



# #BEACTIVE DAY

## INCLUSION GUIDE



**Considering an intergenerational approach to physical activity engagement:**

*A hands-on guide for fitness and physical activity clubs and centres*

[beactiveday.eu](http://beactiveday.eu)

**europe active**  
MORE PEOPLE | MORE ACTIVE | MORE OFTEN

  
Co-funded by  
the European Union





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## WEBSITE

Project:

[europeactive.eu/projects/beactive-day-2023](https://europeactive.eu/projects/beactive-day-2023)

Campaign:

[beactiveday.eu](https://beactiveday.eu)

Ceska Komora Fitness (CZ):

[komorafitness.cz/beactiveday-2023](https://komorafitness.cz/beactiveday-2023)

Active-FNEAPL (FR):

[beactiveday.fr](https://beactiveday.fr)

Attic Union of Gym Owners (GR):

[beactiveday.gr](https://beactiveday.gr)

MAFORSZ (HU):

[beactiveday.hu](https://beactiveday.hu)

Latvian Health and Fitness Association (LV):

[balticfitness.lv/beactive-day-2023](https://balticfitness.lv/beactive-day-2023)

Portugal Activo (PT):

[lpfit.pt/beactiveday/](https://lpfit.pt/beactiveday/)

Romania Active (RO):

[romaniaactive.ro/beactive-day-2023-romaniaactive](https://romaniaactive.ro/beactive-day-2023-romaniaactive)

Association for Recreational Fitness Serbia (RS):

[beactiveday.rs](https://beactiveday.rs)

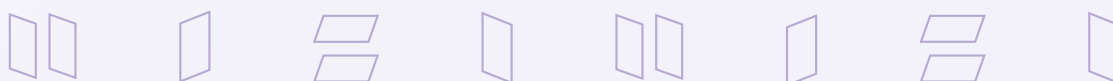
Together Advancing Common Trust (MK):

[beactiveday.mk](https://beactiveday.mk)



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# 01 INTRODUCTION

This guide has been developed through the vision that every person, regardless of age, gender identification, ethnic, cultural or economic background, sexual orientation, ability or disability should have the right to participate in health-enhancing physical activity. This guide promotes the power of physical activity to bridge differences and to unite people, and strives to inspire new standards for inclusion in the sector. The 2022 edition of the **#BEACTIVE DAY** campaign focused on furthering the inclusion of women and girls in physical activity, with the guide available here. This year, **#BEACTIVE DAY** adopts an intergenerational approach to get the youngest and oldest age groups more active, more often, and together.

Age plays an important role when it comes to fitness and physical activity access and opportunities. For the vast majority of individuals, being physically active is a crucial precondition of healthy lifestyle and general wellbeing. A 'one-size fits all' approach is often not the most efficient strategy for physical activity promotion, nor one that is advised by entities working towards health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) and improved public health. Being physically active is essential for people of all ages, though it has been demonstrated

that younger and older age groups face a unique set of barriers and age specific needs to be less sedentary. Both groups therefore require targeted approaches for effective physical activity promotion- and bringing them together to do so could even contribute to enhancing social cohesion.

In light of this, the following guide provides an overview of the current physical inactivity 'pandemic', explains how age is a defining factor of engagement, and reviews the common barriers to being physically active for both younger and older generations. The document then offers a roadmap for how fitness and physical activity providers can enact an intergenerational approach to create more accessible and inclusive opportunities for different generations to come together and engage in physical activity. The guide therefore paves the way to better inclusion of young and older age groups in physical activity through an intergenerational approach that is sensitive to the needs and realities of all.



## 02 ABOUT THE 2023 #BEACTIVE DAY PROJECT

The 2023 **#BEACTIVE DAY** project is a 12-month initiative coordinated by EuropeActive and funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The project includes 9 partners which are the national fitness associations of Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, and Serbia.

The concept of **#BEACTIVE DAY** is based on EuropeActive's previous 'National Fitness Day' campaigns, which were successfully developed across 15 European countries since 2017, proving that the core of this concept is a sustainable formula for success.

The **#BEACTIVE DAY** campaign materialises the vision of getting more people across Europe more active, more often, and is designed to tackle the issue of increasing levels of physical inactivity through the core message of #BeActive. By fostering greater participation in physical activity events throughout the last week of September, the **#BEACTIVE DAY** campaign directly contributes to Europe's largest campaign promoting sport and physical

activity - the European Commission's annual European Week of Sport (EWoS).

As a proven flagship event, **#BEACTIVEDAY** strives to be a key annual celebration of physical activity and coordinate national campaigns to support the contribution of the fitness and physical activity sector to EWoS. By working under the umbrella of EWoS, which creates strong connections at European, national, and regional levels, **#BEACTIVE DAY** is already demonstrating considerable success.

**#BEACTIVE DAY** celebrates the fun of fitness and physical activity and involves free events and activities that take place in thousands of fitness and sport centres, parks, town squares, schools, or even universities, and all for the benefit of anyone who wants to embrace being physically active for the day. In doing so, our campaign inspires individuals to move more, and to better understand the benefits and importance of an active lifestyle.





## 03 WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR ? WHAT DOES IT OFFER ?

*As part of EuropeActive's collective vision to get more people, more active, more often across Europe, this document is developed under the framework of the 2023 #BEACTIVE DAY project.*



This guide supports fitness and physical activity providers to successfully create and deliver activities, initiatives, programmes that adopt an intergenerational approach, which are tailored to the needs and preferred activities of younger and older age groups, as part of the **#BEACTIVE DAY** campaign. An inclusive lens should appeal to a broader audience and benefit organisational and strategic planning for fitness and physical activity operators.

**With fitness and physical activity provider staff and management in mind, the guide offers:**

- An overview of age-related disparities in physical activity levels
- Definition and explanation of the benefits of intergenerational physical activity engagement to youth, older adults and fitness operators
- How to overcome barriers to implementing an intergenerational approach
- Specific considerations and insights when targeting older and younger generations
- A roadmap for implementing an intergenerational approach



This guide encourages fitness and physical activity stakeholders to seize the **#BEACTIVE DAY** campaign as an opportunity to specifically focus on creating welcoming environments, fun activities and cater for an intergenerational target audience.



# 04 PHYSICAL INACTIVITY ACROSS AGE GROUPS

## The reality of physical inactivity

The physical inactivity ‘pandemic’ is a pressing global health issue that has reached alarming levels in recent years. Global estimations show that 1.4 billion adults do not meet the recommended levels of physical activity. This corresponds to approximately 1 in 4 adults yet, an even greater 3 in 4 adolescents (11-17 years) do not reach WHO physical activity recommendations.<sup>1</sup> This issue is increasing in scale, with the proportion of Europeans who never exercise or play sports rising from 39% in 2009 to 45% by 2022.<sup>2</sup> Despite the growing importance attached to the promotion of physical activity in EU Member States in light of this trend, physical inactivity levels remain alarmingly high.

Physical inactivity has negative impacts on physical and mental health as well as economic productivity. Should the trend of inactivity not be changed, its global

cost is estimated to be approximately INT\$520 billion between 2020 and 2030.<sup>3</sup> Today, a vast amount of research demonstrates how regular physical activity improves wellbeing and prevents depression, anxiety and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) including stroke, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease and cancer. The COVID-19 pandemic drew increased attention to the positive benefits that strengthening regular physical activity has on the immune system, even though the pandemic exacerbated inactivity levels: over 50% of adults reported reduced physical activity levels during the pandemic.<sup>4</sup> The overall situation requires boosted action.

Policies to increase physical activity levels can have a considerable impact on improving population health. Implementing WHO’s guidelines of recommended physical activity across the EU is estimated to:<sup>5</sup>



Increase the life expectancy of **people who are insufficiently active**



Save **EUR PPP 14 per capita in healthcare expenditure** – a total of **EUR PPP 8 billion** per year

Avoid 11.5 million cases of non-communicable diseases over the next three decades, including:



Increase average **life expectancy** by **2 months**



Reduce **total health expenditure** by **0.6%**



**3.5 million** cases of depression



Prevent over **10 000 premature deaths** per year



**3.8 million** cases of cardiovascular disease



**400 000** cases of cancer

To attain these benefits, it is essential to boost inclusion in physical activity engagement.

1 | WHO, 'Global action plan on physical activity 2018–2030: more active people for a healthier world', 2018. <https://shorturl.at/abjQ1>

2 | European Commission, 'Special Eurobarometer 525 sport and physical activity', 2022. <http://bit.ly/3MSFI95>

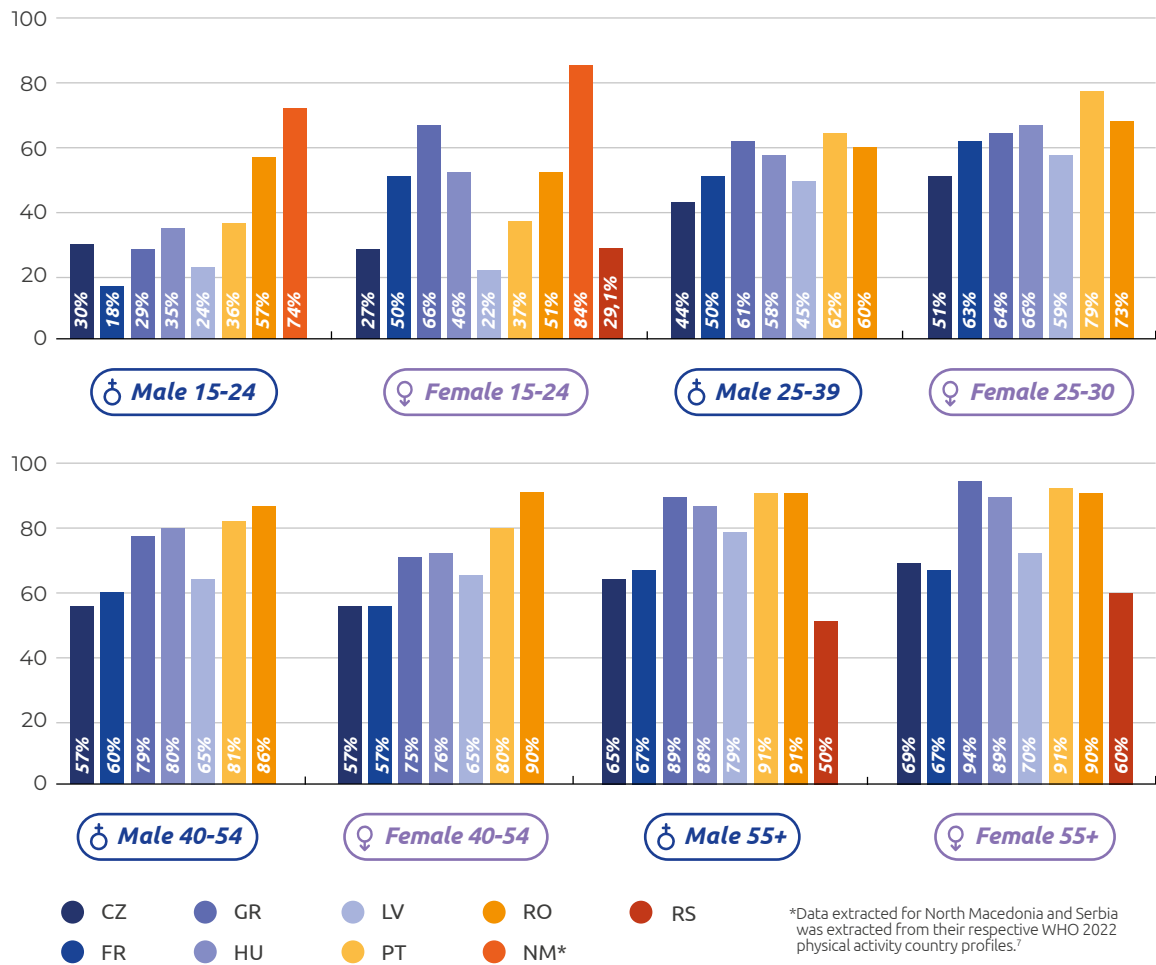
3 | Costa Santos et al., 'The cost of inaction on physical inactivity to public healthcare systems: a population-attributable fraction analysis', in Lancet Global Health, Vol 11, 2023. <https://shorturl.at/bpxO2>

4 | OECD/WHO, 'Step Up! Tackling the Burden of Insufficient Physical Activity in Europe's 2023. <https://shorturl.at/jxyTW>

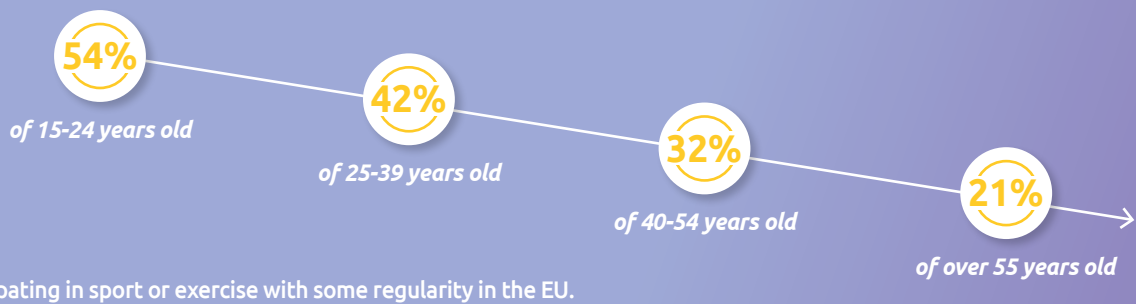
5 | Ibid

# What we know about physical activity levels across age groups

Percentage of people never or rarely exercising or playing sport.<sup>6</sup>



The latest data highlights that physical activity levels consistently decrease with age, with:



participating in sport or exercise with some regularity in the EU.

6 | European Commission, 'Special Eurobarometer 525'.  
 7 | WHO, 'Physical Activity Profile 2022. North Macedonia'. <https://shorturl.at/nozM2>. 'Physical Activity Profile 2022. Serbia'. <https://shorturl.at/jlot2>  
 8 | European Commission, 'Special Eurobarometer 525'.  
 9 | Ibid.  
 10 | European Commission, 'Green Paper on Ageing. Fostering solidarity and responsibility between generations', 2021. <https://bit.ly/3WUxeml>  
 11 | Swedish National Institute of Public Health, 'Healthy ageing: a challenge for Europe', 2007. <https://bit.ly/3NoWSwN>  
 12 | WHO, 'Factsheet - Physical Activity', 2022. <https://shorturl.at/rDPS9>  
 13 | European Commission et al., 'The silver economy – Final report', 2018. <https://rb.gy/4kdjh>  
 14 | Statista Research Department, 'Distribution of frequency of how often people exercise or play sport in the European Union (EU) in 2017 by age group and gender', 2022 <https://shorturl.at/jOPZ7>  
 15 | OECD/European Union, 'Health at a Glance: Europe 2022: State of Health in the EU Cycle', 2022 <https://shorturl.at/yMN04>  
 16 | WHO, 'Global status report on physical activity', 2022. <https://bit.ly/42szkLo>  
 17 | WHO, 'Factsheet - Physical Activity'.  
 18 | UNESCO, 'Fit for Life: sport as a cost-effective solution', 2022. <https://bit.ly/3HZIHYW>  
 19 | WHO, 'New analysis from WHO/ Europe identifies surprising trends in rates of overweight and obesity across the Region', 2021. <https://bit.ly/3oSu8Tt>





## Benefits to older populations

In Europe approximately 73% of older men and 75% of older women are not physically active. This is particularly concerning given contemporary demographic change, with a third of the EU population estimated to be over 65 by 2060. Raising awareness around the benefits of physical activity for this age group and boosting engagement is therefore essential. As seniors are frequent users of the healthcare systems due to age-related conditions, the potential economic upside to focusing on keeping this demographic healthy and active for as long as possible is substantial. Specific benefits for this age group include the maintenance of effective function and capacity for self-care and the prevention and delay of cognitive degenerative diseases (e.g., dementia, Alzheimer's).<sup>11</sup> WHO's recommendations for adults 65yrs+ equally

promote engaging in multicomponent strength and balance training at least three days per week to reduce fall risk.<sup>12</sup>

Improving the health and wellbeing of older populations can also support the development of the Silver Economy<sup>13</sup>. A healthier ageing population holds market potential and economic opportunity through increased participation in society, which can positively contribute to overall prosperity and enhance social equity. For the fitness sector, the silver economy may also represent one of the greatest opportunities to tap into a rarely explored market. An older population motivated and supported to engage in physical activity can boost penetration for the European fitness sector, given only 8% and 7% of men and women over 55yrs respectively currently exercising regularly.<sup>14</sup>

## Benefits to younger populations

Similarly, the majority of children and adolescents also demonstrate low levels of physical activity engagement, with only 1 in 4 11-year-olds and 1 in 7 15-year-olds in the EU meeting WHO recommendations of one hour of moderate-to-vigorous exercise per day.<sup>15</sup>

Regular physical activity provides a multitude of benefits specific to children and adolescents, being particularly important for optimal growth and development.<sup>16</sup> It also supports the acquisition of social skills, motor skills and improved cognitive outcomes including school-based attention and learning ability.<sup>17</sup> Data show up to 40% improved academic performance for children who are

regularly active.<sup>18</sup> Physical activity is also important for young populations given they face some of the highest overweight and obesity rates, affecting approximately 29% boys and 27% girls in 2021.<sup>19</sup>

Physical activity also lays the foundation for a healthier adulthood, hence starting early in life can have long-lasting positive effects on health and well-being throughout the ageing process. Recent studies show that childhood exercise has a protective effect on health in later years, as well as improving cognitive abilities in adulthood.<sup>20</sup> Finally, children who engage in regular physical activity are more likely to continue being active in adulthood.<sup>21</sup>

20 | Aberg MA et al., 'Cardiovascular fitness is associated with cognition in young adulthood', in Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A., Vol 106(49), 2009. <https://rb.gy/h53n6>

21 | Aberg MA et al., 'Cardiovascular fitness is associated with cognition in young adulthood', in Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A., Vol 106(49), 2009. <https://rb.gy/h53n6>

22 | European Commission, 'Mapping study on the intergenerational dimension of sport', 2019. <https://bit.ly/3tiUN3G>

23 | European Union, 'Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the European Union Work Plan for Sport (1 January 2021- 30 June 2024) 2020/C 419/01', in Official Journal of the European Union, C 419, p.1-11, 2020. <https://rb.gy/2wirt>

24 | European Commission, 'Communication on sport (2011): developing the European dimension in sport', 2011. <https://shorturl.at/tMRT6>

25 | European Commission, 'Green Paper on Ageing', 15.

26 | European Commission, 'Loneliness among older adults - A European perspective', 2022. <https://rb.gy/cldsx>

27 | European Commission, 'Loneliness and social connectedness: insights from a new EU-wide survey', 2023. <https://rb.gy/hzlm6>

28 | Victor, C. & Yang, K., 'The prevalence of loneliness among adults: a case study of the United Kingdom', in Journal of Psychology, Vol 146, 2012. <https://rb.gy/l70ey>

29 | European Commission, 'Loneliness among older adults'.

30 | European Commission, 'Flash Eurobarometer 269', 2009. <https://rb.gy/fktrp>

31 | European Parliament, 'European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations', 2012. <https://bit.ly/3P0yK4z>

32 | European Commission, 'Mapping study on the intergenerational dimension of sport'.

# 05 THE CASE FOR AN INTERGENERATIONAL APPROACH TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

## What is an ‘intergenerational approach’ and why is it important?

This guide builds on the understanding of intergenerational physical activity from the European Commission’s definition of **“any activity that engages both young and older generations in taking part in sport and physical activities at the same time”**.<sup>22</sup> Contemporary European sport and physical activity policy<sup>23</sup> stresses the need to increase physical activity levels across age groups, and hence emphasises an intergenerational approach can support social cohesion and inclusion.<sup>24</sup>

Older adults are particularly vulnerable to loneliness and its health related implications given they are more likely to experience life transitions and disruptive life events, such as retirement and bereavement.<sup>26</sup> Data further shows the proportion of 18-25 year olds who report feeling frequently lonely has more than doubled between 2016 and 2022.<sup>27</sup> Research suggests that loneliness follows a U-shaped pattern, with loneliness reaching its highest levels among young and older generations.<sup>28</sup> The Covid-19 pandemic appears to have amplified this prevalence of loneliness among both older and younger age groups.<sup>29</sup>

“The way societies prepare for ageing needs to go beyond economic issues and quality, affordable services. We have to think about how generations live together. One concern is the increasing risk of loneliness and social isolation both among younger and older people”<sup>25</sup>.  
*European Commission’s Green paper on Ageing*

In 2009, 60% of Europeans reported a lack of opportunities for younger and older people to meet and collaborate through activities.<sup>30</sup> Hence, European policies have increasingly endorsed the intergenerational concept as part of the answer to ageing societies. The Commission announced 2012 as the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity Between Generations, highlighting the beneficial contributions physically active older people can make to society by enhancing their independence, in parallel to strengthening solidarity between generations.<sup>31</sup> In 2022, the Commission sought to provide visibility to projects and initiatives promoting intergenerational sport and physical activities across the continent, by launching the *#BEACTIVE Award across generations*.

Finally, the Commission published a mapping on the intergenerational dimension of sport and physical activity<sup>32</sup> that highlights the five main typologies of such activities:

- 1 promoting **intergenerational learning** through sport and sport-related activities
- 2 encouraging **increased participation in sport** of young and old people
- 3 promoting **healthy lifestyles** through intergenerational sport activities
- 4 increasing sport participation through **intergenerational competitions**
- 5 promoting **the role of families** in encouraging physical activity

Focusing the 2023 **#BEACTIVE DAY** campaign on raising awareness around, and developing, intergenerational physical activity engagement is therefore a relevant way to encourage physical activity for both young and older age groups and provide opportunities for connecting communities.





## Benefits of an intergenerational approach

While it is clear physical activity can provide specific health benefits to both younger and older age groups, intergenerational activities possess a wealth of an additional benefits: they can foster interpersonal connections, mutual understanding and respect between generations, thus reducing risks of social conflicts and strengthening a sense of community. They can

further enhance social cohesion by debunking negative perceptions of intergenerational interactions, and by encouraging exchanges of ideas, knowledge and skills, they can facilitate opportunities for mutual learning.<sup>33</sup>

Benefits of implementing an intergenerational approach to physical activity initiatives include:



### For Older people

- Enriching social connections whilst promoting healthy ageing
- Reducing loneliness and social isolation to improve quality of life
- Providing regular opportunities for interpersonal interaction to stay socially connected
- Boosting a sense of value and productivity
- Keeping connected with current trends and perspectives
- Developing new skills with technologies
- Countering negative stereotypes of ageing
- Increase a sense of belonging in communities to enhance life satisfaction
- Contributing to the ability to actively engage in activities, with younger generations, outside of gym settings



### For Younger people

- Increasing confidence in communicating with others
- Increasing tolerance of and understanding for other generations
- Increasing active citizenship behaviours



- Facilitating opportunities for learning outside of education settings
- Promoting a sense of identity and perspective
- Developing valuable life skills and acquiring shared wisdom



### For Club Operators

- **Community Reputation:** By fostering intergenerational activities, your club/centre can position itself as an inclusive and socially responsible entity, thereby improving its reputation and earning a positive image in the community.
- **Unique Programming:** Offering intergenerational initiatives or classes sets your club/centre apart from others, making it more attractive to prospective members of all ages.
- **Clientele:** Promoting an intergenerational approach can help to attract new members and boost revenue.
- **Play a role in improving society:** By embracing intergenerational activities, your club/centre has the potential to create a positive ripple effect throughout the community, enriching lives, fostering connections, and promoting healthier lifestyles. It's a step towards a more inclusive, understanding, and healthy society.



# Challenges to implementing intergenerational initiatives

The Commission's intergenerational Mapping study<sup>34</sup> identifies the two most common barriers to participation as:



## MOTIVATIONAL

- > **Age negative stereotypes** - young people might feel reluctant to engage with older people due to peer pressure or prevailing norms stipulating that is not socially desirable to do so. Older people can also have a negative perception of younger generations.
- > **Settings** – non-neutral settings such as schools or nursing homes might induce a sense of not belonging to either the older or younger participants and can result in increasing feelings of discomfort. It is therefore useful to select a neutral place where both groups will feel at ease (fitness club/centre, sport fields, parks, community centres etc).
- > **Communication** – different age groups use different vocabulary and might attribute varied meaning to the same words or expressions. In this sense, well-balanced communication appropriate both for older and younger generation is needed.
- > **Local cultural context** – levels of intergenerational interaction may vary across national contexts, with weaker levels of usual interaction between young and older people more easily producing feelings of awkwardness or discomfort.
- > **Promotion** – encouraging participation in intergenerational activities must be engaging to the specific target audience, which can be challenging as young and older populations may be motivated by different things.



## STRUCTURAL

- > **Limited financial support** for this type of programme
- > **Lack of awareness** of the importance of intergenerational projects
- > **Limited number of EU-level networks** focused on this issue
- > **Poor infrastructure** and lack of equipment sufficient for the specific needs of certain target groups

34 | Ibid.

## Key considerations for successful intergenerational activities

When designing and delivering intergenerational physical activity initiatives, club/centre owners, fitness instructors and relevant stakeholders should be mindful of the following key principles to enhance success:

- Include a level of individualisation and self-disclosure during intergenerational activities can help facilitate **close contact and promote intergenerational friendships** (i.e., self-introductions, ice-breaker sessions or structured opportunities for dialogue and exchanges of views)
- Design **mutually beneficial activities for both age groups**. A focus on common goals and a shared purpose helps support this, such as tasks that produce tangible outcomes and involve some organisation/planning (e.g., competitive elements, tasks requiring overcoming a challenge).
- Account for the expectations of both older and younger participants, so as to **not prioritise one group over another**.
- Involve **qualified professionals** with the right knowledge and expertise in working with both older and younger people, such as fitness coaches, but also teachers or social workers.
- **Create inclusive environments** for intergenerational activities. This is vital for both older and younger people to feel comfortable participating in activities together.
- **Be flexible** in responding to participants' needs and allow for changes throughout implementation based on participants' feedback.
- **Communicate about the benefits** of intergenerational projects at local, and gradually at national and international levels, as this enhances awareness raising, which may directly affect the level of funding available for these types of activities.

### Intergenerational example: Madrid City Council's 'Shared Exercise' initiative

The Shared Exercise initiative ran between 2007-2019 in Madrid, aiming to promote healthy lifestyles through intergenerational physical activity initiatives. It was led by the General Directorate for the Elderly, in the area of Equity, Social Rights and Employment. in collaboration with the Directorate for Education and Youth.

Under the initiative, events were organised in eight city districts (Fuencarral, Moratalaz, Puente de Vallecas, Arganzuela, Carabanchel, Vicálvaro, Salamanca and Villaverde) to provide opportunities for younger and older populations to connect. All activities were held in

public parks or squares and led by exercise professionals. Each session lasted for 1hr and included a warmup walk to encourage conversation between participants, group stretching and games. It helped tackle negative stereotypes between generations and showcase the value of intergenerational interaction around physical activity. This project was very well received by local communities, receiving an average satisfaction rate of 9.5 out of 10 in 2019. Feedback specifically revealed how elderly participants felt more connected to their local communities thanks to this programme.



# 06

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR TARGETING OLDER GENERATIONS

With a vision centred around promoting social, mental, and physical health, Fit&Sund has established itself as a pioneer in promoting active and healthy lifestyles among seniors through its innovative senior gym programmes. Their expertise in this area is showcased through their participation in the Promoting Physical Activity for Healthy Ageing (PAHA) project, which led to the development of the "Motion for livet" (exercise for life) concept. This concept serves as the foundation for Fit&Sund's specialised fitness programmes designed specifically for seniors over 65 years. This concept is notably implemented in 5 of Fit&Sund's 39 gyms across Denmark, who, together run a total of 60 classes a week for seniors. This has proven to be a successful programme since 23% of the entire Fit&Sund franchise's membership are seniors. This extensive experience with seniors is why Fit&Sund has been selected as core experts in the 2023 **#BEACTIVE DAY** project

and have been essential to bring together the following content.

Seniors constitute a demographic with specific needs and who often exercise during non-peak hours, usually in the middle of the day when most of the working population is occupied. This pattern presents a unique opportunity to maximise the utilisation of your club/centre facilities. It is important to also note that seniors can particularly lack a sense of community, due to many being retired and no longer having professional social interactions. This can make them seek out and happily contribute to building communities in their local areas, making intergenerational physical activity initiatives a chance to bridge the generational gap, promote social cohesion and strengthen the social fabric of the community.

### Added value for clubs/centres



#### New Clientele & Increased Membership:

If senior activity is not already an integrated part of your strategy, then implementing it can attract a new demographic to your club/centre. This increase in membership can lead to a boost in revenues, particularly given that adults over 65yrs are currently the least active age-group in European societies and are hence a market holding potential for significant growth.

#### Optimised Centre Utilisation:

Seniors typically have flexible schedules and are more likely to use facilities during off-peak hours. This results in optimal use of your facilities throughout the day.



### Challenges and suggested solutions



#### Physical limitations of seniors

##### Explanation

Seniors often have physical limitations or health conditions that must be considered while designing activities. It is vital to have activities that are flexible and adaptable to various physical abilities.

##### Suggested solution

Use physical therapists or fitness professionals experienced in working with older adults to design safe, engaging, and adaptable exercise routines. It is also helpful to offer a range of activities at different intensity levels to cater to various fitness levels.





### Technology challenges

#### Explanation

With the increasing use of technology in everyday life, it is inevitable that some activities or even club membership procedures, will have a technological component. Some seniors may struggle with using innovative technology.

#### Suggested solution

With the increasing use of technology in everyday life, it is inevitable that some activities or even club membership procedures, will have a technological component. Some seniors may struggle with using innovative technology.



### Fear of injury

#### Explanation

Seniors might be hesitant to participate due to the fear of getting injured.

#### Suggested solution

Ensure safety in all activities by incorporating appropriate measures such as proper equipment, qualified supervision, and a hazard-free environment. Health and safety briefings should be part of every activity and help enhance participant confidence. If you want to create an environment where seniors actively challenge themselves and get the most out of their exercise, they need to feel safe.



### Marketing

#### Explanation

It can be challenging targeting seniors through commonly used social media marketing.

#### Suggested solution

Use posters and adverts in local newsletters, clubs, libraries, or other places that facilitate or host senior activities.



### Lack of interest or motivation

#### Explanation

Some seniors might lack the motivation to join activities, especially if they feel the activities are not suited to their interests or abilities.

#### Suggested solution

Encourage member feedback and involvement in planning activities. This gives them a sense of ownership and ensures that the activities are varied and appealing to a wide range of interests and abilities. Keep in mind that success stories are a great motivator, so do not be afraid to provide opportunities to succeed. These could be challenges such as beating scores on a machine or balancing the longest on a balance pod- incorporate easily trackable exercises. Focusing on the social benefits of engaging in physical activity can make participation more appealing.



# Sector example and key considerations from



Based on the above information, Fit&Sund have had remarkable success with the following projects and strategies:

## 1 Senior Campaign:

*“Drawing seniors in with a good offer is a wonderful way to build a customer base. In our experience, the best campaign is based on a 4–6-week free trial with 2-3 classes a week focused on introducing seniors to the fitness environment. This begins with a senior introduction class which creates a safe environment, as it is the same group of participants that are in the class throughout the campaign. Try to build a relationship with your participant, use the same instructors, and allow time for conversation and feedback after each class. After the campaign, make sure to have scheduled classes around the same time as the introductory campaign classes to facilitate continued participation.”*

## 2 The senior board:

*“As you run multiple campaigns and build your senior membership base, try to establish a senior board. This should consist of 4-6 members in total, 2-4 senior members, an instructor, and a gym leader/owner. The senior members could be compensated for their contribution, with a free/discounted membership for their involvement in the board. Use the senior board members as ambassadors; ask them to participate as you run new campaigns. They could have small presentations, talking about their own experience with the classes, why they started or what effects they have experienced since started going to your gym/club. This will help you build trust among new members and at the same time retain your existing senior members.”*

## 3 Plan social events:

*“After establishing your seniors board and running a couple of campaigns, you can start focusing on promoting the social health aspects of participation. In general, use your knowledge of your local area and your imagination. Remember, the social events are your way to great socialising, interaction, retention, and great experiences for your senior members.*

*Examples of social events could be:*

- *Walk and talks: Invite the senior group for a walk and talk. Plan subjects or even invite an expert in an interesting area. (i.e., a physiotherapist, mindfulness expert, nutritionist or an expert on a historical event that has taken place around the area)*
- *Dinners or lunches: plan dinners and/or lunches, use local restaurants and combine it with exercise. It could be that you start your day with an hour of exercise at the gym/club, then meet up at a local restaurant for lunch, after lunch you finish the event with a walk around the area.*
- *Museum trips: In our experience museum trips work well as social events, learning together is a fantastic way to connect beyond fitness classes, and to stimulate one's mind.*
- *Plan guest instructors: Invite other instructors to teach your classes, this could be yoga, mindfulness, meditation, dance etc., this helps introduce new challenges, keeping your classes fun and exciting.”*



# 07 CONSIDERATIONS FOR TARGETING YOUNGER GENERATIONS

Based on the above information, Fit&Sund have had remarkable success with the following projects and strategies:

- 1 **Make it fun:** Everyone loves to have fun, and kids in particular! Fun must be the focus of activities to engage children and help them build a positive relationship with physical activity. Reflect on how to make activities as fun as possible: from the music and moves to the style of teaching- it's FUNdamental!
- 2 **Create a feeling of belonging:** All too often kids' sports are competitive and can be non-inclusive which may discourage participation. Set up activities with instructors/ teachers who focus on nurturing a real sense of inclusion and achievement, so that everyone feels they belong- and want to come back!

- 3 **Make it right for the age and stage:** Co-creating activities and initiatives with young people helps use music kids love, moves they can easily master, and explanations that make sense to them. Incorporating core building block skills, which have been expertly approved to align with development stages, rounds out the experience from fun to health-enhancing.
- 4 **Give a sense of achievement:** Every session should grow confidence as young people experience the thrill of mastering new skills and enjoy a sense of collective completion. Positive reinforcement is important, regardless of the physical abilities of the child or outcomes of games.
- 5 **Uphold and safeguard physical and emotional safety:** ensure all moves are pre-tested, or in line with development stages, to ensure they push young people to experience the full extent of their ability while being safe for their age group.



## Added value for clubs/centres

### New clientele & long-term member retention:

By targeting younger age groups, clubs can attract a new demographic and expand their client base. Most importantly, engaging younger generations early on can foster the establishment of fitness habits and contribute to ensure a stable and long-lasting membership base for the club.

### Growth Potential:

Younger age groups are often more likely to embrace new activities and try out different fitness programmes. By providing targeted programmes, clubs can tap into this growth potential in terms of participation and involvement and capitalise on it.

## Challenges and suggested solutions



### Lack of autonomy

#### Explanation

Kids and younger generations may still be dependent on caregivers, both financially and in terms of logistics for attending fitness classes or gym sessions.

#### Suggested solution

Involve parents and caregivers in children's activities by finding ways to motivate them to integrate physical activity into their children's weekly routines. Make it easy for the parents in terms of planning and practicalities, such as scheduling the sessions right after school or providing comfortable spaces to observe or chat during the sessions.

Offer a variety of family-friendly activities, group hikes, fitness classes and sports events; consider arranging discounted memberships or group training sessions specifically tailored for parents/ family unit.





### *Safety concerns*

#### **Explanation**

Parents and caregivers often worry that a physically active child could hurt themselves and may therefore be likely to limit their child's activity.

#### **Suggested solution**

Develop comprehensive safety guidelines specifically tailored to different physical activities, highlighting precautions, proper techniques, and equipment usage. Ensure to maintain open lines of communication with parents and caregivers, addressing their concerns and providing regular updates. Modification of adult risk perceptions may be one way to positively influence children's activity behaviours.



### *Lack of fitness literacy*

#### **Explanation**

These individuals may have limited experience in fitness spaces and regarding specific vocabulary

#### **Suggested solution**

Involve specialised fitness professionals who can translate formal terminology into understandable, engaging instruction for young participants.



### *Lack of motivation and interest*

#### **Explanation**

Children may be perceived as 'naturally active' per se, resulting in a potential lack of interest from both the children and their parents/caregivers in engaging them in structured forms of physical activity.

#### **Suggested solution**

Ensure that classes are fun, enjoyable and structured to include both moderate and vigorous intensity activity. Moves must be pre-tested to ensure they safely 'push' young people to experience the full extent of their ability. Their confidence grows as they experience the thrill of mastering new skills and as a result they fall in love with regular physical activity.



### *Still in development phase*

#### **Explanation**

Kids and younger generations are still growing and their bodies developing, hence should not engage in certain fitness activities, dependent on their development stages (e.g., heavy weight training)

#### **Suggested solution**

Ensure fitness classes are tailored, appropriate and safe for this age group. Well-qualified fitness professionals should lead them. Fitness spaces where youth are independently engaging in physical activity should also be monitored, to ensure no high-risk or damaging activities are being performed.





### Inactive role models

#### Explanation

Children are increasingly exposed to inactive role models and to a world that doesn't prioritise physical activity. Female role models, both inside and outside the family unit, can create a normative environment for children- prioritising physical activity is therefore essential.

#### Suggested solution

Promote active role models for all children and encourage regular interaction, such as group workouts and joint physical activities, where active adults can act as role models, actively engage and guide children. Organise parent-child physical activity programmes that allow family units to engage in physical activities together and invite active parents within the community to share their experiences and practical advice with other parents.



### Safety concerns

#### Explanation

Social norms, cultural beliefs, and gender stereotypes can influence children's perceptions and attitudes towards physical activity, potentially discouraging certain groups (e.g., girls) from participation.

#### Suggested solution

Promoting inclusive environments, challenging stereotypes, and providing diverse physical activity options that cater to different interests and cultural backgrounds. Highlight diverse role models, including both female and male athletes, who challenge stereotypes and excel in various physical activities.

Check out the 2022 **#BEACTIVE DAY** Inclusion Guide, dedicated to engaging more women and girls!

### Sector example:



The 2023 **#BEACTIVE DAY** campaign is excited to count on the support of Les Mills, core sponsor of this year's edition. Les Mills have kindly developed the following section, offering further insight into helping children be more active through one of their flagship programmes.

For more than 50 years, Les Mills has been leading the way in fitness. They produce 25 group fitness programmes, backed by science, to be experienced in club or at home via Les Mills+. Every week, millions of people get fit in 21,000 clubs, across 100 countries with the help of 140,000 Les Mills instructors, who bring to life programmes such as BODYPUMP™ (the world's most popular barbell workout), BODYCOMBAT™ (martial arts), RPM™ (indoor cycling), BODYBALANCE™ (new generation yoga) and our latest innovation, Les Mills Strength Development, the first of many new programmes developed to target Generation Active.



BORN TO MOVE is all about inspiring young people to fall in love with physical activity. It combines fitness and fun to help kids and teens develop positive self-awareness, confidence, and coordination.



The programmes allow children to experience the vitality and joy that comes from moving to music – and in turn, nurtures a life-long love of physical activity. They are available as 15–55-minute workouts, each of the five different BORN TO MOVE programmes are optimised for a specific age group and their core developmental stage, to suit both early years and school years.

“The early and school years of life are a critical window to form positive habits. That is why we've developed BORN TO MOVE. We want to instil a love of being active in children so they can grow into active, healthy, and happy adults.” Dr Jackie Mills MD, Les Mills Chief Creative Officer.

In collaboration with the **#BEACTIVE DAY** campaign, Les Mills has a marketing toolkit of assets available to help promote your **#BEACTIVE DAY** plans and initiatives and for the entire month of September, Les Mills is offering FREE access to the BORN TO MOVE virtual platform!

For more information on how Les Mills is supporting the **#BEACTIVE DAY** campaign, visit [www.lesmills.com/beactive-day](http://www.lesmills.com/beactive-day) and to gain access to the BORN TO MOVE virtual platform, scan the QR code and fill in the form.

# 08 ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTING AN INTERGENERATIONAL APPROACH

This roadmap intends to serve as a basic guide. Each club or centre is unique, and this plan should be adapted according to your specific circumstances, resources, and goals. Remember, the aim is to foster understanding, companionship, and mutual learning among different generations.



**Assess Your Resources:** Before you begin, take stock of what you have. What facilities and spaces are available for use? Who among your staff is qualified to create and lead such activities? What budget can you allocate towards this initiative?



**Assess your local community:** Research your local community. What is the current engagement of young and older age groups in your club membership? Where do your target groups gather and spend time? What are the best marketing opportunities? What are the best mediums to communicate with them? The broader the range of age groups, the more likely it will be necessary to use a variety of communication areas and channels.



**Design Suitable Activities:** Based on your resources, your goals, and the insight you can increasingly collect from participants, start planning activities. Ensure activities are versatile and adaptable to cater to varying physical abilities and interests. Include a suitable range of activities, with both physical and mental components, perhaps even gamified elements, and make sure safety precautions are in place. Most importantly, make it fun and enjoyable!



**Collaborate with Experts:** For activities that require specific expertise (like fitness classes suitable for seniors or youth), collaborate with experts. This ensures safety and suitability while adding value to your programme. Based on the above, make sure to plan activities/classes that are easy to replicate, as they might become part of your daily classes and activities.



**Train Your Staff:** Ensure your staff understands the purpose, importance, and reasoning for implementing these intergenerational activities. Be sure they are trained, or gain training, to successfully engage and manage different age groups, ensure safety in participation and emphasize cooperation and mutual respect.



**Schedule the Activities:** Plan your schedule. Ideally, intergenerational activities should take place at a suitable time for both the targeted age groups. As older adults may have more flexibility in their schedules compared to younger individuals, consider aligning the planning of intergenerational activities with school schedules to better accommodate families' needs. If possible, include ice-breaker sessions or other opportunities for intergenerational bonding and socialisation before or after the sessions.



**Promote Your Activities:** Based on the community assessment from Step 1, use targeted newsletters, social media posts, your website, and word-of-mouth as appropriate to spread the word about your new initiatives. Emphasise the benefits and make sure to appeal to your specific target group(s) using the correct marketing channels and language.



**Run a Pilot Programme:** Consider running a pilot programme first. This allows you to get feedback and make necessary adjustments before a full-scale roll-out. The 2023 **#BEACTIVE DAY** could be a terrific opportunity to kickstart a pilot programme. Getting to know the younger and older age groups of your local community will, most likely, take time. Be adaptive and use the pilot programme to learn from your local area.



**Evaluate and Adapt:** Regularly evaluate the success of your activities. Obtain feedback from participants and adjust your programmes as needed to ensure they continue to meet the needs and interests of your members. Use ambassadors from all age groups to gain from inclusive teamwork.



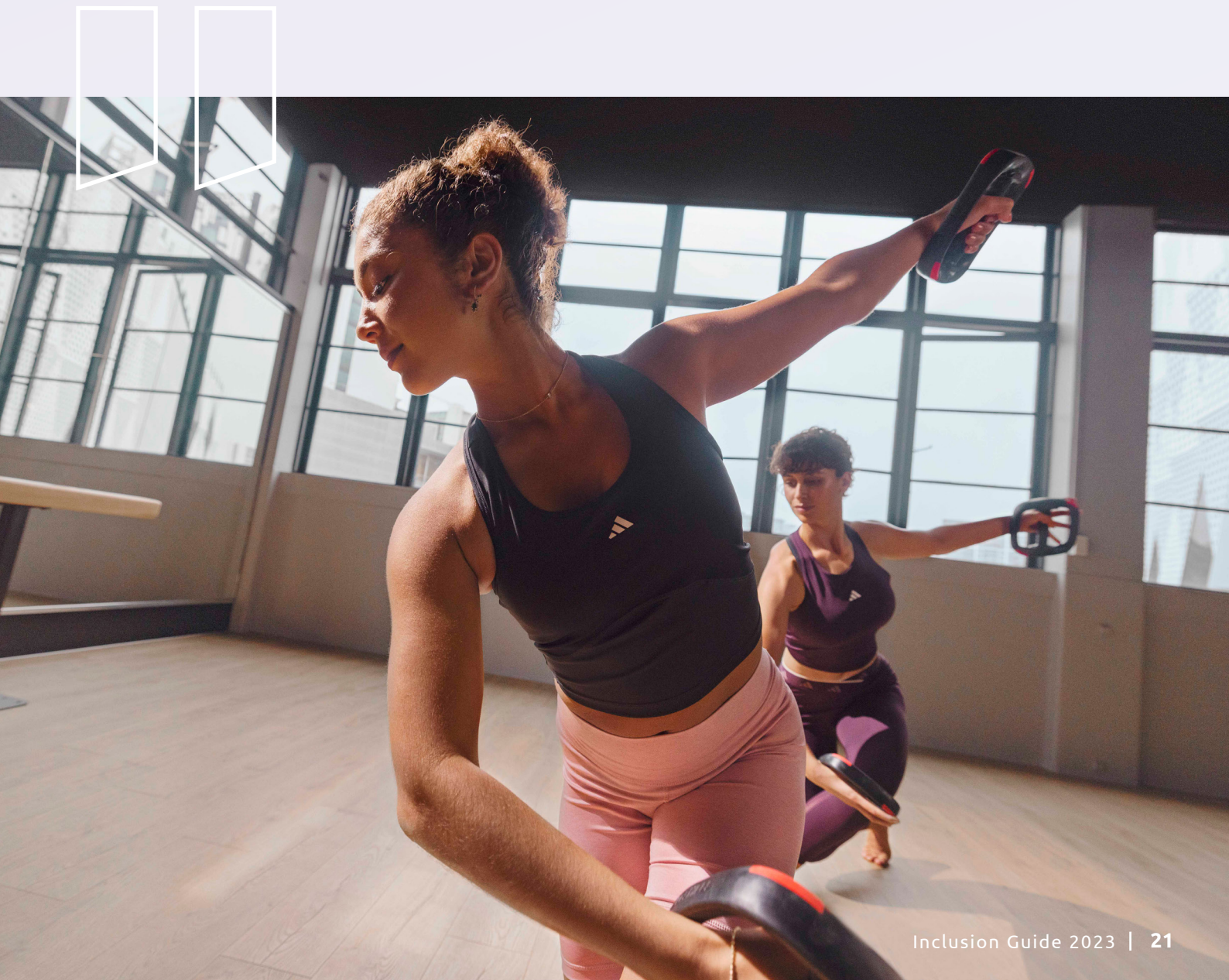
**Celebrate Success:** Acknowledge and celebrate the success of your intergenerational activities. Share success stories and positive outcomes to inspire others to join and to promote your club/centre.



## 09 CONCLUSION

The 2023 **#BEACTIVE DAY** presents an opportunity to bring together individuals from different generations, especially younger and older age groups. As such, an intergenerational approach provides a platform that fosters interaction, learning, mutual respect, and access to new clientele for fitness clubs, centres, and operators. It also provides specific benefits to young and older populations to overcome unique challenges faced by these groups. As previous sections have highlighted, creating programmes and initiatives for intergenerational activities unlocks the potential to

access these often-untapped markets. This guide has reviewed the numerous benefits for club/centres who do so and has provided further context and explanations about the contributions these kinds of activities make towards one's community, and society. The roadmap provided and explanation of how to overcome potential barriers equips clubs/centres with a clear route of action. We hope this therefore inspires you, the gym/club owners, to integrate intergenerational activity in your gyms with the support of 2023 **#BEACTIVE DAY**.



# 10 RESOURCES TO GO FURTHER

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



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## INTERGENERATIONAL



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Ebrahimi et al., 'The effect of physical activity based on intergenerational programs on the quality of life of older adults', in *Journal of Ageing*, Vol. 14, 2020.

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European Commission, 'Mapping study on the intergenerational dimension of sport', 2019.

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European Commission, 'Green Paper on Ageing. Fostering solidarity and responsibility between generation', 2021. <https://bit.ly/3WUxeml>

Generation Games/ Practical user's guide.

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National Association of Seniors Fitness/Resources.

<https://rb.gy/8k309>

Promoting Physical Activity for Healthy Ageing (PAHA) project, 'Good Practice Guide', 2016.

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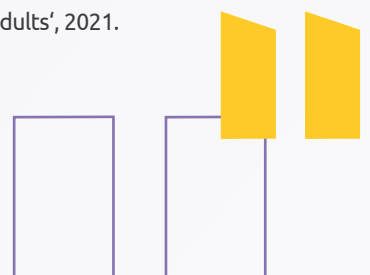
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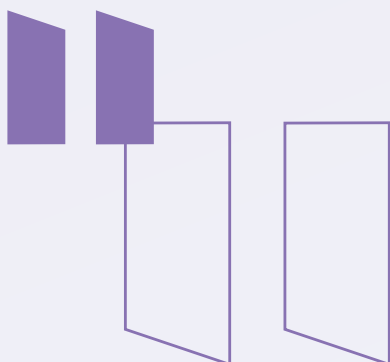
# #BEACTIVE DAY



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