

SENIORI V POHYBE

Seniors in motion

The goal of the Seniors in motion project is to focus on leisure time of **seniors** through various **physical activities and exercises**. The elderly are a target group whose number is growing rapidly, but does not receive proper attention. We believe that active and quality leisure time is an important part of seniors' lives. Along with maintaining social contacts, these activities are crucial at any age for maintaining physical and mental strength, independence and overall well-being.

Within the project, we also decided to focus more on **seniors socializing**. We want to offer main activities where they can meet and talk. Activity-based relationships help to solve issues with seniors' loneliness, which is a growing social problem.

In our project, we have **three professional coaches** who form the core of a team – nordic walking coach, memory trainer and professional city guide, who have been intensively engaged in work with seniors professionally or voluntarily for several years. The other group consists of **volunteers** of different ages, including a target group of seniors without specific training. Even amongst our volunteers we are trying to interconnect different generations. For example, thanks to a senior volunteer, we are preparing train trips available to all elderly. We are also enthusiastic about the interest of young volunteers who are realizing short trips to nature or similar activities that combine physical movement and meeting up.

The way we work is through **activities on a regular basis**. These are posted on our social networks, on the website, and sent to our members and sympathizers by newsletters. As the **core team**, we regularly meet in **information sessions** to evaluate the fulfillment of our project goals as well as choosing the best tools to achieve them. Tasks and competencies are divided within the group.

Our project is currently **funded** by **voluntary contributions** from our activities and **member's contributions** to our organization. We are actively involved in **community grants** to create multi-funding.

As a part of our activities, we organize **hiking trips** around Bratislava, where we use the immediate vicinity of the Little Carpathian Mountains. We see that the elderly who are engaged in hiking have not only walked many forest trails and paths; but because they walk a lot, they also have stamina that even much younger individuals can envy them. On the other hand, they have no partners and do not dare to take trips for several hours on their own, which is quite natural. Therefore, they like to join when we go in a group and apart from traveled kilometers, they can enjoy new friendships.

We organize **nordic walking** in nature parks of Bratislava. This type of exercises can perfectly work out the whole body. We continuously learn and attend trainings in this area so that we can teach our seniors the right technique, which is crucial.

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Juggling and coordination exercises. We were inspired by juggling with balls, however those are not suitable for seniors. We have created juggling with scarves, which are much slower and have a larger surface. We appreciate that especially when catching them. Some exercises are created directly in our trainings. Coordination exercises are exercises that use asymmetric movements. We practice several cognitive functions at the same time, whether it's reaction time, spatial orientation or concentration, which people often have problems with. At the same time, exercises aimed to improve brain concentration to coordinate movements, as well as coordinate the right and left-brain hemispheres.

Amongst the benefits of these exercises are better memory, concentration, coordination skills, physical and mental condition, sense of achievement after coping with more complicated exercises, reduced stress and friendships, as already mentioned.

Memory training with a certified trainer aims to show seniors how to improve memory at any age. We try to defy the myth that courses where memory is trained are only for people who already have certain problems with it. Just as many of us have incorporated physical exercises into our lives, so we should take the same care of our memory, too. We explain the difference between “natural” forgetting and real problems with memory caused by dementia. We teach memory techniques through practical exercises so that everybody can use them in everyday life. The techniques are practically trained in every subject of daily living. For example - how to remember names and faces, how to remember a number code on a card, how to learn foreign languages when we are older, how not to forget things at home, etc. Moreover, we motivate seniors to actively train their memories and their cognitive functions, to care for them as well as for their physical health.

The key points of our project for the future is the **focus** on creating an **information platform** on our website www.seniorivpohybe.sk, which would contain comprehensive information on active and sporting activities for seniors in Bratislava and its surroundings. We plan to **expand the activities** we currently offer on a regular basis to activities in a concentrated **weekend form**. Seniors who are still working and do not have time to attend during the week will be able to try out new sports and activities.

We also aim to further **extend** our **team** to **volunteers with expertise** from the ranks of sports enthusiasts who would be able to cover new activities as well as volunteers for leading our current activities.

We believe that both sides of our project- our coaches and seniors can win in this project. Every day, our coaches and volunteers are reassured about the amazing potential of our seniors. Not only is each of them an expert in an area that they have studied all their lives and can exchange expertise from a wide variety of fields, but they can also provide us with answers to common life issues, whether they are

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related to education, relationships, or life balance. Apart from that, the elderly gain new incentives in their lives.

In the future, we would like to **cooperate with care homes**, where seniors are located for 24 hours and where the offer of physical activities is very limited.

Lastly, we would love to continue to **cooperate with senior friendly organizations** that work or plan to work with the elderly and to raise public awareness of the issue of balanced aging.

The results of our project are realized **activities**, in which the seniors boost their **physical and mental energy and fully develop their potential**. They **gain** and consolidate new **friendships**. They **learn** new **skills and hone their abilities**. In the long run, that leads not only to their **greater autonomy** and **self-sufficiency**, but above all to **quality time spend during retirement**.

Finally, **we truly enjoy the exchange of energy that** we feel throughout our activities.