPORTS ACADEMIES IS FOR THE KIDS TO DEVELOP HEALTHY ROUTINES AND HABITS. OVERALL, WE WOULD LIKE TO HELP THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE – A HEALTHIER PORTUGAL”

— Luis Grosso

INATEL FOUNDATION



- celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2010
- follows a mission to promote conditions for the leisure time of young people, workers and seniors, as well as the promotion of inclusion and social solidarity
- administers a multi-level portfolio comprising, but not limited to, social hotels, rural tourism facilities, wellness facilities, stadiums, and sport schools for young people and seniors

WHAT IS SPORT ACTION NETWORK EUROPE – SANTE?



SANTE is an ambitious effort of 17 partners representing sport organizations, esteemed universities, health organizations, businesses and local governments. The partners are uniting their resources to address and act upon the contemporary challenge of improving Europeans' health.

SANTE pays special focus on promoting innovative cross-sector partnerships to foster learning across Europe and recommend future directions within health enhancing physical activity.

SANTE is co-funded by the European Commission's Sport Unit under its 2009 Preparatory Action in the Field of Sport (EAC/21/2009)

SANTE features the following specific aims:

1. Promoting health enhancing physical activity with a starting point in sport organisations.
2. Engage national and local sport organisations from Europe in networking and best practice exchange with a view to qualifying existing and developing new initiatives.
3. Highlight and promote cooperation between sport organisations and business, schools, local governments, health organisations and others.
4. Establish partnerships and cooperation between international/European organisations and stakeholders in the field of health enhancing physical activity.
5. Collect, document and valorise examples of innovative cross-sectoral cooperation in health enhancing physical activity.
6. Prepare future actions in health and physical activity.

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS:

Policy recommendations

The vision '100 Million More European Active in Sport and Physical Activity by 2020' was developed and subsequently the discussion topic for a seminar in the European Parliament. The vision has since received considerable cross-sector support. See more at www.isca-web.org

MOVE2010 Congress: Sport for All and Health: A Strategic Partnership

MOVE2010 proved to be a platform for international knowledge sharing and inspiration for stakeholders related to sport for all and health. An state-of-the-art selection of new strategies and understandings was presented and debated. See more at www.move2010.info

Thematic seminars

Health challenges of a European wide nature have been dealt with through in-depth seminars focusing on Active Seniors, Engaging Youth in Physical Activity, and Future Perspectives for HEPA Human Resources. See more at www.mysante.info

Cross-European learning

Knowledge sharing study tours, expert consultations and bi/trilateral workshops have taken place to inspire and foster organizational development of SANTE partners. A SANTE Handbook on good HEPA practices has been developed with innovative contributions from across Europe. See more at www.mysante.info

THE SANTE NETWORK

INTERNATIONAL SPORT AND CULTURE ASSOCIATION (ISCA)
www.isca-web.org



CZECH ASSOCIATION SPORT FOR ALL (CASPV)
www.caspv.cz



DANISH GYMNASTICS AND SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS (DGI)
www.dgi.dk / www.underground.dk



GERMAN GYMNASTICS FEDERATION (DTB)
www.dtb-online.de



ITALIAN AEROBIC AND FITNESS FEDERATION (FIAF)
www.fiaf.it



FEDERATION OF THE EUROPEAN PLAY INDUSTRY (FEPI)
www.fepi-play.org



INATEL FOUNDATION
www.inatel.pt



LATVIAN SPORTS FOR ALL ASSOCIATION (LTSA)
www.sportsvisiem.lv



LITHUANIAN COUNTRY SPORT CLUB UNION NEMUNAS
www.lkska.lt



NETHERLAND'S SPORT ALLIANCE (NSA)
www.sportalliantie.nl



SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL SPORTS COUNCILS (SALSC)
www.salsc.org.uk



CZECH SOKOL ORGANISATION (SOKOL)
www.sokol-cos.cz



SPORTS UNION OF SLOVENIA (SUS)
www.sportna-unija.si



UBAE EUROFITNESS
www.ubae.net



ITALIAN SPORT FOR ALL ASSOCIATION (UISP)
www.uisp.it



UNIVERSITY OF CASSINO (UNICAS)
www.unicas.it



MUNICIPALITY OF FLORENCE
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