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## **Introduction**

Survey on the Readiness to Undertake Intergenerational Sporting Activities, the title of this national research reveals the main topics addressed. It also reveals the goals of the research which is describing and/or discovering intergenerational sport solutions for healthy ageing, i.e. practices that would contribute to healthy ageing of which social inclusion is an important part. Namely, social inclusion requires open relationships i.e. with different generations not only peers.

The research survey, integrated in the project Funmilies, addresses these topics taking in account the National Programme of Sports in Republic of Slovenia. EU Physical Activity Guidelines and the Tartu Call for a Healthy Lifestyle, and the Council conclusions — Healthy Ageing across the Lifecycle (2012/C 396/02). Funmilies promotes social inclusion through intergenerational sports of people older than 65 who are not in the mainstream and are in many regards at the edge of society. Older people should be more active, better seen and better heard in society. Being active in old age means co-operating. Perhaps the easiest way for them to maintain social bonds is in their family where intergenerational bonds are most natural.

More specifically, the project aims at:

- 1) Enhancing participation and cooperation in intergenerational sports activities of elders of 65+ and youth of 25- in Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece, Italy and Slovenia.
- 2) Enhancing the awareness and capacities of sports professionals in organizing/implementing intergenerational sports activities that motivate the participation of elders 65+in Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece, Italy and Slovenia.
- 3) Increasing awareness on the importance of physical activity, healthy living and active ageing among older (and younger) citizens in Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece, Italy and Slovenia.
- 4) Increasing the access of persons 65+ in sports activities, and relevant information in Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece, Italy and Slovenia.
- 5) Strengthening the physical skills, social skills, self-esteem and psychological skills, cognitive skills and general wellbeing of elders (65+) and of youth (25- ) in Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece, Italy and Slovenia, through cooperation in joint sports activities.
- 6) Promoting the concept and benefits of intergenerational sports (and tools for its implementation) to relevant stakeholders, actors and policy makers in the fields of sports, healthy living and active ageing.

## **Sports in Slovenia**

Sports have a long tradition on the today's Slovenian territory. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century with the rise of civic society they were first organized within associations and federations of

associations and were based on sporting activities practiced already in the Middle Ages (i.e. the game of bowls, shooting, pedagogical horseback riding, fencing, etc).

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Slovenia has been having two major political orientations, the right (catholic) and the left wing parties. In compliance with these orientations gymnastic movements Sokoli and Orli (Engl. Falcons and Eagles) were organised. After the Second World War, in the times of former Yugoslavia (Slovenia was one of its republics), the traditions of both movements were inherited by *Partizan* (somatic culture, gymnastics, athletics, public events), a top down organised physical culture movement more in line with the new one-party communist political system of former Yugoslavia.

The new government had a social vision, namely, to transform the predominately agricultural country into a more progressive industrial one and consolidate its own power. Brigades of young volunteers were set up who were building roads, who enrolled in vocational training and political education as well as numerous sporting activities. Moreover, an overall technical and sporting movement *Mladi tehnik* (Eng. Young Technician) was organised all over the country where young people could learn piloting planes, doing the parachuting and enjoy other sporting and cultural activities like dancing, etc.

When in 1991 Slovenia separated from Yugoslavia, the new State organized its own Slovenian Olympic Committee and joined international sport federations.

## **Survey Research Report**

Country: Slovenia

Reporters: Dušana Findeisen, Ana Krajnc

Date and place: April 2021 -Slovenia

**Title of the research: Survey on the Readiness to Undertake Intergenerational Sporting Activities**

Participants in the research: (Sample)

The total number of respondents is 14 out of which 2 men and 12 women with the majority of the respondents from the age box 65-84.

### **Rationale: (Why)**

Today, generations may be more autonomous. But, the greater their autonomy and freedom, the less they feel indebted to anterior generations and the less they are sensible to the fate of the coming generations, the more society becomes fragmented in all areas of life. In these circumstances older and younger people should be offered multiple possibilities to meet, share activities. They are to be offered opportunities *to create together*, to give each other and stand for their common interests. *Both giving and receiving establish relationships and ties.*

In organized intergenerational dialogue and practices (i.e. intergenerational sporting activities) generations are purposively, meaningfully brought together. How to bring them together *is a matter of good will, knowledge* about them and the existence of intergenerational sporting activities provision.

Moreover, *active and healthy ageing, the best political vision of old age right now*, means that older people have to remain in continuous contact and co-operation with younger generations. Namely, it is impossible to imagine active older people cut off from other generations focused on their homes and declining networks of peers.

### **Methodology: (Methods)**

As per the Activity A2.1, this research was targeting both younger and older generations, respectively from 12 up to 25 and over 65 up to 84 years of age as well as their readiness to engage in intergenerational sporting activities and formats within families, communities and other contact zones. The survey was meant to find out to what extent the formulated hypotheses are valid. The research was expecting them to be confirmed, partly confirmed, partly rejected or rejected. Upon this procedure the researcher tried to answer the set research questions.

Slovenian U3A developed a survey questionnaire and Guidelines for the researchers. The questionnaire was developed on the basis of preliminary discussions with students of Slovenian U3A and some young people, studying scientific articles and books as well as specialized sport magazines, Youtube recordings of discussions on sports and life stories of sportsmen, in different languages (English, French, German, Slovenian, Croatian, etc.). When developed, the Survey was applied to the two age groups of interviewees.

Due to Covid-19, the interviews were conducted online using the application ZOOM be individually or collectively. For those, who are not good at English questions were translated and additional explanations were given, if applicable. The interviewees chose their answers for each section of the survey. Additionally, the interviewer discussed with them their choice and arguments to get a wider picture and wider possibilities for interpreting the results of this survey.

Each interview lasted from 45 up to 90 minutes and was carried out without a break suggested in the Guidelines for this research. Several times, particularly at the beginning of the interview, the interviewees were reminded that the results will be carefully stored, that only the acronyms and age of the interviewees will be used and made public. The interviewees agreed to it. Younger interviewees under the age of 16 needed their parent's agreement to participate in the survey. The interviewer was taking notes.

### **The researched sample**

The researched sample was selected at random and counted 14 in total. The majority of the interviewees were older people over 65 and out of whom (10) were women and (1) men, 11 in total. Older people were more numerous since they were recruited from U3A students, circles of friends, relatives and peers. All older interviewees were retired.

The interviewees aged 12-25 were less numerous (3), out of whom (1) young boys and men and young girls or young women (2).

Older interviewees were on average more educated than younger ones which is understandable given the fact that younger people were mostly still in formal education; (1) completed elementary school, (2) secondary school, (9) graduated studies and (1) post-graduated studies. With respect to the occupation, (2) were pupils, (1) university student, (1) between work and retirement and (10) retired. The majority of the sample (8 out of 14) are not married and are living with their parents, siblings, children or pets (the majority of older participants are married and live with their spouses (6)). Regarding their housing environment, the majority of the interviewees live in a large city with more than 100.000 inhabitants, near to hills and/or river or streams. They all live in pure urban environment. Some of older participants are currently living on the country in a village due to the COVID situation. They are retired.

### **Analysis and interpretation of the results: (Findings) according to the set hypotheses**

The results were analysed for each age group separately and then compared. The validity of hypotheses has been checked.

***Hypothesis 1 - In most countries' sports are perceived primarily as sporting activities and much less as learning about generations and maintaining ties between them.***

The hypotheses has been **confirmed**. The hypothesis had been formulated by analogy with other socially marginalized groups and their educational activities. In principle, they are perceived as educational activities, transmission and creation of knowledge but not as an activity empowering these social groups, creating bonds with society, inducing new social practices, changing self-perception and position of these groups in society. Intergenerational sporting activities are supposed to pursue these goals and objectives. It can be deduced that public campaigning will be needed to raise social awareness about the benefits and different aspects of intergenerational sporting activities.

***Hypothesis 2 - In most countries intergenerational sporting activities are considered as impossible due to the gap in the abilities and affinities of different generations.***

Hypothesis 2 **has been rejected** for the Slovenian participants argue that the gap in abilities of younger and older generations can be breached by taking into account overlapping sporting affinities and choosing mostly endurance sports like hiking, tracking, swimming, cycling.

***Hypothesis 3 - Younger and older generations have mostly been influenced by an interaction of different factors impacting their involvement in sports through life.***

When today's older people in Slovenia were young, they mostly had a lot of freedom to choose any sporting activity on their own. Their choice was often motivated under the influence of their physical environment, their peers, the school, sporting clubs in vicinity. They went from one sport to another.

“One sport lead to another and still another. I did not have to ask for permission my parents I only said I would like to enrol in. this and that activity or course.”

“The activities were accessible for a moderate fee” and sporting club Partizan was not far away.”

“We enjoyed a lot of freedom and found playgrounds everywhere... We went skiing on the hill behind our house, we played in the streets, there was no supervision on the side of the adults.”

Today's young generations are often encouraged by their parents of higher social status and education. Like other activities, sporting activities are a part of parents' shaping the life of their children and are a part of the pursuit of social success. Young people are often encouraged to become professional sportsmen and sportswomen.

Older and younger generations have mostly been influenced by an interaction of different factors impacting their involvement in sports through life, physical and social environment, in Slovenia, also political and community context in the past.

“The greatest honour was to be chosen to carry relay toward the President of the State to congratulate him for his birthday. The celebration was also turned into a Festival of Youth.”

Older and younger people adopt an activity or drop it following on relation to life transitions, changing of primary to secondary, socialisation (for young people).

***Hypothesis 4 - Younger and older generations have psycho-social needs that motivate them to be involved in sports.***

Hypothesis 4 **has been confirmed**. Both younger generations and older generations need to be stable to lead structured life, to be supported, to be socially recognized and to belong, to be more self-confident and less vulnerable. Both older and younger people are psychologically vulnerable. Moreover, younger generations want to do what older generations or their siblings and peers do. Older people's bonds with younger generations are a question of generativity (giving and transmitting), but they also need to know more. These psycho-social needs are social needs par definition, that can be met in the presence of others, through co-operations and commitment fostering identity.

***Hypothesis 5 - Some preferred sport activities of younger and older generations overlap.***

Hypothesis 5 **has been confirmed**. There are overlapping sporting activities which are yoga, hiking, tracking, ball games, cycling, badminton. While younger people express their affinities, older people are more conditioned in their choice by their abilities. Intergenerational activities should therefore be adapted to preferably healthy older people's abilities, to the affinities of generations and should not be performing and competitive.

***Hypothesis 6 - There are not enough intergenerational sporting activities provided for in partners' countries.***

The hypothesis **has been confirmed**. It has become clear that there is not enough awareness as to the nature, format and benefits of intergenerational sporting activities and the role they play in social inclusion and communities or contact zones in general. In the public campaigning, which should be an ongoing one, could be used the findings of this survey and the interpretation of the survey results.

***Hypothesis 7 - New intergenerational sporting activities should be based on the already existing intergenerational sports provision, generational sport preferences that overlap as well as on the existing environment and existing contact zones.***

The hypothesis **has been confirmed**. Intergenerational sports and sporting activities are being offered by kindergartens with parents taking part, nursery homes when based on structured and regular organised activities uniting young and older people, hotels, intergenerational and community centres. They are conditioned by geographical vicinity, surrounding community and physical environment. To be truly intergenerational they have to be creative pursuing common goals, they have to be seasonal, and it is not enough if they are reduced to single though ritualised massive intergenerational events like walking while commemorating a historical event, artistic activity, etc.

***Hypothesis 8 - New intergenerational sporting activities should consolidate generational ties and raise public awareness.***

Hypothesis 8 **has been confirmed**. It has become clear that there is not enough awareness as to the nature, format and benefits of intergenerational sporting activities and the role they play in social inclusion and cohesion of communities or in contact zones in general. In the public campaigning, which should be an ongoing one, could be used the findings of this survey and the interpretation of the survey results. In short, any attempt to set up an intergenerational sporting activity should be accompanied by public campaigning. For that matter, several topics should be continuously studied in depth like generations, family, perceptions of sports, intergenerational bonding, social inclusion, best practices, ..., to raise public awareness, etc. The campaigning aims at modifying mentalities, taking decisions, knowing more.

## **Results with graphical interpretation: age group -25**

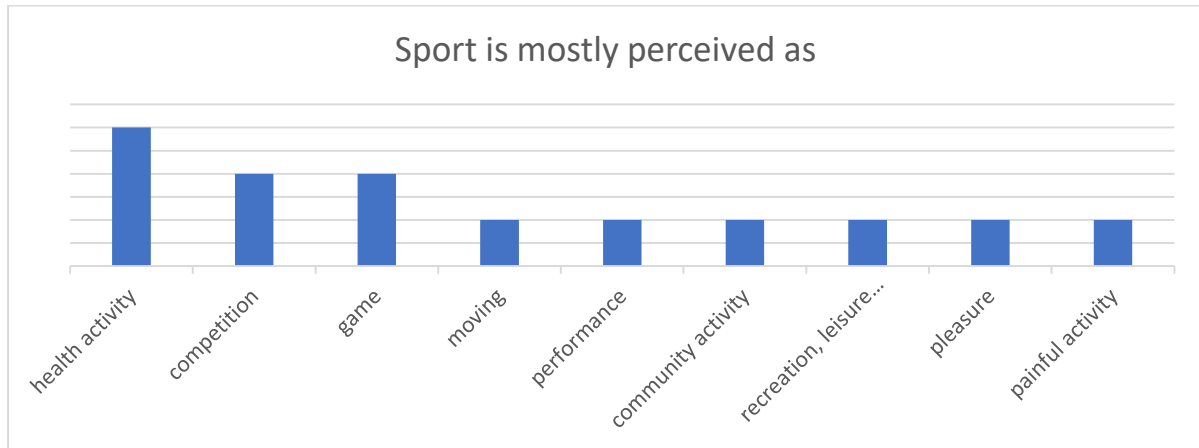
**What is sport for them?**



healthy activity

competition

game



How is family perceived?

Younger and older generations within families have close relationships in my country.

Older family members take important decisions for the family.

Family members help each other a lot.



How are young people perceived?

They have a lot of technological knowledge.

How are older people perceived?

They are part of our family.

### Why have you got involved in sports so far?

I started being involved in sports under the influence of my physical environment (woods, lakes, sea, play grounds, parks, TV programs, Internet).

### Why did/do you maintain your sporting activity?

I liked it.

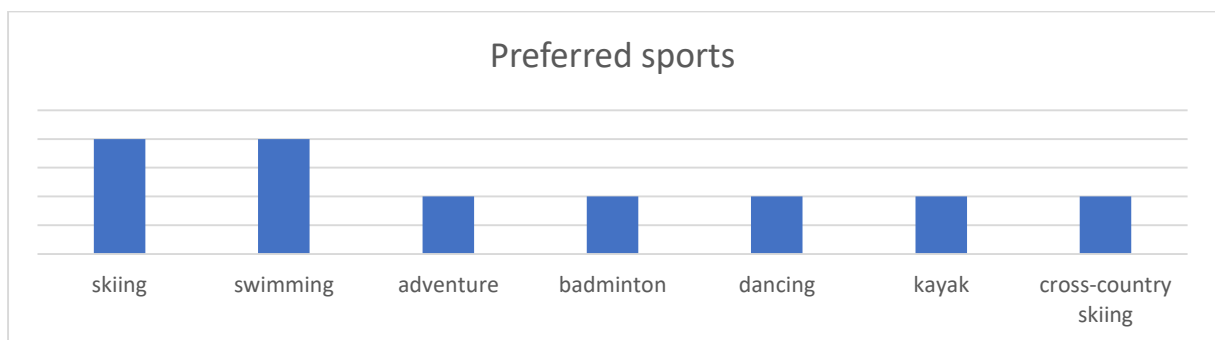
### When or why did you drop a sporting activity?

Long-term illness, injury, stressing life transition.

### Which sports do you like best?

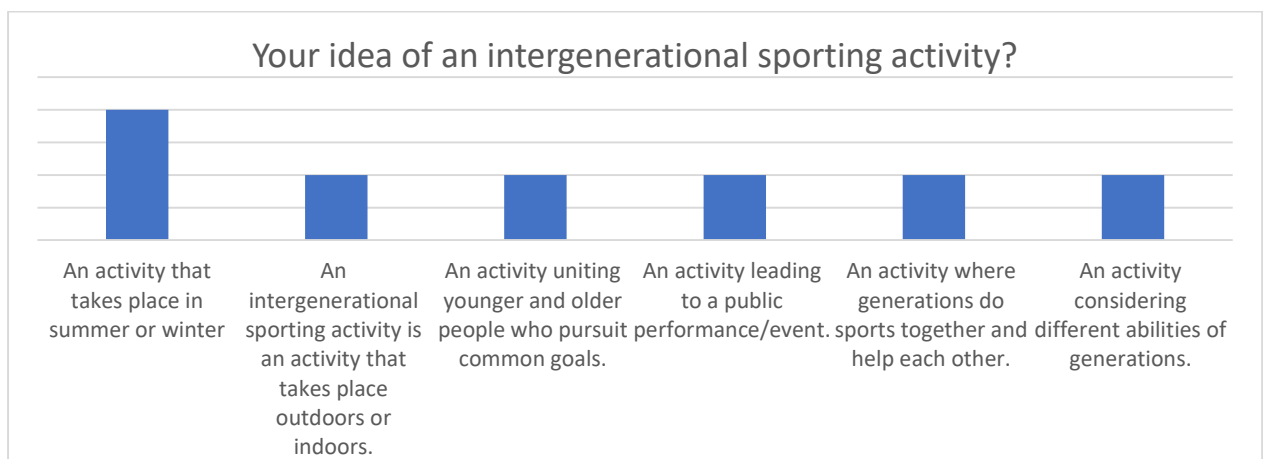
Skiing

Swimming



### Which of the following definitions best depict your idea of an intergenerational sporting activity?

An activity that takes place in summer or winter.



**How would you describe the provision of intergenerational sporting activities in your country?**

There are some massive intergenerational sporting events. Which? (football, hockey, dancing)

**Who provides intergenerational activities?**

Schools for younger generations

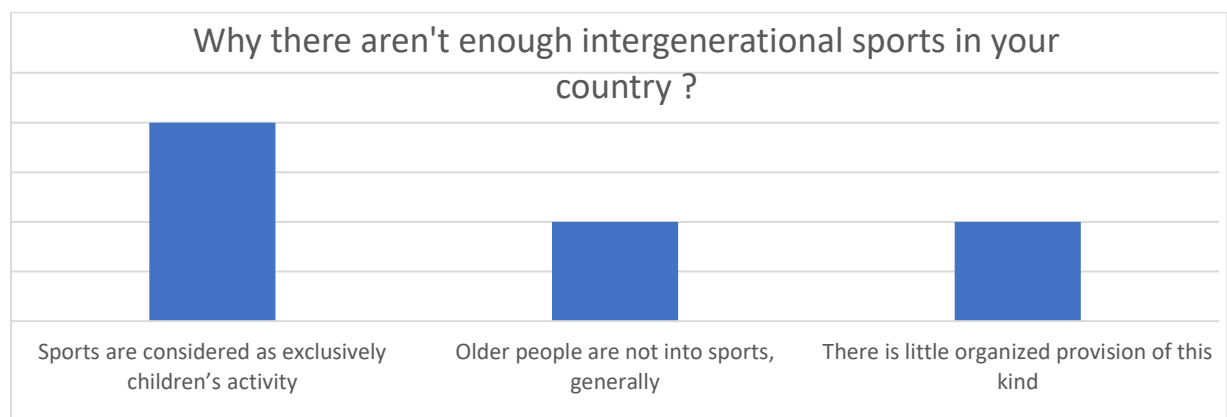
Sports Clubs

**If there are not enough intergenerational sporting activities in your country, why is it so?**

Sports are considered as exclusively children’s activity.

Older people are not into sports, generally.

There is little organized provision of this kind.



**Results with graphical interpretation: Age group 65+**

**What is sport for them?**

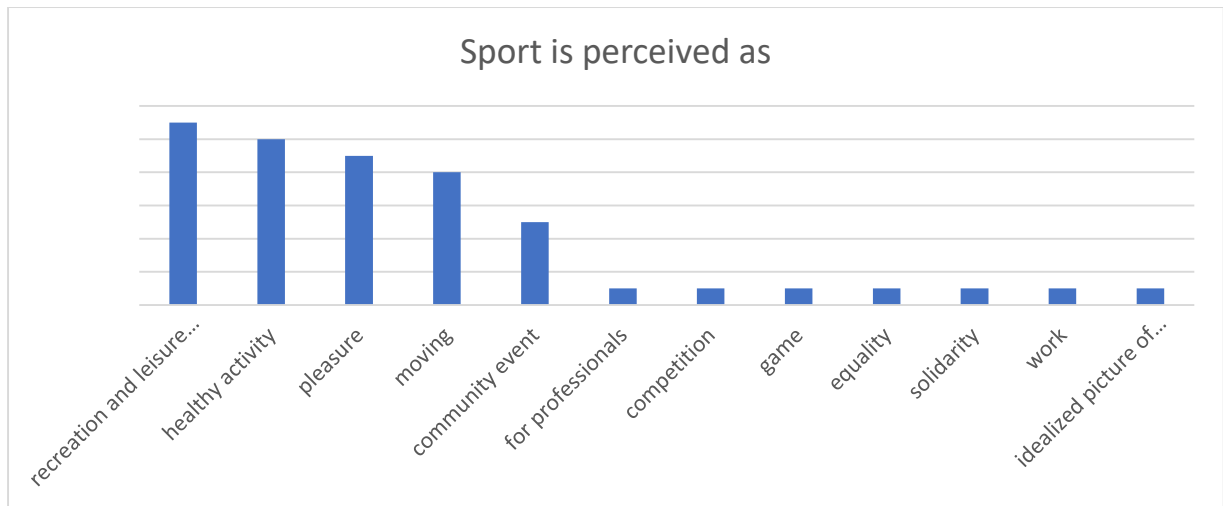
recreation and leisure time activity

healthy activity

pleasure

moving

community event



### How is family perceived?

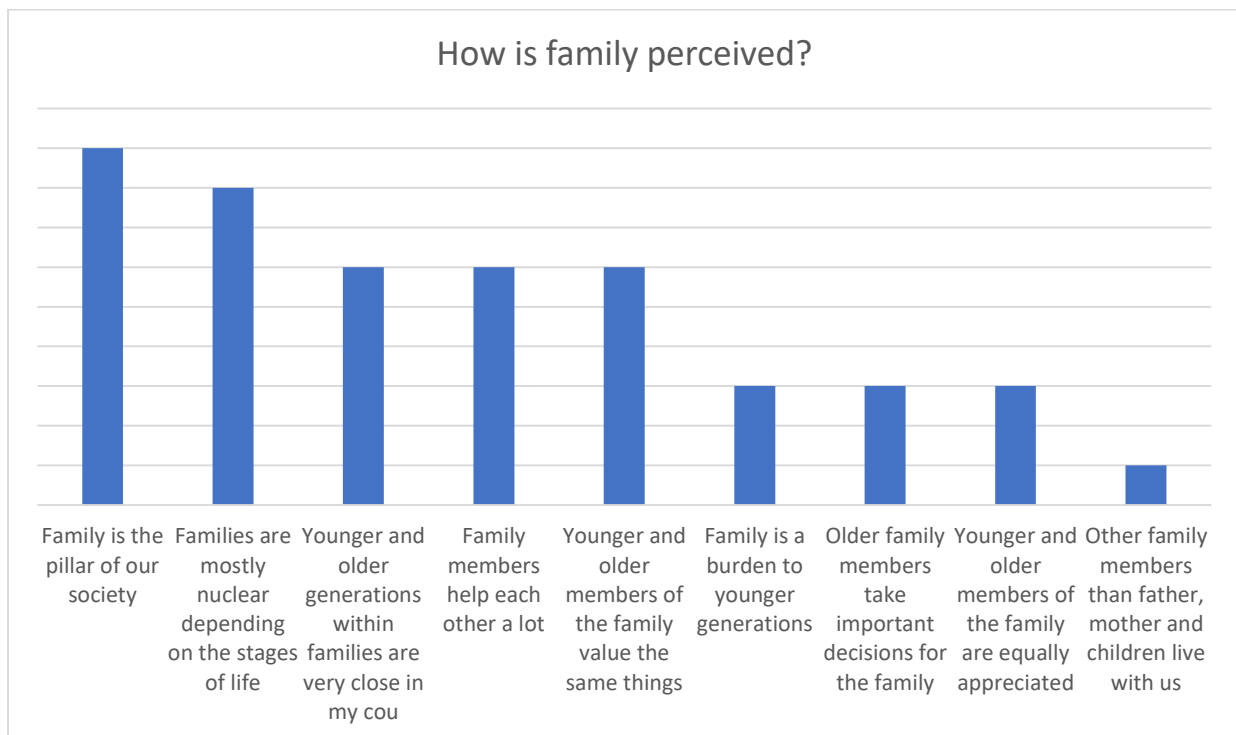
Family is the pillar of our society.

Families are mostly nuclear depending on the stages of life.

Younger and older generations within families are very close in my country.

Family members help each other a lot.

Younger and older members of the family value the same things.



### How are young people perceived?

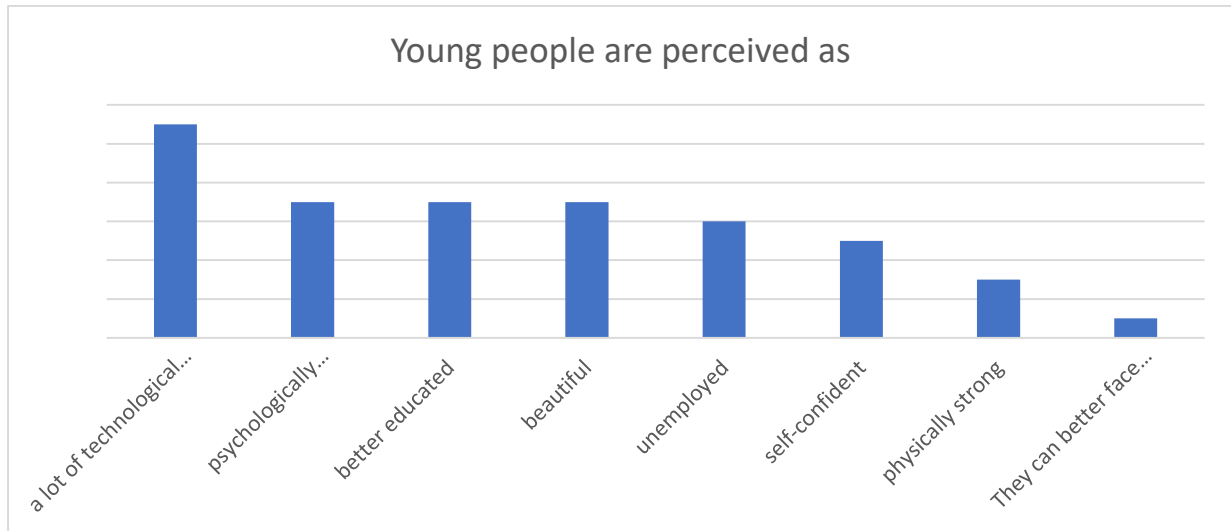
They have a lot of technological knowledge.

As psychologically vulnerable.

As better educated.

As beautiful.

As unemployed.



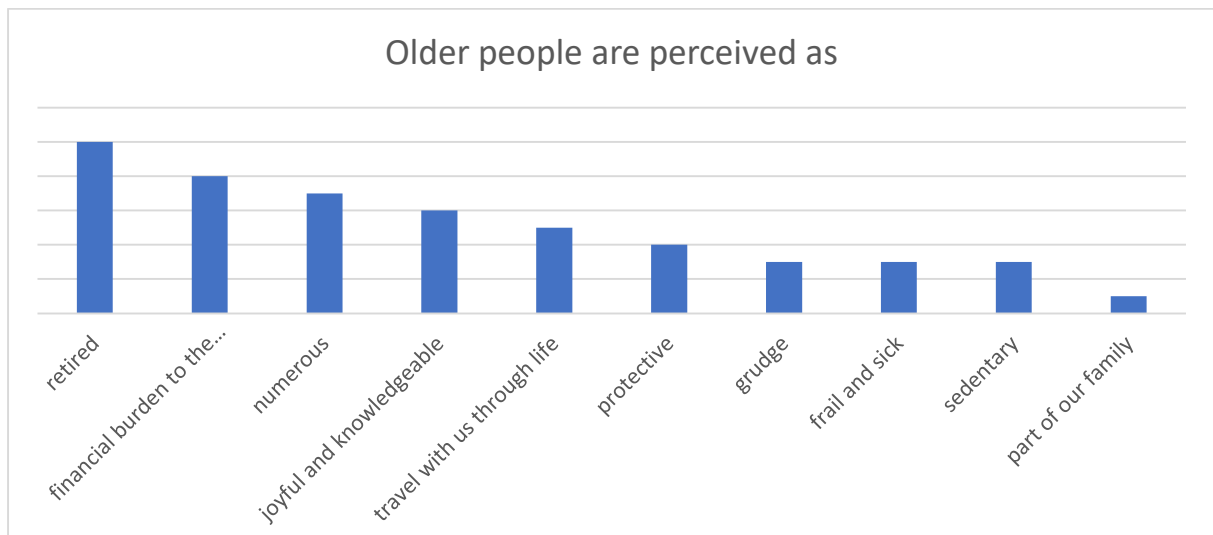
### How are older people perceived?

As retired.

As a financial burden to the society.

As numerous.

As joyful and knowledgeable.



### Why have you got involved in sports so far?

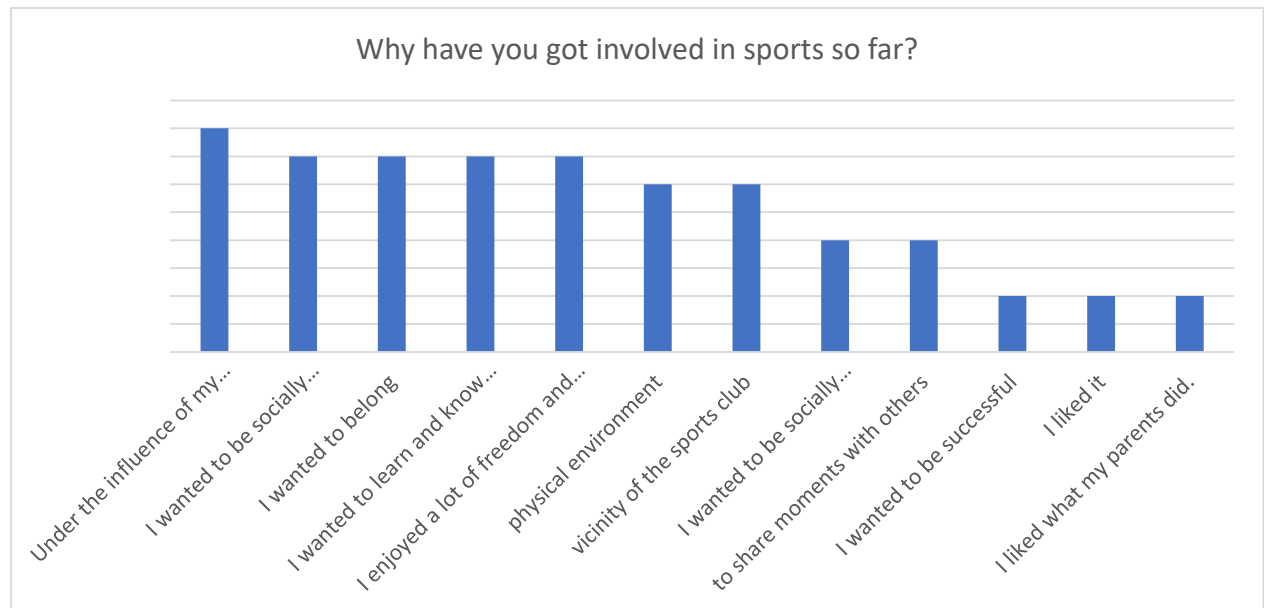
Under the influence of my peers, friends.

I wanted to be socially recognized and loved.

I wanted to belong.

I wanted to learn and know more.

I enjoyed a lot of freedom and went into sports themselves.



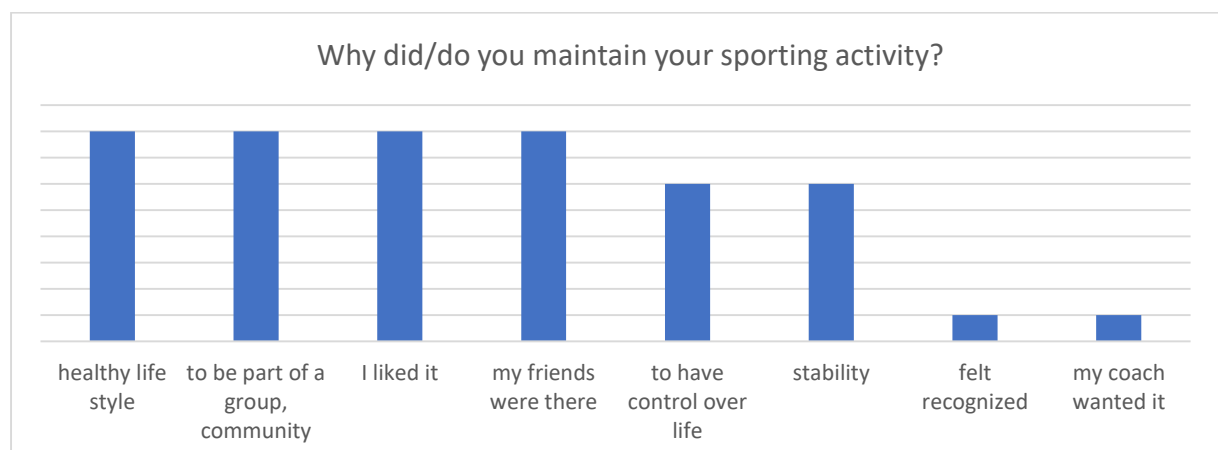
### Why did/do you maintain your sporting activity?

I developed a certain style of healthy life which I liked.

I liked/like being part of a group, community.

I liked/like it.

Because my friends were/are there.



### When or why did you drop a sporting activity?

Stressing life transition, too old for sports, long-term illness, economic situation, fear of getting hurt and lose autonomy.

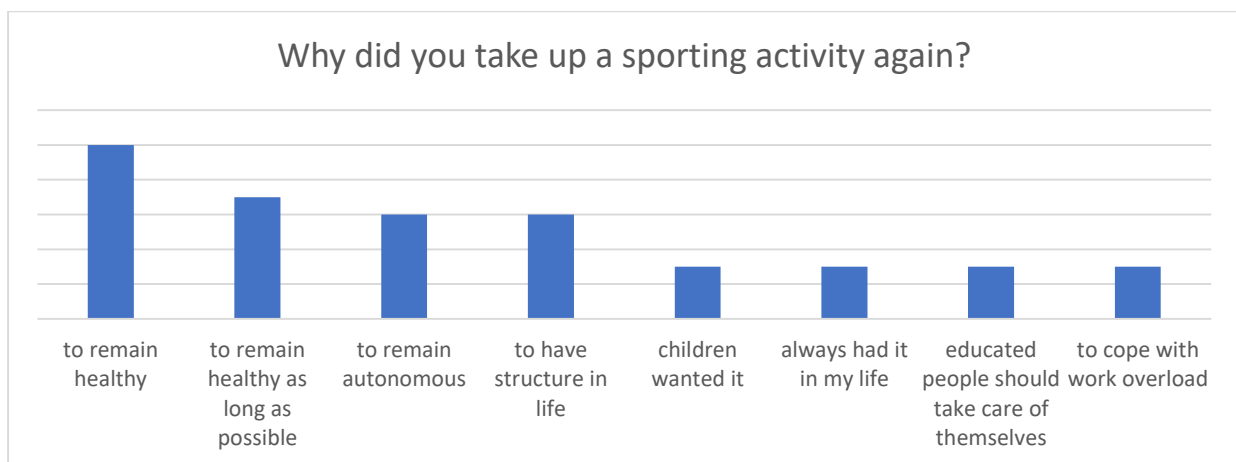
### Why did you take up a sporting activity again? Several answers are possible, tick them.

I wanted to remain healthy.

I would like to remain healthy as long as possible.

I would like to remain autonomous.

I want to have some structure in life.



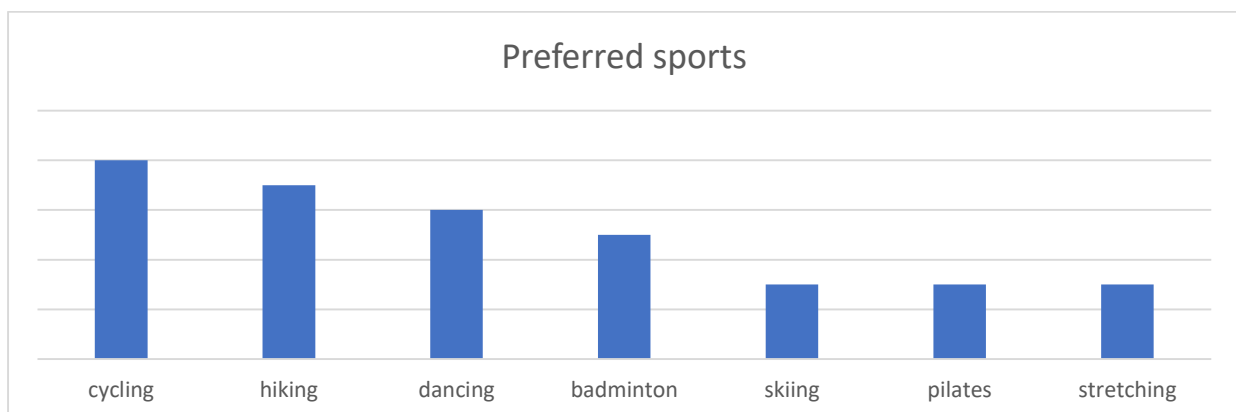
### Which sports do you like best?

Cycling

Hiking

Dancing

Badminton

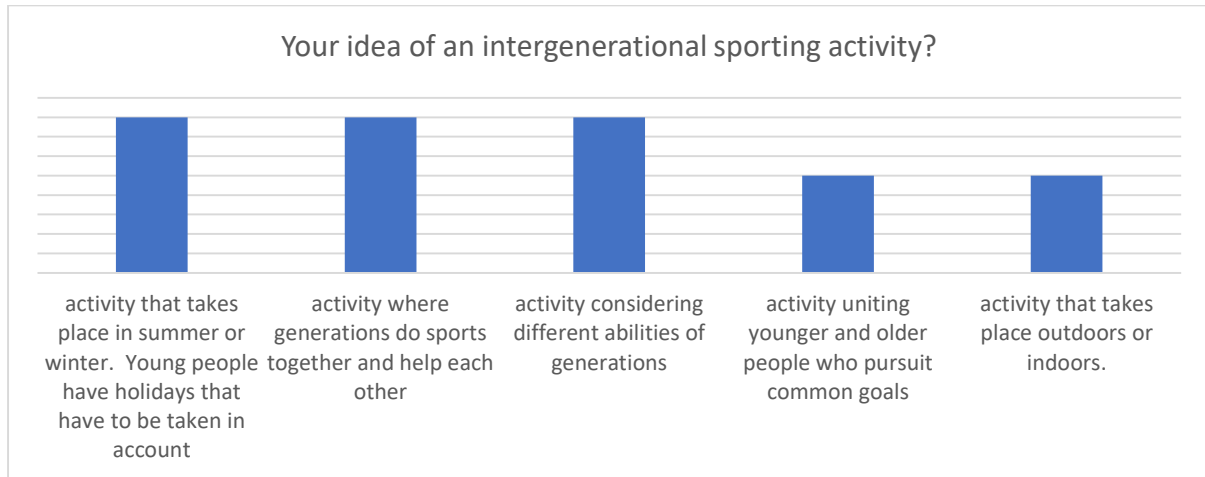


**Which of the following definitions best depict your idea of an intergenerational sporting activity?**

An activity that takes place in summer or winter. Young people have holidays that have to be taken in account.

An activity where generations do sports together and help each other.

An activity considering different abilities of generations.



**How would you describe the provision of intergenerational sporting activities in your country?**

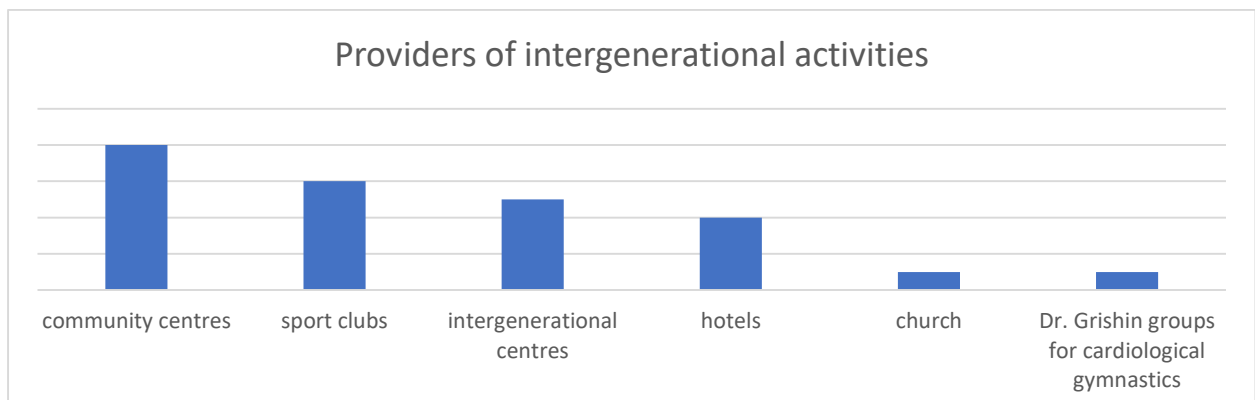
There are some massive intergenerational sporting events. Which? (marathons and other ritual events, connected with topics of all sorts (literature, historic events, etc.)

**Who provides intergenerational activities?**

Community centres

Sport clubs

Intergenerational centres





**If there are not enough intergenerational sporting activities in your country, why is it so?**

There is no public awareness.

There is little organized provision of this kind.

Older people are not encouraged to get engaged.

Generations live separately.

