The Project description

The Special Secretariat of Nutrition and Sports of the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity funds Local Authorities of the country to implement programs of physical activity for people aged over 65 years. These programs are part of the Sport for All programs, covering all age groups, and also special population groups such as disabled, Roma, prisoners, patients of Drug Rehabilitation Centers etc. The approval for the implementation of the "Exercise in Old Age" programme is given by the Special Secretariat of Nutrition and Sports on request of the Local Authority interested and it is 100% funded.

The program content includes physical exercises with recreative and social nature, such as basic gymnastic exercises, exercises for the flexibility of the joints, etc., and is aimed at disease prevention, recreation and improvement of the biological, psychological and mental ability of a person, while it also develops the concept of sociability.

The program is implemented for 8 months per year (from October 15 to June 15 the following year) by qualified University graduates of Physical Education in specially designated areas of clubs for the elderly. For the period 2011 to 2012, the municipalities that participated in the program were 112 and approved a total of 521 sections. The beneficiary population is approximately 8,500 people. The sections are distributed throughout the country, but most of them belong to the regions of Attica and Thessaloniki due to increased population and less healthy urban environment.

Why is it considered a good practice
The Programme “Exercise in Old Age” is considered a good practice because it promotes a healthy lifestyle and it helps preventing and controlling non-communicable diseases. It also facilitates the participation of older persons in social and cultural life.

Timeline/duration of the project
The Project has been implemented since 1988.

Lessons learnt
Older people show great interest in participating in sports activities that improve their health and enhance their interpersonal relationships, which is shown by the number of participants in the programme. Lifelong exercise is one of the key components of quality management and effective use of leisure time, taking into account the modern lifestyle and the results of many surveys about the positive effect of exercise on the health and on the psychosocial situation.

Relevance for the UNECE region
The programme is implemented in Greece, that is covered by the UNECE region.

Location of the project
Various locations throughout the country.

Contact information, website
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