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## Cooperation Model of Sports Education for Aged – Project “Really Fit from 50” in Germany as an Example

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### ABSTRACT

Cooperation between different organizations help the development of sports education for aged, the project “really fit from 50” in Germany accelerate the development of sports education for aged through it, and the key of success are: 1. Find the common profit, 2. Learn professional knowledge, 3. Evaluate and optimizing, 4. Sharing experience. According to China’s present situation the cooperation can start in sports education organizations and between sports and medical as well as sports education and old-age care institutions. And the cooperation with universities are indispensable.

**Keywords:** the aged, sports education, cooperation, Germany

### INTRODUCTION

Many scholars in our country have put forward the view that the development of the old sports education cannot be separated from the cooperation of all parties. For example, Zhang (2008) suggested to make full use of social resources, multi-channel fund-raising, Liu (2014) pointed out that the focus of the elderly sports education public service system is the organization differentiation under the multiple synergy mechanism, and Wu (2009) points out that resource integration is the strategy of social development of sports education in the elderly. These studies show that people are aware that the development of sports in the elderly is not only a family of sports-related institutions (sports education associations), but also the need for multi-party cooperation to promote the development of sports education for the elderly. However, there are relatively few researches on cooperation model, especially empirical research, and the relevant experience abroad can be used for reference.

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#### **State of the literature**

- Early studies have shown that regular participation in physical exercise has a significant effect on improving chronic, noncommunicable diseases in the elderly.
- The social problems brought about by the aging of the population. The social security system of our country includes three aspects of medical security, old-age security and unemployment protection. The two aspects of medical care and old-age care are closely related to the elderly. The process of population aging in our country is becoming more and more an important aspect of the burden.

#### **Contribution of this paper to the literature**

- Provide sports authorities to form a consensus to attach importance to the work of the elderly physical education.
- Medical institutions and the elderly physical education sector to form a partnership.
- The pension agencies should provide the various needs of the elderly for physical education.

## RESEARCH BACKGROUND

### Germany “Real Health 50 (Richtig fit AB 50)” Project Introduction

#### *Project background*

As one of the first countries to enter an aging society, the proportion of people over 60 years old has risen from 5% in 1900 to 26% in 2010. It is expected to reach around 37% by 2030, and according to the latest calculations, by 2050, the population over 50 will surpass half of the population, and by 2060, one out of 7 people will have a 80-year-old.

The Government has taken measures to tackle the challenges posed by ageing in many ways, and sport is one of them. The German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, the elderly, women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, hereinafter referred to as BMFSFJ), which is directly responsible for the related affairs of the elderly, has cooperated with the German Olympic Movement Federation (Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund, hereinafter referred to as DOSB) since 2003, Funding DOSB for the promotion of sports education for the elderly. To date, the third cycle has been carried out, with the first cycle of the project entitled “True Health 50 (Richtig fit AB 50)”, the goal of this three-year project is to promote physical education for the elderly from a health and social policy perspective, which reduces barriers to the participation of older persons in physical activities through the implementation of specific group guidelines and specific measures (Gibbons 2003).

The German Olympic Movement Federation is the highest body of organized German movement, with 97 member organizations and 2.76 million members making it the largest community organization in Germany. Approximately 1.85 million staff members organize about 440 million hours of sports education each year in 90,900 sports education clubs, most of whom are part-time volunteers. According to the association’s membership data analysis, the number of 41-60-year-olds increased from 2 million in 1990 to 6.3 million in 2009, of which 3.8 million were men and 2.5 million were female, of which 30.5% of male members and 20.4% of female members often participated in sports activities of the Association. In the same period, the number of members aged 60 and above rose from 1.3 million to 3.6 million, of which 2.2 million were men and 1.4 million were women. Nevertheless, the number of people participating in sports education in the association is still less than that of the total population: Male members account for 25.7% of the number of male citizens, and 12.8% of women’s members are the number of female citizens (<http://www.dosb.de/?id=14736>).

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## RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### Project Content and Effect

“True Health 50” consists of 5 subprojects, the German Sports education Federation DSB (later merged into DOSB) through the establishment and operation of the elderly sports education website [www.richtigfitab50.de](http://www.richtigfitab50.de) to disseminate relevant information, eliminate stereotypes, and stimulate the enthusiasm of older persons in sports; The State Sports Federation, which is trying to collaborate with doctors, believes that doctors’ advice will be taken seriously by older people, which will be the most important impetus for motivating older people to participate in sporting activities. Thüringen Sports education Federation: Thüringen’s sports education federations have taken the form of cooperation with employers to attract older practitioners to join the Sports Game Association; the Berlin Sports Federation has adopted a partnership with health and community to encourage older persons to participate in sports education; the Land Schleswig-holstein Sports education Federation, in partnership with health and tourism agencies, hopes to attract new recruits who are regularly involved in fitness and wellness by lowering the threshold (Stiehr & Ritter, 2006). The entire project lasts 3 years and the site continues to operate after the entire project to improve the information. The other 4 measures were implemented between June 05 and July 03, while the remaining 1 year was mainly in line with the DSB and the local sports education federations to carry out the continuity of consolidation and outreach efforts. Can be seen, in addition to 1 of them for the elderly sports education information website construction, the remaining 4 had adopted a multifaceted approach to promoting sport development for older persons, which, at the beginning of the 4 projects, had focused on the cooperation of sport-related institutions, on the basis of which they were further working closely with the non-sporting bodies.

### Cooperation Between Sports Education Bodies

The establishment of the cooperative relationship between the sports education institutions is the focus of the early implementation of each subproject, and this has hardly encountered any problems. Sports education federations around the world are very easy to establish close ties with local sports education associations, which is attributed to the previous cooperation, on the other hand, the target groups of the associations also have the trend of aging, the urgent need to carry out the corresponding projects. At the same time, there is consensus on the preparation of older people’s sport as a long-term project to promote the health and social connections of older persons, rather than as a “means” to win large numbers of members in the short term (Stiehr & Ritter, 2006).

This cooperation (Jorgensen 2015) on the one hand can solve the project development needs such as venues, equipment and other issues, on the other hand to carry out the elderly sports education activities just to meet the needs of sports education associations, because small-scale sports education associations, they carry out the elderly work will be very hard, while older people mean new groups, new ideas and new collaborators, they need to be done by themselves, and larger sports education associations are aware that older people mean “the best age” and the important group of their future, This coincides with their intentions.

In addition, this cooperation has been supported by most coaches, coaches with old-age sports education experience are useful, and more coaches are trained to do the job.

### Cooperation Between Non-Sporting Bodies

Compared with the sports-like institutions, the cooperation with the non-sports organizations is another scene, the early implementation of the project, this part of the work can be difficult to say, and sometimes cannot be achieved. After some breakthroughs have been made, there has been a deepening of cooperation in the follow-up phase and cooperation with the target agencies in attempting to collaborate or choose to replace them.

### **BERLIN-Health and Community**

The sports education Federation of Berlin has been working with health and community associations to encourage older people to participate in sports education, regardless of whether they have a prior habit of participating in sports education, and the first is to co-operate with the construction workers' Association. Although the project is open to anyone who is interested, women and low-income groups, as well as immigrants, will receive more attention. The follow plan will provide 40 sports education activities to 500 people through cooperation with the inclusion of non-sporting institutions (Liu & Guo, 2016). The experience of project implementation will be compiled and used to guide collaboration with health and the elderly institutions (Stiehr & Ritter, 2006).

Some of Berlin's selected cooperating agencies are interested in targeting older persons as their target group, making collaboration smoother, such as a physiotherapist who wants to win senior customers in Berlin, and wants to expand his old-age apartment in community influence. In addition, it is also easier to collaborate with a wider range of services and institutions with some low utilization rates, such as a treatment pool available at a hospital in Spandau, Berlin.

Most of the cooperation failure is often due to the specificity of the other people, such as psychiatric hospital patients cannot participate in activities after the membership of Sports education Association, it is not possible to join the corresponding group in the vicinity of the residence, to enjoy the free service, and for example, Kaufhof (a famous department store in Germany) has a great interest, but is stranded because it cannot adjust the length of time that most people have available.

The project programme of the Berlin Sports education Federation was widely welcomed, in the end, more than 500 people participated in 55 courses (Prediger & Zindel, 2017), such as governments, nurseries, clinics, a commercial rehabilitation agency, and a Chamber of commerce interested in cooperation, and later there was a shortfall in demand, which was sufficient evidence that Berlin's choice of partnership with health and community was promising.

### **Thuringia-Employer**

Thüringen sports education federations (Markovits & Forgasz, 2017) have been working with employers to attract older practitioners to join sports games. The first is the older men who have been keen on ball games and the women who are interested will be welcomed. Given the low rate of local migration, it is expected that the likelihood of immigration participation is not high. Activities in the large and medium-sized cities in an orderly manner, according to the plan will be 150 people to participate in 8 games of the nature of the ball sports courses. The practical guide will contain course content and guidelines for the operation of the male-dominated athletes (Stiehr & Ritter, 2006).

In the cooperation of the Thüringen Sports Federation and employers, employers have shown an interest in the initial list of services, but they have not followed up with a corresponding incentive programme, resulting in few final forms of formation. At the end of the experiment and other institutions such as old age offices, unions, the cooperation of the Aliens Committee has not encountered problems in joint advocacy and media resource sharing, but in further communication it has been found that most organizations are only interested in the physical activities of the type of health (non-confrontational Fitness program), and there is little interest in sports education such as football, volleyball and tennis. Finally, only 66 people participated in 8 courses. The proportion of men and women who chose tennis in the participants was almost equal, the men who chose volleyball accounted for 32, and the men who chose football were male. Although the project wants to operate in a game way, some older people who previously had exercise habits were reluctant to participate because they were shy about their level of movement. The survey also found that although older people were interested in health campaigns, the subproject still attracted some of the participants through its athletic programs. But the attendant risk of injury becomes a new paradox.

## Land Schleswig-Holstein-Health and Tourism Institutions

The Land Schleswig-holstein Sports education Federation, in cooperation with health and tourism agencies, hopes to attract new recruits who are often involved in fitness and recuperation by lowering the threshold. The local unique tourism resources are the background of this measure, and, according to experience, women are the main audiences of convalescent services and, given higher prices, this measure will attract people who tend to consume private sports education services. The measure is planned by the sports education association to open 7 courses for 120 people in the health resorts of the East China Sea. The relevant experience will be presented to you in the form of an operational guide, which includes a course programme and a guide to collaboration with health and tourism agencies (Stiehr & Ritter, 2006).

In the cooperation of the Land Schleswig-holstein Scenic Area, use the local resort hotel swimming pool, sauna area, facilities such as gyms provide convalescent physical activity, which has been strongly supported by local tourism agencies, and the local Centre for Medical Prevention, registered by the travel agency, has also provided participants with materials on health and diet for the purpose of popularizing relevant knowledge, and such cooperation has progressed quite smoothly.

The state's GEKÜRT health insurance company has also responded positively by mailing ads and coupons to its senior customers, giving € 150 per person (a similar activity in the state of Bayern), which is also quite effective, with an estimated half of the participants expressing a positive impact on the offer. Gekürt said it needed to respond to a rapidly growing population of over 50 years, hoping to spread the idea of preventing lower medical spending by moving to people who did not exercise. And obviously not just one company has the understanding that after the project started, more insurers began to fund their clients.

Eventually, 105 people participated in 6 courses. Women were slightly more involved than men, and higher income participation was also higher, and some of the participants had been exercising, but had been looking for sports education that were more suitable for older people. Land Schleswig-holstein's project links older people's sports education through the "recuperation (wellness)" program to those who have been worried about the stress of exercise and have to endure hardship. Although there will be potential for attracting male participants in the future, the overall package does not require big adjustments (Stiehr & Ritter, 2006).

## The State of Bayern-Doctor

The State Sports Education Federation tries to collaborate with doctors who believe that the doctor's advice will be valued by the elderly, which will be the most important impetus for motivating older people to participate in sports education. The measure limits the target group to the elderly who have never engaged in sporting activities in sports education associations. The measure plans to open 7 courses for some 150 new recruits and to develop practical guidance based on existing experience, incorporating curriculum guidance and implementing guidelines for partnership with health institutions (Stiehr & Ritter, 2006).

This kind of cooperation encountered great difficulties in the initial stage of the project, even in the first one years, it was impossible to find a specialist lecturer. At the first year of the symposium, doctors who took part in the program said doctors' advice was often not accepted by patients, such as quitting smoking could not be achieved by doctors' advice, and the doctors' advice was overestimated. Nevertheless, the Group decided to continue to work with doctors, as some of the participants in the project indicated that they had been affected by doctors, not just by telling them about the event, but also by giving advice on specific sports education projects.

As a counterpart, the State Sports Education Federation requires the association to apply for the project to prove that they have established contact with the doctor and that some doctors are willing to provide specific advice to the patient on the content of the sport. Another part of the doctors said they would at least help distribute brochures or posters, which were attributed to inadequate funding and lack of expertise. After the adjustment, the doctor's advice began to be accepted by more and more elderly people, and coaches were also asked to provide basic health issues as well as professional advice on sports.

In the end, about 380 people were involved in 19 courses, and the goal of attracting “new recruits” was achieved, some of whom had been regularly involved in the campaign but had been looking for more suitable sports education for older people; gymnastics projects are more popular with women, while there are no obvious differences between men and women in the sports education projects, while the old couple come together to pay attention to the phenomenon, but the total participation of men in the dominant position; Most of the participants are from the middle class, and their emphasis on health makes the result not surprising. This is due to their high income and education, and the small number of immigrants, which also set targets for future work, and more backward urban areas need more attention (Stiehr & Ritter, 2006).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The eventual participation of Thuringia is far from the goal, and the Land Schleswig-holstein has largely achieved its goal, while Berlin and the state of Bayern have more than 15 and 12 courses, and the extra costs are paid by the Berlin Sports Federation’s own fund and the course fee of the state of Bayern (Stiehr & Ritter, 2006).

In addition to the attractiveness of the project itself, the GEK insurance company’s Mail coupon activity has a very positive impact on Land Schleswig-holstein and the state of Bayern, where doctors’ professional advice has played a key role in the late stages of the project, and the success of Berlin’s early events has laid the groundwork for Word-of-mouth marketing success. Thüringen’s choice of ball games is more athletic, which only attracts a small number of older people, and whether employers are motivated enough to promote the movement of older people is also a question.

### **Key to the Success of Sports Education for the Elderly in Germany**

“Real Health 50” is the beginning of large-scale old-age sports education in Germany, its effect has been affirmed by everyone, on this basis, followed by a new large-scale project can be implemented, related scientific research has also produced results. It has carried on the beneficial attempt in using the multi-party cooperation pattern to carry on the old people sports education aspect, its experience is worth our reference. The author believes that in the cooperation of sports education organizations, the key to success is to make full use of the relationship between the former cooperation, to form the emphasis on the physical work of the elderly and to train the special personnel. In cooperation with non-sports organizations, the following points need to be taken into consideration:

### **To Find Common Interests in the Physical Education of the Elderly**

By carrying out projects, it is important to take into account the interests of the other, which can be economic or can be achieved by improving the working environment through the efficient use of resources, by gaining greater visibility or by remedying some disadvantages. For example, subsidizing a client to participate in sports education for the elderly will bring more benefits to the insurance companies, while the health agencies that target the elderly are more motivated than the average employer to cooperate actively.

### **Physical Education Partners Also Need Expertise**

The program in the state of Bayern shows that doctors give some professional exercise advice to better convince older people to participate in sports education than simply sending a single page. So let partners to master certain sports education knowledge of the elderly can make partners in promotional projects and other occasions more lightly.

### **The Physical Education of the Elderly Needs to Be Combine Scientific Means to Evaluate and Optimize the Content and Healthy Lifestyle in Time**

The successful implementation of the whole project cannot be separated from the guarantee of scientific assessment, each subproject is carried out to one years and the second year by the end of the scientific assessment, the implementation of the effect of a timely understanding of the success and failure to find the reasons, along with

the content of cooperation, the way to optimize, and even replace the cooperation object, to ensure the overall implementation of the project results.

### **Sharing Experience, Expanding Influence, Ensuring Sustainability**

In order to expand the impact of the project and ensure its sustainability, the subprojects have developed guidance manuals based on their own experience, sharing their own experiences, including project concepts, collaborative models, implementation effects and part of the curriculum teaching program. This measure provides assistance for the further development of sport for the elderly in other regions and projects.

### **China's Development of the Elderly Sports Education Cooperation Model Outlook**

#### *Formation of a consensus within the sports education system educating the elderly on the necessary health knowledge and related sports knowledge*

China's sports education institutions at all levels should be the first to form an emphasis on the physical education of the elderly, the population structure of the entire society will be directly reflected in the participation of sports education, the elderly population will occupy an increasing proportion of the population of sports education participation. As a countermeasure, educating the elderly on the necessary health knowledge, each individual sports education association should make special competition rules for the elderly according to the level of physical and mental development of the elderly, develop special training equipment, study the influence of the project on the physical and mental health of the elderly, and do the corresponding protective measures.

### **Cooperation Between Sports Education and Medical Institutions**

In cooperation with the medical institutions, the two sides should first of all in the exercise of the importance of the elderly to reach a consensus, drugs combined with appropriate exercise will usually play a better effect, in this context, from the patient's interests, medical institutions will be aware of the movement of the recommendations. Medical institutions will also gain a better reputation.

In the experience of Germany, the medical staff should learn the basic knowledge about the movement of the elderly, understand what kind of exercise should be used to diagnose and treat the patients, and then give the corresponding suggestions in the course of diagnosis and treatment, and provide the contact and participation way of relevant sports education organizations.

Old-age sports education institutions and medical institutions can regularly organize sports education knowledge and health lectures and experiences (Short, Fidelman, & Louguit 2012) for older people, as these elderly people are usually more concerned about health and the demand is stronger. Sports education organizations also place brochures and other promotional materials in medical institutions for easy access, but this must not replace the doctor's verbal advice.

### **The Cooperation of Old-Age Physical Education and Health Convalescent Institutions**

In the case of providing basic accommodation, care and recreational activities, the elderly and convalescent institutions (Lazarides & Rubach, 2017) also need to try to provide more active and healthy leisure services for the aged, which will not only enhance their reputation but also become a new profit point.

If it is non-profit organization, sports can become an indispensable health and leisure activities for the elderly to promote health and quality of life (Guo & Liu, 2016).

If it is a profit-making institution, such as a retirement property and a convalescent or tourism agency that is a major target for the elderly, it can be used as a quality service to attract customers. Sports education institutions need to work in depth with the old-age institutions, from product positioning, facilities construction, clothing equipment, product publicity, content, maintenance and other aspects of the design to attract the elderly products.

## Physical Education Institutions in the Elderly Cooperate with Relevant Educational Institutions in China

In addition, institutions should try to cooperate with universities in personnel training and scientific research. The development of the old-age sports education cannot be separated from the professional talents, and the training of a group of talents based on the physical and mental condition of the elderly will be able to promote the vigorous development of sports education in the elderly, and will also meet the increasing demand of the market.

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