WP4= International sports activities after the end of the HEPA CAMP

List the specific objectives to which this work package is linked: Continuation of regular sports activities of youth in project sports (Based on the good experience of the international sports camp in Brežice, the continuation of sports activities of young people in project sports in the participating countries in order to increase the level of involvement of young people in sports).

T4.1	**Intergenerational swimming lessons**	**1. Venue = Slovenia, Thermal water parks. 2. Intergenerational swimming lessons – Indoor trainings: 1.11.2023 – 31.3.2024. 3. Duration: 1x weekly for 1 h. 4. Participants: HEPA camp participants + Seniors 65 + (Selected by public call). 5. Number of participants involved: 200 seniors 65+.**
T4.2	**Paddle for a Cure - Weekly kayak and monthly dragon boat experience to promote this sport in the sense of improving psycho-physical abilities and sports, which reduces the possibility of women's breast cancer**	**1. The initial course of kayaking. 2. Boating and rowing with dragon boat; 1x monthly, 2 hours, and women will have priority. 3. 3 Lectures and workshops: (i) self-examination of breasts, (ii) self-examination of the mode, (iii) what each one can do on his own, to improve his health and reduce the possibility of cancer.**
T4.3	**Promotion of innovative ways of recreation (Street handball and Beach Handball)**	**1. Beach handball will be performed every first Friday of the month with the aim of "extensions" into a healthy, fun evening for youth in all participating organisations that are connected with handball. 2. With the help of the associations that are part of the project, we will also try to preserve the elements of street handball and handball fitness.**
T 4.4	**Innovative forms of climbing - a mobile climbing wall in each village**	**With experienced trainers and a movable boulder wall, we will enable young people to experience safe climbing. The boulder wall is portable and consists of pieces that can be moved apart and can be moved to another location. This is very convenient as the wall can be used in**

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		different locations, bringing it closer to rural and disadvantaged areas outside of urban centres.

Deliverable name: Conducted trainings in participating organizations
From sports: 1. Intergenerational swimming lessons, 2. Kayak and dragon boat, 3. Beach handball

T. 4.1 Intergenerational swimming lessons

Intergenerational swimming was designed in a way where young people between the ages of 15 and 29 and seniors 65+ learn self-rescue techniques and swimming in the safest way possible. Above all, we taught them techniques where they can perform the exercise themselves, as the exercises are easy to perform and the intensity is adjusted to each individual.

We decided on this type of exercise because the vast majority of young people stop sports immediately after finishing primary school, or even more so in the first years of high school. On the other hand, seniors want to do sports as much as possible, because they are aware of the importance of being active, and swimming is an excellent choice for them, since many can no longer even walk well, but they can swim.

With this, we wanted the young people to learn from the seniors about the importance of exercise, and the elderly could do the exercises with the help of the young people, as they were helping them with the exercises. And also, from a motivational point of view, they had a very good influence on each other.

In the following, the way of performing the exercises and above all the importance of such methods are presented.

4.1.1 PREPARATION OF THE PROGRAM FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Program development

The work program was developed from September to December. During this time, we also conducted two test groups of seniors in Novo Mesto, where we tested exercises for the elderly in practice. Practice has shown that we have chosen the right exercises and just the right amount of challenging and interesting exercises to perform.

In two test groups in the second half of October (October 16 and 23, 2023), we performed self-rescue and swimming techniques.

Implementation of the Intergenerational Swimming program

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The main part of the implementation of the program was set for the winter period in the Terme Čatež thermal park, as the largest park of its kind in this part of Europe. With this, we wanted to enable as many people as possible to join us in our activities.

Thus, in the first part (16.1. - 19.3.2024) we taught seniors swimming techniques and exercised them by swimming and taught them self-rescue techniques. In the last part (March 26 - April 23, 2024), we combined senior and youth swimming and created a story of intergenerational swimming at the same time in the pool.

Swimming skills

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Swimming is a very important skill when it comes to survival. There are too many stories of people drowning unnecessarily because they did not know how to swim effectively in the given situations.

Swimming is highly recommended for maintaining physical condition. It is especially welcome when it comes to all activities related to the proximity of water. Swimming can be fun and has a beneficial effect on the body. It is a low "damage" form of exercise with great cardiovascular benefits.

The manual talks and shows how to learn the best possible swimming drills for survival and self-rescue. It is divided into two parts:

- An Efficient swimming

This section contains training techniques and methods to improve your swimming ability. Of course, the prerequisite here is that you are a swimmer. You can swim at least 50m independently and can perform all water adaptation exercises (looking underwater, exhaling, gliding, dealing with water resistance and lying on your back).

- Water safety, self-rescue and survival techniques

Being near any body of water can be a form of danger, but open water is even more so. In this part, there is information about different dangers in different forms of open water. What to do when faced with such dangers is shown and explained, covering self-rescue and survival in solo and/or group situations.

In this manual, the term "open water" refers to any natural body of water such as sea, lake and river.

- General safety near water

The activities in this manual can be dangerous if not performed with proper safety precautions. Follow water safety instructions in this and other public areas.

IMPORTANT! Whenever possible, learn new techniques in calm waters (such as swimming pools). Only when you are confident can you start learning and doing exercises in open water.

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- The best way to ensure safety is to avoid danger. If complete avoidance is not possible, the next best thing is to seek local knowledge. Check with water rescuers, local water sports operators, rowers, fishermen, etc. at each location. Please check the location of the water activity yourself, as circumstances may change.

- An additional person should always be present for supervision, e.g. someone you trust.

- Protect yourself from the sun with appropriate clothing and creams.

- Stay hydrated.

- Keep warm.

- Do not stay near water under the influence of intoxicating substances.

- It is good to strive to improve your own performance, but be careful not to overwork yourself. This is especially important for open water.

- Have adequate safety and rescue equipment nearby that you must know how to use.

- Train only in waters and conditions that you know you are capable of and that are for you

safe. Look for signs and warnings (flags, boards) for the information you have

and if you are not sure, ask the lifeguards. Do not swim when the red flag is displayed. This is a sign that there is danger in the water and the swimming pool is closed.

- Watch out for other people involved in recreational activities, such as water sports, especially motorized ones. Usually, these surfaces are separated from swimmers, but still attention will not be superfluous.

- Never run or jump into unknown water. In open water, you should always check the depth as conditions can change.

- If you find yourself in trouble, stay calm and raise your hand calling "HELP".

- Always wear a life jacket in a boat or any unsupervised area near water where there is a risk of falling into the water and drowning (various dangerous cliffs) and the inability to swim ashore. The life jacket must always be fastened.

- Always tell someone you are going out on the water, how long you intend to be there and when to expect you back.

- Be careful near any water edge, be it a pool, river banks or rocks in the sea, etc.

- Get to know the different characteristics of different water areas, the advantage you will swim in them.

- Enter the water in a safe way and never jump in headfirst. Find a place to enter and exit safely.

4.1.2 TRAINING PROGRAM WITHIN THE HIH PROJECT (TRAINER AND ASSISTANT)

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In further we will explain techniques that were presented at our Intergenerational swimming lessons.

1. **Exploiting water resistance for swimming**

Taking advantage of water resistance is the most energy-efficient way to stay in one place in the water

Learn to take advantage of the resistance of the water before attempting other water-related exercises.

By taking advantage of the water's resistance to stay still, you can work until you can come up with a rescue plan or until help arrives.

We learn this technique gradually: first in the shallows in the presence of a lifeguard, and only then do we gradually move into the deeper part.

While you are taking advantage of the resistance of the water, your body is vertical in the water and your head is above the surface. Your arms and legs work to keep you afloat. Trunk movement is minimal.

There are a few ways to take advantage of water resistance. The following method is used

slightly more difficult to learn, but it is the most energy efficient.

It combines vertical twisting of the arms with alternating circular strokes of the legs, as if "beating eggs".

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SCULLING technique

Encourages you to use your forearms (not just your palms) to make a good stroke.

Extend your arms (so that they are extended) and bend them to 90 degrees. Turn your palms outwards and turn them so that they are facing each other and facing away from each other (as if scooping ice cream from a tub). Repeat the movement. Keep your back straight and do not lean forward or backward.

2. **SURVIVAL BACK SWIMMING TECHNIQUE**

In this technique, you lie on your back while swimming.

You use a simultaneous frog kick/chest and skating motion with your "sculling" arms. Arms and legs move and come together at the same time.

The main goal of this technique is to conserve energy and reduce heat loss.

To increase energy saving, make a slow movement with your arms and legs. Make short kicks and swings and slide as long as possible.

Start the next kick only when you feel that your legs are sinking or you lose momentum moving forward.

Short strokes reduce heat loss from under your armpits and between your legs. Hands should not extend beyond shoulder height.

At the end of each stroke or stroke, the arms and legs must be together.

Keep them together but comfortably against the body.

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This technique can also be used in the event of an underwater explosion. You'll want to go faster to avoid exploding, so increase your swings and punches. Make the next stroke and swing earlier than normal, but not too fast.

3. LONG DISTANCE SURVIVAL SWIMMING

There are two techniques you can learn to swim long distances.

Germania technique or survival technique back and combat side technique.

The survival back technique is an easy form to learn and is very energy efficient. It is useful for long distances and/or survival situations, such as waiting for rescuers.

The fighting side technique, however, is extremely effective by changing the side of the swimming technique. It was developed by US Navy Seals and is perfect for escape, dodge and survival.

- It is an effective technique (quick but energy-saving at the same time)
- You can swim with equipment (e.g. backpack)
- Good position in the water (harder to notice)
- It is great for swimming through the waves
- You can observe your surroundings while swimming (unlike the survival technique of backstroke).

4. COMBAT LATERAL TECHNIQUE

It is a combination of backstroke, breaststroke and sidestroke.

There are 4 basic phases to this technique. Sliding position, two stroke and stroke positions and returning to the start. The return involves a pair of arm-strokes in a breaststroke style.

Slide position

Get some initial momentum.

First stroke and pull

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The first stroke is done by pressing the palm of the upper hand down.

If you rotate to your right, the right hand is on top. Bend your arm at the elbow.

Make sure your arm is aligned at a downward angle: your shoulder should be on top, followed by your elbow below the shoulder, then your wrist, and finally your fingers at the very bottom. This way, you will get the most out of your first move (see image below).

Continue the stroke as you roll onto your side. Your forearm is vertical, elbow above wrist. Stay on your page until the return stage.

Go into a pull-up by continuing to move the upper arm until the arm is in line with the upper thigh. The arm follows your midline. Be careful not to raise your elbow too high either.

Second stroke and pull

Begin the second stroke and pull it all the way with the other hand. The palm is turned down and remains in this position. When you extend your arm to the end, buoyancy increases and propels you forward.

When your arm is vertical, your palm will be facing your feet.

The stroke and pull and return of the lower arm is almost identical to the stroke of breaststroke.

Return to start (rest).

Begin the return with a simultaneous scissor kick and arm movement.

Raise both arms through the midline of the body. Then the arms travel back to the glide position as for the chest technique.

Keep your hands under the water and as close to your body as possible.

Continue with your arms forward past your face while doing a scissor kick. Finish in a sliding position.

CONCLUSION

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There are, of course, quite a few methods and exercises for self-help in the world and in practice. Of course, the method and the execution of individual exercises differ from situation to situation. Each of us is an individual and as such every situation is unique and probably never repeatable.

Therefore, we emphasize that it is very important to be very good swimmers beforehand. Knowing how to swim can save our lives, or because of this, we can engage in water activities more often.

To be a good traveller, keep in mind that in a given situation, you depend solely on you and your actions. Therefore, be as collected as possible, try to remember at least one of the exercises and thus save yourself.

In any case, you are welcome to take part in one of our courses, where we also teach this type of self-rescue technique and, above all, how to act in given situations.

In total we had 373 seniors who practiced in our program.

Two test groups in October 2023 with over 40 seniors and 13 days from January to April 2024 with 343 seniors who practiced in our program. When we combined our seniors and youths who were included intergenerational swimming, we got 98 and 100 youths practicing together with seniors.

INTERGENERATIONAL SWIMMING DAYS	LOCATION	SENIORS	YOUTHS
23.10.2023	Novo mesto	15	
16.1.2024	Terme Čatež	4	
23.1.2024	Terme Čatež	21	
30.1.2024	Terme Čatež	29	
6.2.2024	Terme Čatež	28	
13.2.2024	Terme Čatež	34	
5.3.2024	Terme Čatež	30	
12.3.2024	Terme Čatež	22	
19.3.2024	Terme Čatež	31	
26.3.2024	Terme Čatež	27	
Hepa camp 1 2024	Terme Čatež	27	98
9.4.2024	Terme Čatež	26	
Hepa camp 2 2024	Terme Čatež	24	100
23.4.2024	Terme Čatež	21	

5. ADAPTATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF EXERCISES AND EXECUTION OF HEPA

CAMP 2: MARCH AND APRIL 2024

From March to the end of April, we held another two weeks of HEPA camps, where we first taught young people innovative swimming training.

Theoretical part

First, in a theoretical approach, we explained the participants what we will learn. We explained to them all swimming techniques, new ways of swimming training and the importance of safe

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swimming. In addition, we presented them with individual elements on examples, when to use it and in which situations to use individual techniques.

After that we explained to them the importance of self-rescuing in water. Mostly in open water, because there is very important to know all the elements, because there we can't rely on lifeguards, like in swimming pools, because there aren't any.

Practical part

After all the theoretical part was done, we moved into the water.

We first tested each individual's swimming skills separately. Despite the fact that everyone was given a questionnaire before the start, where they had to declare whether they are swimmers or not, we checked them individually in the water, so that we had information about their knowledge. With this, we determined the levels and classified them into groups based on prior knowledge.

At this point coaches showed them each exercises separately. Then we trained and performed each exercise until the overall exercise was won and after that we moved on to the next exercise.

All the time, we encouraged the participants to ask questions developing together what they were least successful at or what they were afraid of.

In the second part, the young people taught the seniors and were helpful in carrying out exercises where the seniors needed help. At the same time, they were learning wisdom for life, and among them there were quite a few who fit in really well and rejuvenated at least for a moment.

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Intergenerational swimming turned out to be a real hit and both young and seniors enjoyed it very much. Could not praise this kind of idea and especially how good it is that the European Commission recognized such a good idea in this, that we offered and implemented it in practice between people.

It was with a heavy heart that we had to stop the training, but we promised them that we would try to organize this type of training again, because it is a great motivation for everyone when the training is presented to them in an innovative and, above all, useful way.

Demonstration of Self-Rescue Techniques for Divers

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We presented key self-rescue techniques that are vital for all divers. This demonstration highlighted various methods that allow divers to safely return to the surface in emergency situations. These techniques include the proper use of equipment, procedures for calm and effective underwater rescue, and methods to prevent panic.

SUP Rescue Action

We also demonstrated SUP rescue action, showing how anyone with a SUP nearby can quickly and effectively assist in water rescues. This demonstration was highly educational and emphasized the importance of having basic knowledge of water rescue. Participants learned basic techniques for rescuing victims and the proper use of the SUP as a rescue tool.

Why is the Self-Rescue Course for Divers Very Important?

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Self-rescue is a crucial skill that can save lives in underwater emergency situations. Divers learn the correct techniques and procedures that enable them to safely return to the surface in case of trouble, significantly reducing the risk of accidents. The self-rescue course boosts divers' confidence and prepares them to safely handle any unpredictable situations. With the acquired knowledge and skills, divers become more prepared for challenges they may encounter underwater, which is essential for their safety and the safety of their diving partners.

T4.2 Paddle for a Cure - Weekly kayak and monthly dragon boat experience to promote this sport in the sense of improving psycho-physical abilities and sports, which reduces the possibility of women's breast cancer

1. THE INITIAL COURSE OF KAYAKING

The training part of the initial kayak training was adapted to the weather conditions and to the findings of the analysis in the development of the training programmes and past experience. We have therefore divided the training into several phases and ensured that the participants gradually get used to the water. Given that this is a time of the year when water training (especially for beginners and non-paddlers) is not suitable and participants are reluctant to venture out on the water due to the low temperatures, we have developed an innovative form of training with partners and professionals, which will result in a final phase of water training.

Special attention has been paid to vulnerable groups (people who have suffered serious injuries and those who have overcome serious illnesses). Our work during the reporting period was carried out in several phases, firstly we had to find out how to attract participants to exercise with innovative ideas, so the first part of the work was dedicated to research, study and development of an innovative form of exercise towards a gradual transition to water-based training. So far, we have been very successful in this, as the sessions have been very well attended.

PHASE 1: ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATIVE TRAINING WITH EXPERTS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS.

We analysed innovative options for involving different groups in sport (rowing, water sports) and the development of innovative training. Our focus was mainly on the youth group and those who have suffered from serious illness or injury.

Innovation in involving young people in sport is crucial for several reasons:

- Changes in young people's interests and motivation: Young people's interests are constantly changing, especially in a rapidly evolving technological and digital world. Innovative training sessions can better capture their attention and motivate them to participate regularly.

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- Developing motor skills: Innovative approaches allow young people to develop different motor skills in a fun and challenging way. This is particularly important during a period of rapid physical and cognitive development.
- Health and well-being: young people who are regularly physically active have a lower risk of developing chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease and diabetes. Innovative exercise can help establish a pattern of regular physical activity.
- Social interaction and social skills development: Group and innovative exercise sessions promote social interaction, cooperation and social skills development. This is particularly important during adolescence when young people are forming their social identity.
- Fighting digital overload: in an era when young people spend a lot of time in front of screens, innovative exercise offers a healthy alternative that encourages physical activity and a move away from digital devices.
- Persistence and commitment: The variety and fun elements of innovative workouts increase the likelihood that young people will persist with exercise. Fun and challenging activities reduce feelings of monotony and boredom.

Innovation is also important in exercise programmes for other age groups, including older people, for several reasons:

- Adapting to physical and cognitive changes: as we age, physical and cognitive changes occur that require a tailored approach to exercise. Innovative workouts can include elements specifically designed to improve balance, flexibility, coordination and strength, which is particularly important for older people.
- Preventing and managing chronic diseases: older people are often prone to chronic health conditions such as arthritis, osteoporosis and heart disease. Innovative exercises can help manage these conditions and reduce pain and stiffness.
- Mental health and social connectedness: Innovative exercise often includes social components that encourage socialising and reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation, which are key to the mental health of older people.
- Increasing self-confidence and independence: Exercise that is tailored to the abilities and needs of older people can increase their self-confidence and help them maintain a greater degree of independence in everyday life.

Innovation is also important in exercise programmes for other age groups, including older people, for several reasons:

- Adaptation to physical and cognitive changes: As people age, physical and cognitive changes occur that require an adapted approach to training. Innovative training can include elements specifically designed to improve balance, flexibility, coordination, and strength, which are particularly important for the elderly.
- Prevention and management of chronic diseases: Older people are often prone to chronic health conditions such as arthritis, osteoporosis, and heart disease. Innovative training can help manage these conditions and reduce pain and stiffness.
- Mental health and social connectedness: Innovative training often includes social components that promote socializing and reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation, which are crucial for the mental health of the elderly.

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- Increasing self-confidence and independence: Training that is adapted to the abilities and needs of the elderly can increase their self-confidence and help them maintain a greater degree of independence in everyday life.
- Improving cognitive functions: Regular physical activity can improve cognitive functions and slow cognitive decline associated with aging. Innovative training that includes mental challenges can further stimulate brain activity.

Innovative training for vulnerable groups such as individuals who have recovered from breast cancer or other severe diseases is extremely important for several reasons:

- Individualized Approach: Each individual who has recovered from a serious illness has their own specific needs and limitations. Innovative training allows activities to be adjusted to the individual's capabilities, ensuring safety and effectiveness of the training.
- Re-establishing Physical Strength and Endurance: After a severe illness like cancer, there is often a loss of muscle mass and general physical condition. Innovative training programs can help gradually restore physical strength and endurance.
- Emotional and Psychological Support: Training can have a therapeutic effect and help manage stress, anxiety, and depression, which are common companions of serious illnesses. Group exercises can also provide important social and emotional support.
- Improving Quality of Life: Regular physical activity can improve overall quality of life, increase energy, improve sleep, and general well-being.
- Managing Side Effects of Treatment: Some innovative exercises are specifically designed to manage specific side effects of treatment such as lymphedema, pain, and joint stiffness.
- Incorporating Rehabilitation Elements: Innovative approaches can include rehabilitation elements that are crucial for comprehensive recovery from illness.

When integrating vulnerable groups such as those who have survived cancer, it is crucial to work closely with healthcare professionals to ensure the safety and adaptability of the training to individual needs and limitations. Innovation in this context means creating an inclusive, adaptable, and supportive training environment that promotes physical and emotional recovery and improves quality of life.

We decided to develop innovative training, into which we invested a lot of effort and time, involving top experts from each field:

Tjaša Krištofić, a graduate kinesiologist and physiotherapist. As an expert in the movement of the human body, Krištofić developed and later also led a functional training that is scientifically based, safe, and effective. With her knowledge, she adapted the training to the individual needs, abilities, and goals of the participants, focusing on muscle groups that are most exposed and important in paddling, in order to comprehensively prepare participants who approached training in the gym for on-water activities.

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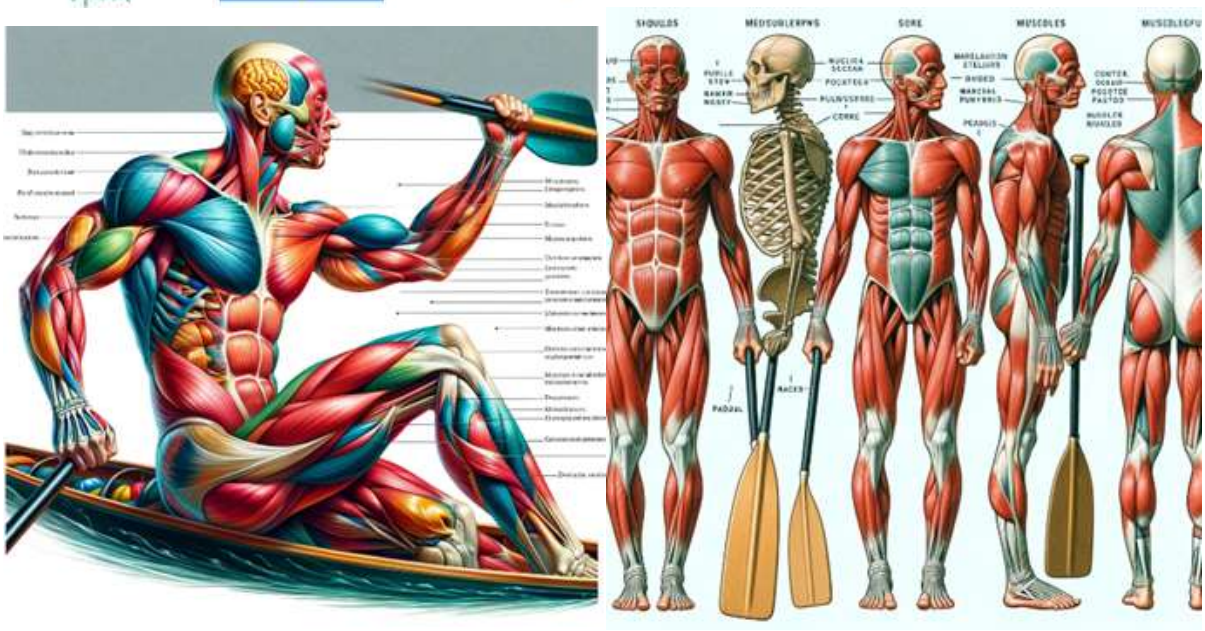

Picture: Muscle groups that are most exposed and important in paddling

Special attention was paid to the gradual adaptation of participants to paddle sports in a way that exercise tools were gradually introduced in the gym. Tjaša used innovative approaches to alleviate people's awareness that they are actually preparing for paddling, as this has been the biggest problem for most participants in approaching the training.

Training tools used in developing the training: chair, broom, elastic band, ball.

Picture: Developement phase, Tjaša Krištofić.

Petra Stojanović, nurse/biotherapist. The combination of knowledge from a nurse and a biotherapist allows the nurse not only to understand the medical aspects of health and disease but also to include

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holistic approaches for relaxation and improving overall well-being. As a biotherapist, Petra Stojanović used various techniques such as meditation, breathing exercises, and energy therapies to promote relaxation and reduce stress after the workout with their own body weight. We incorporated this way of thinking into the second part of the innovative training in the gym.

Dejan Testen, kayak coach, fitness instructor, and AEQ method teacher. He is one of the most successful coaches of kayaking on wild and calm waters, and a fitness instructor who has also been a competitor and national team member in wild water kayaking. Having been in the coaching profession for over 24 years, he has continuously engaged in physical preparation and the field of psychology and personal growth of athletes. He is also a teacher of AEQ breathing methods, level 1, and paddleboarding, meditation, and a water rescuer. He also participated in three Olympic Games, most recently in Tokyo as a coach of the Japanese national team, and in his younger years, he was a competitor and national team member in wild water kayaking. He has particularly contributed his knowledge on the inclusion of especially vulnerable groups in innovative training.

Matjaž Avšič and Boris Irt, long-time competitors in kayak on calm and wild waters. With the help of competitors who have more than 35 years of experience, we adapted the training routine with other experts in such a way that the training would be attractive for the young and other vulnerable groups while also being individually designed and adapted to different levels of paddling knowledge.

PHASE 2: INNOVATIVE TRAINING (FROM GYM TO PADDLING ON WATER – 3 stages)

Execution period: (January – April 2024), continuity: once a week

Performed sessions: 9.1.2024, 16.1.2024, 23.1.2024, 30.1.2024, 6.2.2024, 20.2.2024, 27.2.2024, 5.3.2024, 12.3.2024, 19.3.2024, 26.3.2024, 3.4.2024, 29.3.2024, 31.3.2024, 7.4.2024. Plans for the following sessions have not been carried out to the reporting date: 27.4.2024, 7.5.2024, 14.5.2024, 21.5.2024, 28.5.2024, 4.6.2024 depending on weather conditions.

We began implementing the innovative training, which was free for all participants, in January 2024 and conducted it through the end of April 2024. The third phase is set to begin in May 2024 and will continue until June 2024 when we conclude the project activities.

STAGE 1: Preparatory phase in the gym

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Pictures: Promotional flyers for free innovative exercise.

Innovative approaches combining various training techniques (functional training with own body weight, relaxation techniques, introduction of paddling tools, emphasis on upper body workouts). The training was designed in segments:

- Warm-up
- Station-based training with own body weight
- Stretching and calming, preparing for the second part of the training: relaxation techniques and meditation

The implementation of a biotherapeutic approach to training emphasized relaxation techniques, awareness of emotional body parts, and focus on breathing techniques. Meditation promotes a deeper connection between the mind and body. After intense training, taking a few moments to turn our attention inward helps us become aware of how our body and mind feel. Physical exercise is essential for stress relief, but meditation can enhance this effect. Engaging in mindfulness or meditation after training can help reduce the production of stress hormones, making us feel more relaxed and focused. Meditation is also associated with faster muscle recovery. By calming the nervous system and reducing stress, meditation can contribute to faster recovery, aid in muscle relaxation, and promote overall well-being. After training, the body feels tired, but the mind benefits from improved focus with meditation. By releasing mental tension, meditation can help with greater focus and concentration. Physical activity can sometimes cause muscle tension and stiffness. Meditation, especially practices that include yoga techniques, allows you to intentionally relax tension from various body parts, promoting greater relaxation and comfort. Taking a moment for gratitude

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meditation after training can increase our gratitude for our body's capabilities. Recognizing the effort we put into our training routine can encourage a positive mindset and motivate us for future workouts.

Highlights of the training:

Holistic approach to health and well-being: Integrating various professional fields allows for a more comprehensive treatment of health and well-being. The kinesiologist focuses on the physical aspect, while the biotherapist approaches the mental and emotional aspects of health.

Customization and individualization: A training program that considers both physical and mental health aspects can better meet the individual needs of participants. Each individual has unique needs and challenges, making a personalized approach key to the success of the training.

Injury prevention and promotion of recovery: Professionally guided functional training reduces the risk of injury and aids in recovery from existing injuries.

Pictures: Innovative training, Phase 1 in the gym.

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Implementation of innovative training in the gym for HEPA camp participants, March 2024

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STAGE 2: Intermediate phase of acclimatization to water: training with props, trainers, and skate training

Pictures: Promotional leaflet for free innovative exercises.

This intermediate phase, which includes simulating paddling using trainers or simple simulators and skate training, is a key part of the innovative training program for kayak and canoe. This phase is designed to help athletes maintain and improve their paddling skills even when weather conditions do not allow for water training. We performed part of the training with paddles and simulation of paddling at every gym session and continued with training on outdoor skate trainers and paddle trainers.

Using trainers and simple tools that activate the same muscle groups as paddling:

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- Trainers are excellent tools for simulating paddling on dry land, and a simplified training that strengthens the muscle groups important for paddling includes the use of simple tools such as paddles, elastic bands, balls, and trx.
- These tools allow us to practice proper paddling technique while also strengthening specific muscle groups used in paddling.
- Training on a trainer allows for precise adjustment of intensity and monitoring of progress, which is crucial for gradual improvement of fitness and technical skills and can include interval training, long endurance sessions, and technical exercises to improve stroke efficiency.

In this part of the training process, trainers can include technical and tactical elements of paddling. This includes analysing and improving individual stroke phases, learning tactical approaches, and improving responsiveness to various situations.

Picture: Introducing paddling tools in an innovative training in the gym.

This intermediate phase is crucial for maintaining and improving paddling skills and for bridging the period when training on water is not possible for beginners, allowing them to gradually acclimatize to the water. It enables athletes to stay active and focus on specific aspects of their technique and conditioning, which will benefit them when they return to the water.

Images: Training with additional props, gradual acclimatization to water.

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Pictures: Training on trainers, effective paddling.

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Skate Training:

Skate trainers allow the simulation of kayak or canoe movement on dry land. With skate trainers, athletes can practice coordination, balance, and maintain a sense of proper body position, which is crucial for efficient paddling. This type of training also strengthens the core of the body and stabilization muscles, which are important for maintaining proper posture during paddling. In addition to physical abilities, skate trainers also help develop mental skills such as focus and concentration, which are necessary for successful paddling.

Why are skate trainers excellent for (before) and (during) paddling training?

- because they allow the simulation of kayak or canoe movement on dry land
- because they are excellent for practicing coordination, balance, and maintaining a sense of proper body position, which is crucial for efficient paddling
- because this type of training also strengthens the core of the body and stabilization muscles, which are important for maintaining proper posture during paddling.
- We also ensured intergenerational cooperation and provided participants' parents with free childcare during training. The animator conducted sports-themed activities with the children (drawing, games, discussions about the importance of movement for health).

Pictures: Innovative training on skate trainers.

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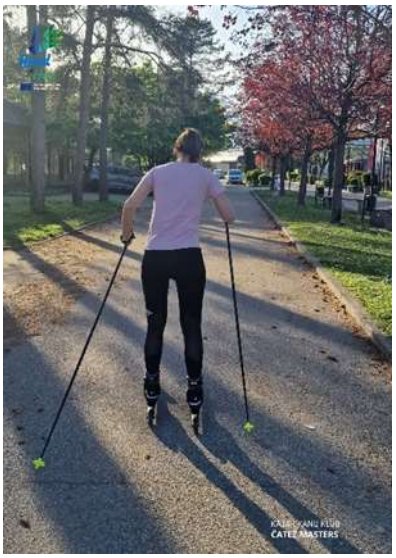
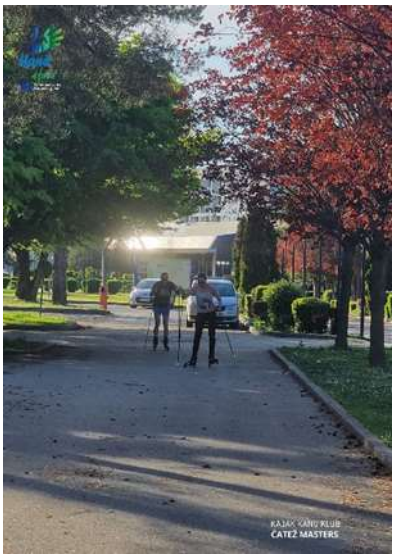

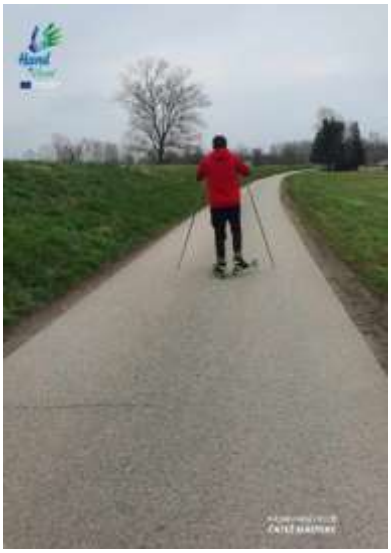

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Implementation of skate trainers as part of the Hepa camp, April 2024

STAGE 3: Water-based Training (Velike Malence, River Krka, May and June 2024) – not fully implemented yet

After completing the first two phases, and once the weather permits, we will move on to water-based training sessions. These sessions are scheduled to occur once a week. The expected start of these training sessions is May 8, 2024.

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Image: Promotional flyer for the 3rd phase of water-based training.

A part of the water training was conducted as part of the "Effective Paddling" workshop, which was aimed at those who already have some paddling experience.

Pictures: Promotional flyers for training

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Trainer: Dejan Testen

1. Dry training and kayak basics

The purpose of dry training on a kayak ergometer was to introduce the correct body positioning, choosing the right equipment, setting up the equipment, and demonstrating the kayak basics.

Proper body positioning is crucial:

- Ensure that you sit in the boat, or in this case on the ergometer, as aligned or symmetrical as possible.
- Both feet should be equally secured in the footrest. Check if one heel or toes are drifting to one side.
- Observe how the knees are positioned – whether one knee is held differently than the other.
- Make sure you are sitting evenly on both buttocks.
- Check the position of the elbows and shoulders. Are they raised and tense, or relaxed?
- Ensure the torso is positioned over the pelvis and whether it is supported structurally or held by muscles.
- The head should be over the shoulder girdle, not pushed forward which would require muscular effort to maintain.
- Examine the distance between the footrest and the seat. How do you touch the bottom of the boat with each foot? Is it symmetrical?

Picture: kayak, training.

Choosing the right equipment involves:

1. Selecting the kayak: A kayak that is too big can be difficult to steer as it isn't sufficiently submerged in the water, causing torque issues at speed. A too-small kayak has excessive submersion, leading to stability problems and directional control issues. The width of the

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kayak should also be considered appropriate to the skill level of the paddler. A too narrow kayak can create balance problems, which later affect technique and the speed of the kayak as the paddler cannot fully develop their potential. The paddle then becomes more of a support tool rather than for propulsion.

2. Selecting the paddle:Choosing the paddle involves considering length, blade size, and angle of the paddle: These depend on your physical and technical preparation. The length should be based on your ability to stabilize the trunk. Blade size is dependent on your feel for anchoring the paddle in the water and, of course, the strength to maintain a good anchor at that position. The angle of the paddle depends on your stability in the boat.
3. Equipment adjustment: We also demonstrated how to properly adjust the equipment to fit one's abilities and needs.

Demonstrating the kayak basics (Kayak alphabeth)

We demonstrated the basics of kayaking on an ergometer so that attendees could understand and grasp what we aimed to achieve. Later, participants tried the same themselves in a boat.

Pictures: Demonstrating the kayak basics (Kayak alphabeth)

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2. Training on the water

Somatosensory adjustment in the boat:

Picture: Guidelines of the Slovenian Canoe Federation.

The first part of the training on the water was dedicated to somatosensory adjustment in the boat. Participants delved into the feelings of interoception and proprioception, trying to sense how they actually sat in the boat. Coaches from another boat provided advice and tried to facilitate their actions. Often, due to sensorimotor amnesia, a kayaker may not feel their body well. In such cases, the coach can help by describing what they see. We later supplemented this with video recordings.

Alphabet in the boat:

The second part of the training focused on the kayaking alphabet still in the boat. Exercises were performed frontally so that each kayaker could compare their actions also with the speed of the boat relative to others. The alphabet is designed to allow learning of individual stroke segments such as the dip, working field, push-off, and transferring the paddle to the other side. Here, you also have the opportunity to observe exactly what you are doing on the side that is supposed to be relaxed. Coaches from the boat corrected and advised kayakers on the spot.

Pictures: Training in the water, Alphabet in the boat

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Training – copy training:

In the second part of the workshop, we conducted a more serious training session aimed at technique, or a clear picture of how much a kayaker moves the boat with one stroke and how efficiently they paddle. Kayakers started at intervals of 30 seconds, limited to a stroke frequency of 60 strokes per minute. The first kayaker had their frequency regulated by coaches from the boat with regular data, while others copied the strokes of the kayaker ahead of them. The task was to maintain the same frequency as the kayaker ahead of you and thereby verify how efficiently you are paddling. We conducted three 2000-meter distances with this copy-training method. The parameters for such

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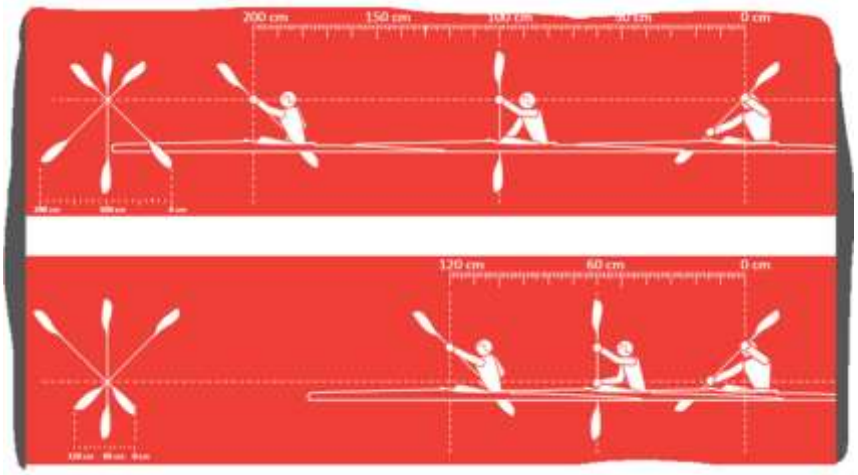
training include a stroke rate of 60 strokes per minute, lactate levels of 2-4 millimoles, aerobic heart rate between 140 and 160 for competitors, and boat speed of 12 km/h.

Pictures: Copy training, analyze and participants on the water.



All the training sessions and all the participants present in the kayaks were also filmed and a detailed video analysis of each individual was made later in the lecture room. We told each individual what their most noticeable paddling faults were and what they needed to fix.

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Pictures: Video analyse recordings.

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The most common mistakes observed and addressed were:

- Incorrect equipment choice: Some kayakers, especially older ones, had kayaks that were too narrow for their abilities. Too large or too small paddles.
- Paddle blades too large.
- Incorrect paddle angle: Some kayakers did not understand why the paddle angle was necessary and its purpose.
- Body posture in the boat: Most kayakers leaned too far forward. They also pushed their heads too far forward, which complicates movement and breathing, and this posture also hampers effective perpendicular paddling.
- Low paddle arc: It was often observed that kayakers could not maintain a high paddle arc (pivot of the paddle) and with the upper hand, they impaired the lever, thus reducing the boat's movement per stroke.
- Stroke finish behind the body.
- Poor push-off from the stroke.

These were the most visible errors among most participants. We informed them about these issues and recommended exercises for improvement and technique enhancement.

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For beginners, we will consider a gradual integration into the water:

Start with shorter and less intense training sessions on the water so that athletes can get used to the specific conditions and sensations of paddling in a kayak or canoe. We will try different boats: MV Kayak and DV Kayak, large canoe, and SUP.

Gradually increase the length and intensity of training sessions on the water so that participants can adapt and improve their endurance in the aquatic environment.

Technical training on the water:

Focus on paddling technique where athletes learn and perfect specific skills such as strokes, turns, starts, and sprints. Emphasis on proper technique and strength use to ensure maximum efficiency and speed on the water.

2. PADDELING AND ROWING WITH DRAGON BOAT AND CANOES

Due to weather conditions, these activities will be carried out at the end of April, May, and June. Some activities were also conducted as part of the Hepa camp.

Pictures: Implementation of paddling Hepa camps April 2024.

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In April, May and June we will hold several activities on the water, first one:

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3. LECTURES AND WORKSHOPS

On March 29, 2024, and April 16, 2024, we held 3 workshops covering all three aforementioned areas.

Workshop: Effective Paddling – Content part in the classroom on the topic: Stress and its impact on sports results, training for particularly vulnerable groups, and sports as an addiction – listen to your body.

During the workshop, we explored how stress can affect sports performance, physical well-being, and the mental health of young athletes. We provided young athletes with practical techniques for managing stress tailored to their needs, including mindfulness techniques, visualization techniques, and targeted breathing exercises, which are particularly effective in a sports environment.

The workshop also addressed how proper nutrition, regular physical activity, and adequate sleep contribute to reducing stress. Participants learned how to create a balanced schedule that allows time for training, competitions, studies, and relaxation, which is crucial to preventing burnout among young athletes. Sports veterans in paddling, who are still active and compete but are more exposed to stress in a different way as they age, also joined the workshop.

At the workshop, we also touched on topics related to vulnerable groups. We mainly focused on recovery after an injury or after a severe illness. Here, we emphasized the analysis of why the injury occurred. What was done wrong that led to an injury that stopped me. The same applies to illness. Why did the body have to react with illness? We particularly highlighted the violation of two physical laws: the law of time and the law of balance. Whether we do something too quickly or too slowly, or too much or too little. From this analysis, we gained a lot of insights into our functioning before the injury or illness. Pain is a signal from the body that something is wrong and needs to be checked. However, we often respond with more work or by denying and suppressing the pain. We also help ourselves with pills and other aids that only alleviate the symptoms, not revealing the causes of the situation.

To prevent reoccurrence of chronic injuries and illnesses, we have also organised a "listen to your body" workshop as part of "effective rowing". We introduced the basics of the AEQ method, where we discover the real state of our body by explaining, performing somatic AEQ exercises and breathing modules. In particular, we discover the disorder and compensations in the body. The improper functioning of agonists and antagonists due to contracted muscles. By regularly performing the exercises we have shown and consequently reducing the sensory-motor amnesia, we start to feel our body better. This enables us not to get back into old patterns of action or dependence.

The theme of the workshop was also sport as an addiction. We discussed the difference between the use, exploitation and abuse of sport or work in general. Finally, we also presented the proper use of sport through kayaking. The movements in kayaking are very complex and suitable for rehabilitation. Above all, the stresses on the joints are low. We have been finding out why conscious paddling from the core is very suitable for rehabilitation after injuries. Focus on what and how you do, not how much and how fast as the basis of movement and sport.

Picture: Workshop, 29.3.2024

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Workshop: What can we do for ourselves to improve our health and reduce our chances of getting cancer 16.4.2024

The title of the workshop, conducted by Tjaša Krištofić, a qualified kinesiologist and physiotherapist, was Stress is the silent killer.

"Stress is the silent killer" is a workshop that is crucial for today's fast-paced living environment, where stress is often overlooked as a serious problem that often leads to cancer. What can we do for ourselves to prevent this? The aim of this workshop was to educate participants on how to recognise and manage stress in an effective way in order to prevent the long-term health consequences that chronic stress can cause. Participants were introduced to a variety of stress management techniques and strategies, including breathing exercises, relaxation techniques and balancing work and personal commitments. The workshop also highlighted the importance of mental health care and how proper stress management can improve overall quality of life. This is essential to prevent burnout and other serious health problems that can result from constant stress. The workshop will be useful for individuals who want to improve their coping with stress in their personal and professional life. The workshop "Stress - the silent killer" is particularly relevant for young athletes, who often face stress both in the sporting field and at school or in other daily activities. Understanding and managing stress is crucial for young people who want to maintain both physical and mental health and achieve optimal results in their sport disciplines.

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Picture: Promotional workshop flyer.

Pictures: Workshop.

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Pictures: Some power point excerpts from the workshop.

Workshop: Self-examination (focus on the importance of breast and testicular self-examination) 16.4.2024

Petra Stojanović, nurse

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Picture: Promotional workshop flyer.

An educational initiative to raise awareness of breast and testicular cancer in young adults. This workshop aimed to educate participants on proper self-examination techniques, how to identify early signs and symptoms, and how regular self-examinations can contribute to early detection of cancer, significantly increasing the chances of successful treatment.

Workshop content includes:

- An introduction to breast and testicular cancer: explaining what breast and testicular cancer are, how common they are, and what the key risk factors are.
- Self-examination techniques: Detailed instructions and demonstrations on how to perform breast and testicular self-examination. This will include visual and tactile inspection, learning how to spot unusual changes such as lumps, changes in size or shape, nipple discharge or unusual changes in the skin.
- Preventive measures and early detection: The importance of early detection and how regular self-examinations can help in the early detection of changes that could be indicators of cancer.
- What to do if you detect a change: Procedures and steps to take if you notice anything unusual during self-examination.

The workshop will also include breast cancer detection using a breast mock-up designed to facilitate cancer detection and correct self-examination techniques. The aim of this workshop is to equip participants with the knowledge and skills needed to establish a routine of regular self-examinations, thereby increasing their confidence and ability to take an active role in their own health care. During

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the workshop, participants, especially women, asked the expert many questions and shared their personal experiences.

Pictures: Workshop

During the reporting period, we transitioned from the first two land phases to the phase of kayaking training and other types of river paddling on or near the water. The training sessions were held in Velike Malence every Tuesday during this period. There was considerable rainfall during the reporting period, so we had to adjust some training sessions, reschedule them to other days, or occasionally cancel them due to weather or high water levels, as the conditions were unfavourable, especially for beginners.

1. **INITIAL KAYAK COURSE**

During the reporting period, we transitioned from the first two land phases to the phase of kayaking training and other types of river paddeling on or near the water. The training sessions were held in Velike Malence every Tuesday during this period. There was considerable rainfall during the reporting period, so we had to adjust some training sessions, reschedule them to other days, or occasionally cancel them due to weather or high water levels, as the conditions were unfavorable, especially for beginners.

Section 3: Kayak Course (Velike Malence, Krka River, May and June 2024)

The purpose of the course was to acquaint participants with basic paddling techniques, safety rules, proper water conduct, and to introduce various types of boats, paddles, and other equipment. Some participants came to the training without any prior knowledge, so we chose a location in Velike Malence where the water is very calm, even when high. Above all, we aimed to highlight how training

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on the water, in beautiful nature, positively affects an individual's physical and mental well-being, reducing stress.

A preliminary inspection of the riverbed in the area where we conducted the training sessions was necessary to ensure the safety of all participants.

Since participants who had never paddled found it difficult to get into a boat in cold water (15 degrees) unsuitable for swimming, fearing capsizing into the cold water, we started with short exercises on land, while some immediately got into a boat or went on a SUP. Depending on the participants' abilities, prior knowledge, and desire (our approach was extremely individualized), we gradually increased the length and intensity of the water training sessions.

During the winter training sessions in the gym (phase 1 of innovative training) and on roller skates (phase 2 of innovative training), we discovered that many interested individuals could not attend the training because they had no childcare. Therefore, we organized the rpaddeling sessions in a way that allowed participants to bring their children, who were particularly interested in this sport. Children, mostly without fear or hesitation about the cold water, eagerly got into the boats.

We had to put a lot of effort and energy into promotion, as the weather was not in our favor, and kayaking itself is not considered an inherently attractive or interesting sport. We have noticed that people are still somewhat afraid of it. The promotion was carried out through the Facebook page of our organization, the project, and via email to participants of previous phases of the innovative training.

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Pictures: Promotional material, flyers.

We had to constantly adapt the water training sessions to different groups of participants. Most of them had no prior paddling experience, so we always started the training with a warm-up on land and a review of the basic principles of paddling on dry land. Participants were introduced to various types and shapes of boats (flatwater kayak, whitewater kayak, large and small canoe, stand-up paddleboard, seat-on-top kayak) and different paddles for each paddling category. Several children who cannot swim also participated. We equipped them with mandatory gear (life jackets) and demonstrated different paddling techniques.

Due to the many rainy days, we had to cancel the training sessions multiple times (continuous rain and high water levels were not suitable for beginner training on the water). We also adjusted the schedule on an ongoing basis and rescheduled the sessions to another day of the week whenever possible.

Steps through which the participants went:

1. **Introduction and Warm-up:**
    - warm-up exercises on land,
    - review of basic paddling principles on dry land,
    - demonstration and practice of basic paddling techniques on land.

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2. **Equipment Familiarization:**

   - Introduction to various types and shapes of boats (flatwater kayak, whitewater kayak, large and small canoe, stand-up paddleboard, seat-on-top kayak).
   - Familiarization with different paddles for each paddling category.
   - Ensuring all participants, especially children, were equipped with mandatory safety gear (life jackets).

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Positive effects of the training highlighted by our participants:

Participants who had never been in a boat or on a SUP before particularly emphasized the positive aspects related to improving their mental and physical well-being. Although the training significantly improves physical fitness and health, they primarily highlighted these positive aspects:

- Stress Reduction: Paddling on the water helps with relaxation and stress reduction. The rhythm of paddling and focus on movement can act as a form of meditation.
- Mood Improvement: Exercise releases endorphins, which enhance mood and can help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Increased Concentration and Discipline: Paddling requires precision and coordination, which can improve concentration and self-discipline.
- Social Aspect: Paddling is often a team sport, promoting cooperation, teamwork, and social interactions, which positively impacts mental health.
- Self-confidence and Achievement: Regular training and progress in paddling can boost self-confidence and a sense of achievement, positively affecting self-esteem.

Part of the water training was conducted in March and April for participants with prior knowledge (Effective Paddling Workshop, March 29, 2024).

During this period, we repeated the workshop on the water and monitored the participants' progress based on the paddling technique analyses from the first workshop. We analyzed individual progress.

Before organizing the descent, we had to clear dangerous branches along the route.

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Photo: Clearing dangerous Branches on the Course

We conducted a practical knowledge test on May 25, 2024, on the route from Cerklje ob Krki to Čatež ob Savi.

Links to promotional videos: https://fb.watch/sMf3jvHx3P/ and https://fb.watch/sMf5KPwCuT/

Image: Promotional flyer for the practical knowledge test activity.

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First, we gathered at Čatež ob Savi and transported the boats and participants to the starting point (Cerklje ob Krki) with organized transportation.

First, we did a warm-up on dry land and reviewed the theoretical basics (the ABCs of paddling) that we learned with expert Dejan Testen in the previous workshop.

This was followed by a half-hour warm-up on the water. We paddled against the current to warm up and prepare for the descent.

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Paddling against the current for warm-up is a common practice among paddlers for several reasons, including physical and technical benefits. Here are some key reasons why paddlers warm up against the current:

Physical Benefits

- Increased Water Resistance: Paddling against the current increases resistance, requiring greater muscle strength and effort. This helps gradually raise the heart rate and prepare the body for more intense exercise.
- Muscle Strengthening: The increased resistance when paddling against the current helps better activate and warm up the muscle groups essential for paddling.
- Improved Circulation: Gradually increasing the intensity of paddling against the current improves blood circulation, aiding in better oxygen and nutrient supply to the muscles.

Technical Benefits:

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- Better Technique: Paddling against the current requires more precise and controlled movements, which can help improve paddling technique.
- Increased Focus: Since paddling against the current is more demanding, it requires greater focus on technique and coordination of movements, aiding in mental preparation for training or competition.
- Adaptation to Conditions: including the flow, waves, and possible obstacles. This helps them better adapt their technique and tactics during the main training session or competition.

Psychological Benefits:

- Mental Preparation: Paddling against the current can be challenging, helping mentally prepare. It requires endurance and determination, increasing confidence and motivation.
- Focus and Relaxation: Warming up against the current allows paddlers to focus on their movements and breathing, which is relaxing and reduces any tension before more intensive exercise.

Conclusion:

Paddling against the current for warm-up is an effective method that combines physical, technical, and psychological benefits. It increases resistance, helping better warm up muscles and improve paddling technique while mentally preparing paddlers for the challenges they will face during training or competition.

Then, we descended to Čatež ob Savi. The descent was approximately 8 km long. At the end, we organized a symbolic race among the participants to make it more interesting.

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The water activities were followed by an analysis and discussion about the progress each participant noticed in themselves. Participants were pleased because they were able to apply the theoretical knowledge from the first workshop and today's practical test into practice and observed improvements in their technique.

2. Boating and paddeling with dragon boat

As part of this activity, we invited participants of innovative training sessions and other interested individuals to a full-day paddling experience at Lake Jarun, Zagreb, Croatia.

Priority registration was given to women, but there was enough space to accommodate all interested men and children who participated in the one-day experience in neighboring Croatia.

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Pictures: Promotional flyers for the Dragon Boat activity.

Dragon boat is a type of sport that originally comes from China. It is a traditional Chinese sport where teamwork is crucial, as the team paddles in long, narrow boats to the rhythm set by one of the team members. Often, especially in China, these boats feature a dragon's head. This sport combines physical fitness, teamwork, and tradition, as races in these boats are often part of festival events celebrating Chinese culture and historical traditions.

The activity was carried out on April 27, 2024.

Participants were transported to Jarun, a lake in the capital of Croatia, where we first toured the boathouse and facilities of the Kayak Association of Zagreb, and explored the infrastructure that this sports complex offers for water sports.

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Next, we familiarized ourselves with the equipment in the boat and demonstrated the correct paddling technique to the participants. Then, we divided into two groups.

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Once the participants mastered the paddling technique, we had a synchronization training session. It is important for the team to be coordinated and follow the rhythm set by one person in the boat.

Basic characteristics of dragon boat paddling:

Boat: A dragon boat is a long, narrow vessel, usually made from wood or modern composite materials. It is often decorated with a dragon's head at the bow and a dragon's tail at the stern.

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Team Structure: A standard team consists of 20 paddlers, one drummer, and one steerer. The drummer sits at the bow and sets the pace for the paddlers with rhythmic drumming, while the steerer stands at the stern and guides the boat.

Paddles: Dragon boat paddles are shorter and wider than traditional paddles. Paddlers use them for powerful, quick strokes, synchronized with the drummer's rhythm.

Video link: https://www.facebook.com/100092715387723/videos/1167213014289844

Participants highlighted the following positive aspects of this activity (in addition to physical and mental progress):

- Teamwork: Paddling in a group promotes team spirit, cooperation, and communication. You must synchronize your movements and work as a unified whole, which strengthens bonds among team members.
- Socializing: A paddling trip with good company provides quality time with loved ones. Conversations, laughter, and shared experiences strengthen mutual relationships and create unforgettable memories.
- Motivation Boost: Group exercise and socializing can increase motivation for physical activity, as mutual support and encouragement contribute to persistence and achieving goals.
- Connection with Nature: Paddling connects you with nature, bringing a sense of peace and connection with the environment. Observing the landscape, birds, and other natural elements has a soothing effect on mental health.
- Adventure and Exploration: A paddling trip allows you to explore new places and waterways, bringing a sense of adventure and discovery of the unknown.

We concluded with a group lunch at Gostilna Pension Les, where we gathered impressions and socialized.

We also used the opportunity to promote the weekly training sessions on the Krka River, inviting all participants.

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T4.3 Promotion of innovative ways of recreation (Street handball and Beach Handball)

In sporting participation of youth, two critical points stand out when the number of young people involved in sports drops drastically. These are the age of 18 years (At the age of 18, compulsory school physical education is completed with secondary education) and 25 years. (The study revealed that while 41 percent of 22- to 25-year-olds, play sports, only 26 percent of 26- to 49-year-olds do so).

Those who are professionally or semi-professionally involved in sports after 25 years are slowly finishing their sports career. Our solutions to keep former players active in handball and in sports in general are: **WP4 T4.3 Promotion of innovative ways of recreation (Street handball and Beach Handball).** Beach handball as an ideal opportunity for relaxed exercise for youth. Beach handball will be performed every first Friday of the month with the aim of "extensions" into a healthy, fun evening for youth.

The mission of street handball is to invite and encourage people to play handball as a recreational sport in their free time. It can be played anywhere outdoors (also in the gym), on the street pitches, basketball courts, empty parking lots etc. It can be played on one goal or with two goals. **Responsible for carrying out the Activity T4.3 = Damjan Radanovič, Nik Rantah and Mihael Kostevc.**

During the winter months of the project, we carried out:

1. PREPARATION OF THE PROGRAM FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Beach Handball - A New Wave of Sport

Beach handball evolved from traditional handball, adding a dynamic and entertaining element brought by playing on sand. This form of handball first appeared in the 1990s and quickly gained popularity worldwide, now coming to Brežice. The game is known for its speed and energy, with an emphasis on the skills and agility of the players. In Brežice, the court will be set up near the Dobova sports hall where the sand will provide the ideal surface for this exciting sport. The goal of introducing beach handball in Brežice is to encourage the local community to actively spend their free time and offer a new form of recreation.

Adapted Rules of Beach Handball

The field is 27x12 meters with two goals and a sandy base set up next to the sports hall Dobova. As part of the project, we will also renovate it as it is outdated. The game will be played with 4 players on each side, and the duration of the match will be 10 minutes per set, with two sets per match. The peculiarity of the game is that physical contacts are limited, which reduces the risk of injury and emphasizes skill. Scoring is adapted to increase the dynamics of the game, with goals by the goalkeeper or from more difficult positions worth two points.

Beach Handball - Ideal Recreation

Playing on sand allows for less strain on joints and muscles, reducing the risk of injury. The game on sand in Dobova will encourage faster reaction and greater endurance, which is excellent for overall

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physical fitness. Beach handball is suitable for all ages and encourages social interaction and team spirit. In Brežice, this sport will enable active spending of free time outdoors in a pleasant environment. Ideal Recreation for Veterans – former handball players who have ended their sports careers. Through the project, we will invite them to re-join regular weekly training. They gladly responded to our invitation and tested the adapted rules.

Photo: A trial training session of beach handball with veterans.

A trial training session of beach handball with veterans of the handball team showed excellent results. Veterans emphasized that playing on sand is extremely friendly to the joints and muscles, reducing the risk of injuries that are more common on harder surfaces. Training participants expressed enthusiasm for the game, which required less physical force and more tactical thinking, which is ideal for players with rich experience. Beach handball has proven to be an excellent form of recreation for veterans as it allows active participation in sports without excessive risk of injury. This positive experience will serve as an incentive for further integration of veterans and older players into beach handball in Brežice.

Beach Handball - A Magnet for the Youth

Beach handball has all the ingredients needed to attract young people into the world of sports and its popularization. With its dynamic pace, playful environment, and less formal rules, this sport perfectly matches the youthful pursuit of fun and adventure. Beach handball is an exciting and appealing sports activity that offers young people a unique combination of physical activity and fun in the open air. Unlike traditional handball, which is played on hard surfaces, beach handball takes place on a soft base, allowing for faster gameplay, higher jumps, and more attractive moves without the fear of injuries from falls.

One of the key advantages of beach handball is its accessibility. No expensive equipment or specially adapted courts are required for the game; only a space with sand is needed, meaning it can be played

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on any beach or specially built sandy court. This facilitates the organization of spontaneous matches and tournaments, which are excellent opportunities for socializing and promoting team spirit.

Young players are allowed to express their creativity and skills in beach handball. Because the game is faster and more focused on individual moves, players develop their technical abilities and skills differently than in traditional handball. Also, due to the limited number of players on the field, each individual can stand out more and contribute to the game.

Children and teenagers are naturally drawn to activities that are physically demanding and at the same time fun. Beach handball offers both - elements of competitiveness and the opportunity to play in a relaxed social environment. This is particularly important in today's digital age, where many young people are too engaged with electronic devices and need encouragement to go outside and be physically active.

Photo: Promotion of inclusion in project activities at Jarun cup 2023, Croatia.

Moreover, organized events such as summer camps and tournaments further increase the visibility of this sport. When they see their peers having fun and competing, it also increases their desire to participate, creating a 'snowball effect' where the sport spreads and becomes increasingly popular.

Involving sports idols and local sports stars in promoting beach handball can also encourage young people to try out the sport. Through the role models' mentoring, young people can learn, develop, and even aspire to become the next generation of sports talents.

All these characteristics of beach handball create an attractive platform for young people to engage in sports, develop their abilities, and nurture a love for physical activity. It also strengthens the sense of community and bonding.

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Sustainable and Environmental Aspects Playing beach handball promotes a healthy lifestyle and connection with nature. The use of natural materials like sand has minimal impact on the environment and is a sustainable choice for sports infrastructure. This sport will contribute to revitalizing the local community and promoting sports tourism in Brežice.

Photos: We were participated in the Jarun Cup 2024, Croatia, as part of the HiH project - with the aim of promoting the project and popularizing beach handball

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Street Handball

Street handball is a variant of classic handball adapted for playing in streets, squares, or other urban surfaces. This popular form of handball brings the game directly to communities where traditional courts are not available.

Photo: Street handball simulation with representatives of the Slovenian handball team at an event as part of the HiH project.

Adaptability of the Court: The court for street handball is not standardized and can be adjusted based on available space. The size of the court is usually smaller than official handball courts, often using improvised barriers for goals.

Players: The number of players on a team can vary, but games are typically played 4 on 4 or 5 on 5 to increase the intensity of the game and ensure every player is more involved in the action.

Equipment: No special equipment is needed for street handball. It is often played with a regular handball, and the aim is to use smaller goals. Protective equipment is not mandatory, but players can wear basic protection such as knee and elbow pads.

Game Rules: The rules are simplified compared to traditional handball, with an emphasis on fast play and fun. Physical contact is limited to reduce the risk of injury on hard surfaces.

Game Duration: Matches are shorter, often divided into shorter time periods or sets, which allows for a fast pace and more action.

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Safety: Safety is crucial in street handball. Players and organizers must ensure that the playing area is safe and free from hazards such as traffic, sharp objects, and hazardous waste.

Social Aspect: Street handball is not just a sport but also a social event that promotes community involvement and bonding. It is often accompanied by music, food, and other entertaining activities.

Street handball is an excellent way to involve both young and older people in active play, promote physical fitness, and strengthen community ties. Due to its adaptability and focus on fun, it is ideal for promoting sports and an active lifestyle at all levels. Through project activities, we will try to present this game as something everyday, such as playing after a family Sunday lunch.

Photo: Street handball simulation with the youngest - participants of the HiH run - at an event within the HiH project.

Development of handball fitness programs to be used throughout the project execution

Handball is a sport that demands a high level of physical fitness, as it involves complex movements that require strength, speed, agility, and endurance.

Strength: Strength is fundamental for executing powerful throws, effective blocks, and competing for space with opponents. It focuses on developing explosive power needed for quick and strong moves like throws and jumps. Training includes exercises such as Olympic lifting, squats, deadlifts, and bench presses that build muscle strength and power throughout the body.

Speed and Explosiveness: Improving speed and explosiveness through plyometric exercises such as box jumps and sprint training. Emphasis is placed on rapid, explosive movements that simulate actions in the game like quick turns, pushes, and jumps.

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Agility: Agility allows handball players to move quickly and change directions on the field. Training with agility ladders, cones, and hurdles enhances skill and reaction time.

Endurance: Endurance is crucial for maintaining high energy levels throughout the entire game. High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) and long-duration aerobic exercises such as running enhance cardiovascular endurance.

Flexibility and Mobility: Flexibility and mobility reduce the risk of injuries and allow for a greater range of motion. Regular stretching and mobility exercises improve joint mobility and muscle length.

Core Strengthening: A strong core is essential for transferring power between the lower and upper body and for maintaining balance and stability. Exercises like planks, rotational exercises, and Pilates strengthen the core and improve torso stability.

Recovery and Prevention: Proper recovery after training is critical for injury prevention and performance optimization. Techniques such as cooling baths, massages, stretching exercises, and proper nutrition help with faster recovery.

Nutrition and Hydration: Proper nutrition and hydration play a significant role in maintaining physical readiness and performance. A balanced diet rich in proteins, carbohydrates, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals supports training and recovery.

The handball fitness program should be tailored to the individual needs of players, considering their specific roles in the team, age, gender, and current physical condition. Regular monitoring of progress and adjustment of the program is also key to achieving optimal results.

Program for Young Recreational Players

Basic Coordination and Motor Skills: Developing basic motor skills with simple exercises with the ball such as throwing, catching, and dribbling. Exercises to improve coordination include simple agility drills and ball games.

Photo: Learning the basics of handball fitness for youth

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Endurance: "Tag" games or relay races that are fun and simultaneously increase cardiovascular endurance. Light running or brisk walking allows for gradual improvement of fitness.

Strength Development: Bodyweight exercises like push-ups, squats, and lunges strengthen muscle power without the risk of injury. Emphasis on proper technique before increasing intensity or load.

Flexibility and Mobility: Stretching exercises suitable for young people to promote mobility and prevent injuries. Incorporating yoga or Pilates, which are attractive and beneficial for developing flexibility.

Program for Veterans

Low-Intensity Cardio: Walking, Nordic walking, or cycling to improve cardiovascular health. Swimming as an excellent cardio exercise that reduces joint stress.

Photo: Learning the basics of handball fitness for veterans; former professional and semi-professional athletes.

Gentle Strength Training: Light resistance or bodyweight exercises focused on maintaining muscle strength and mass. Core strengthening exercises are crucial for maintaining good posture and preventing back pain.

Stretching and Mobility: Regular dynamic and static stretching to maintain joint mobility. Including balance and proprioception exercises that help prevent falls and improve agility.

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Prevention and Recovery: Techniques such as light massage and warm baths that promote relaxation and recovery after exercise. Adequate hydration and nutrition tailored to the needs of older athletes.

For both programs, it is important to conduct proper warm-up before and cool-down after exercise. Training should be varied and fun, with a focus on socializing and enjoying movement, not just on athletic performance. Adjusting the load and intensity of exercise to individual capabilities is crucial for maintaining motivation and preventing injuries.

2. TRAINING PROGRAM WITHIN THE HIH PROJECT (TRAINER AND ASSISTANT)

Beach Handball Training Program:

- Warm-up: 10 minutes of light running on sand followed by dynamic stretching exercises.
- Technical Drills: Basic ball exercises such as throwing, catching, and dribbling, adapted for playing on sand.
- Game Situations: Practical games where participants play short matches to familiarize themselves with the rules of beach handball.
- Conditioning Improvement: Interval runs on sand to improve endurance and leg strength.
- Cool Down: Light stretching and relaxation exercises.

Street Handball Training Program:

- Warm-up: 10 minutes of jumping in place and light running drills.
- Agility and Coordination: Exercises with agility ladders and cones.
- Game Situations: Street handball games on a smaller court with an emphasis on quick passes and fast gameplay.

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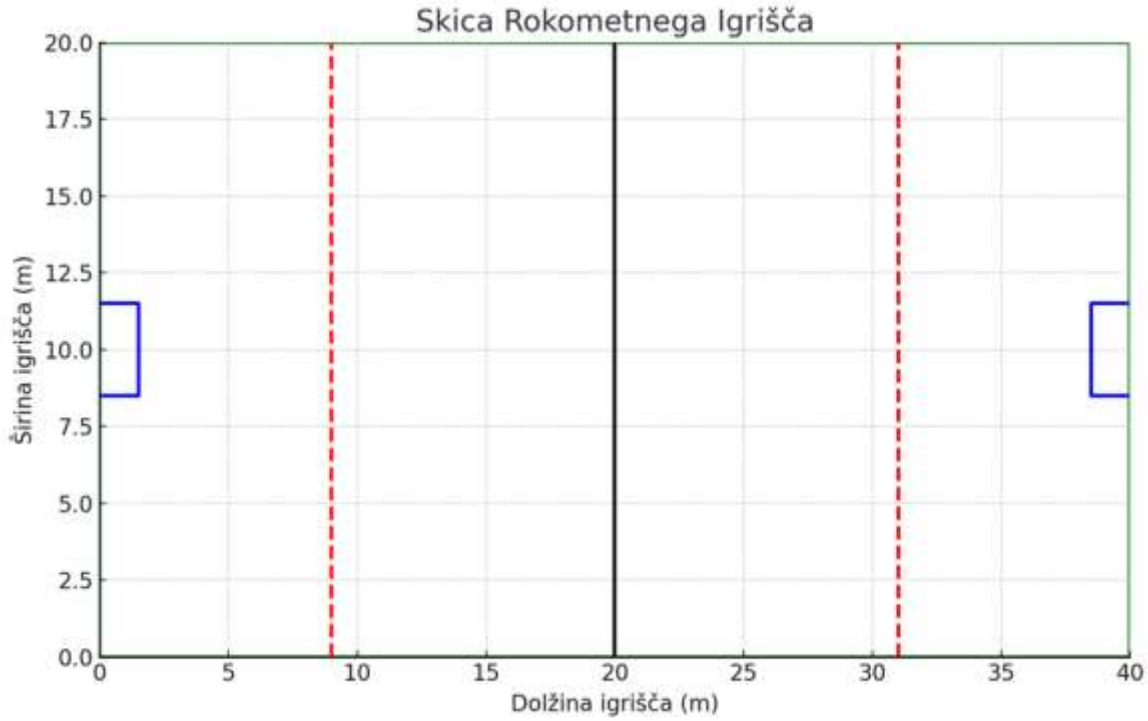

Photo: A sketch of a handball court showing key elements.

A basic sketch of a handball court showing key elements such as the dimensions of the court, the position of the goals, the center line, and the 9-meter line. This sketch will serve as a reference for arranging the court and organizing training for both beach and street handball.

Veteran Handball Fitness Program A 24-week handball fitness program for veterans, former athletes from various disciplines, aged 25 and older. The program is tailored to consider their experience in sports and any limitations related to age.

24-Week Handball Fitness Program for Veterans:

Weeks 1-4: Introduction and Basic Preparation

- Objective: Establish basic conditioning and strength.
- Activities: Light cardio exercise (e.g., walking, light jogging), basic bodyweight exercises, dynamic stretching.
- Focus: On warming up and preventing injuries.

Weeks 5-8: Building Strength and Coordination

- Objective: Improve physical strength and coordination.
- Activities: Moderately intense weightlifting, balance exercises, low-intensity plyometric exercises.
- Focus: On lifting techniques and correct execution.

Weeks 9-12: Developing Agility and Speed

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- Objective: Enhance agility and speed of response.
- Activities: Agility drills (e.g., ladder drills), light sprints, interval training.
- Focus: On movement control and safety.

Weeks 13-16: Emphasis on Endurance

- Objective: Improve cardiovascular and muscular endurance.
- Activities: Longer cardio sessions (e.g., swimming, cycling), extended sessions with lighter weights.
- Focus: On gradually increasing intensity.

Weeks 17-20: Integration of Sport-Specific Exercises

- Objective: Prepare the body for specific movements and demands of handball.
- Activities: Handball-specific drills, games on a smaller field, tactical exercises.
- Focus: On applying handball skills in fitness activities.

Weeks 21-24: Maintenance and Conclusion

- Objective: Maintain achieved conditioning and strength.
- Activities: A combination of previous activities at a steady pace.
- Focus: On maintaining form and preventing injuries.

Each week should include days for active rest and regeneration such as yoga, pilates, or light walking. It is important for veterans to listen to their bodies and avoid overloading, especially if they face limitations related to age or previous injuries. Regular health check-ups are also recommended to ensure safety and health.

3. MEDICAL THERAPEUTIC AND RECREATIONAL EXERCISES

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Photo: Flyer of medical therapeutic and recreational exercises

We organized this comprehensive approach to physical activity that simultaneously strengthened health, restored body functions, promoted overall well-being, and reduced pain. The exercise was conducted under the supervision of the trained professional, physiotherapist Tinkara Zalokar, who ensured that the program was designed to include various physical activities targeting the strengthening of different body systems. The exercise regimen consisted of a combination of therapeutic exercises, cardiovascular exercise, and strength training, which helped in recovering health after injuries/diseases, preventing recurring injuries, improving overall fitness, and reducing the risk of various conditions.

A workout session, which lasted 50 minutes, began with an introductory part where we prepared the body for physical activity, increased body temperature, and blood flow to the muscles, and then moved on to the main part, where we performed specific exercises such as a combination of strength exercises, functional exercises, therapeutic exercises, and cardiovascular activities. During the workout, in addition to body weight exercises, we also used various tools such as bands, balls, weights, rings, and many others. In conclusion, we gradually reduced the heart rate, cooled down the muscles, and worked on flexibility," described the instructor. This exercise program was carried out in February and March.

The exercises took place every Thursday on the following dates: February 1, 2024, February 15, 2024, February 22, 2024, February 29, 2024, March 7, 2024, March 14, 2024, March 21, 2024, and March 28, 2024.

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They were free of charge for all who registered.

Photos: Medical therapeutic and recreational exercises for all.

4. GUIDED EXERCISES OF SMART WARMING-UP AND FUNCTIONAL TRAINING FOR VETERANS

Instructor: Damjan Radanovič

Timeline: Mondays and Thursdays from January to April.

The exercise plan for veteran athletes was designed with an emphasis on smart warming-up and comprehensive body preparation. The primary goals of the exercise included performing effective warm-up exercises tailored to the needs of various sports to reduce the risk of injuries during activities, improve dynamic flexibility, and enhance neuromuscular activation. In the long term, we aimed to increase overall physical fitness and flexibility, develop a better understanding of the importance of warming-up, and maintain a high level of physical fitness and health among all veteran athletes.

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Photo: Exercise for veteran athletes.

Radanovič explained that the exercise regimen was composed of several phases: "It began with mobilization, which lasted about 10 minutes and included exercises for warming up the joints and improving flexibility, along with light aerobic activities, such as brisk walking or light jogging. This was followed by a phase of dynamic flexibility, lasting 10 minutes, which included dynamic stretching exercises targeted at muscles crucial for various sports, and exercises with resistance bands for additional muscle activation. The final phase was neuromuscular activation, lasting up to 15 minutes, involving exercises to improve coordination and reaction time, such as agility disk exercises and 'sliding towel' exercises for enhancing balance and stability." He added that the entire approach was designed to provide a comprehensive and effective program that supports the physical and mental well-being of veteran athletes, allows them to remain active and healthy, and simultaneously reduces the risk of injuries. Radanovič also mentioned that attendance at their sessions was high, possibly even above expectations. "We always offer participants a fresh selection of exercises, and we also vary the purpose of the exercises, from coordination and agility to stabilization and muscle group activation exercises, so that the workouts are not monotonous and participants always try something new.

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Photos: Exercise for veteran athletes.

5. ADAPTATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF EXERCISES AND EXECUTION OF HEPA CAMP 2: MARCH AND APRIL 24

In youth sports participation, there are two critical points where involvement drops significantly: at age 18 (after compulsory school physical education ends) and at age 25 (with only 26% of 26- to 49-year-olds playing sports compared to 41% of 22- to 25-year-olds).

We adapted beach handball, street handball and handball fitness activities for participants of HEPA camps to ensure inclusive and engaging sports experiences.

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6. Beach handball

Photos: Training of veterans and youth on the outdoor sand court.

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- Beach handball trainings

- Beach handball promotional flyers

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The activity of beach handball is highly dependent on the weather. We have conducted most simulations indoors and a few training sessions outdoors. In May and June 2024, we organized beach handball training sessions for the public once a week.

4.4 Innovative forms of climbing - a movable boulder wall in each village

With experienced trainers and a movable boulder wall, we will enable young people to do sport climbing, more precisely bouldering. The boulder wall is portable and can be moved between different locations. This is very convenient, as the wall can be placed outside urban areas, bringing it closer to the rural and disadvantaged areas. By conducting sports climbing events and other related activities in local areas within the frames of the HiH project, we contributed to the promotion of sports and a healthy lifestyle among young people, especially in these less developed areas. With the movable boulder wall, which we made ourselves, we enabled access to sport climbing for all those interested, regardless of their location.

During implementation of the events, we aimed for the following goals and more interesting observations gave us positive feedback.

- Access to sports for everyone: the movable boulder wall removes barriers to access to gyms with climbing walls or where there are no outdoor climbing areas, as it can be moved to different locations. Thus, we make climbing accessible even where there is no permanent sports infrastructure or it is deficient. This is especially important for children and young people in smaller villages or remote areas where sports activities are limited or sometimes inaccessible.
- Physical development: climbing is a complex sport that requires strength, flexibility, coordination and balance. Regular exercise would help children (and of course others too) improve their motor skills, strengthen their muscle composition and improve their overall fitness.
- Psychological development: climbing is not just a physical activity, but also a mental challenge as it often requires commitment to progress. Children and youngsters learn focus, problem-solving and sometimes overcoming their fears. Climbing requires tactical thinking and quick decision-making, which can also benefit everyday life.
- Social development: since we have expanded the activity to many registered participants, climbing has also become a social activity where young people meet, get to know each other, encourage and make new friends. The group nature of climbing helps develop communication skills and it ends up being a fun event.

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- Improvement of self-esteem, self-confidence: success in overcoming difficult routes, solving complex boulder problems or simply climbing to the top of a wall can have a significant impact on a child's self-esteem. Every good attempt at solving a boulder problem contributes to a sense of achievement and improved self-image.
- Impact on the local community: the movable boulder wall is an attraction and it has a positive impact on the local community by encouraging active leisure time and a healthy lifestyle. In the long term, this could reduce youth problems such as antisocial behavior and health problems related to inactivity.

As a part of the HiH project, we have planned the following activities:

- Movable boulder wall in each village (bringing the wall to the countryside)
- Introducing indoor sport climbing on the big wall as part of the international sports camp HEPA'23 and HEPA'23
- An improvised escape game outdoors in the hilly countryside in a local area
- Simulation of the event in bad weather and setting up indoor test routes on a small wall

1. **Bringing the wall to the countryside - a movable boulder wall in each village**

Most of the participants encountered climbing for the first time. Everyone was very satisfied with the experience, especially the children, who were tireless and unstoppable while competing and having fun solving the boulder problems. They expressed great enthusiasm for the opportunity to try a new sport and it was fun to watch being physically challenged in a safe and stimulating environment. Even the elderly try themselves on a wall and recognize climbing as a very difficult and complex sport.

- Active sunday at the 'Banova domačija' (17.09.2023)

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The first event took place on a beautiful autumn day in September in the small village of Artiče at the Banova domačija (a traditional homestead, house) as a part of Active Sunday. The event was marked by a series of interesting activities including competitive goulash cooking, a traditional bread baking workshop, and a scenic hike that highlighted local culinary and cultural traditions. A notable feature of this vibrant gathering was our movable boulder wall, which attracted many enthusiastic participants and added to the community experience. We received excellent feedback and encouragement to continue participating in such events.

- A movable boulder wall in Artiče (September, 2023).

The springtime of the HiH project began on a cold, almost rainy day in the first week of March. We took our movable boulder wall to the small village of Pišece, which lies in the countryside under the northern hilly side of the municipality of Brežice. It is home to the smallest primary school around and their innovative teaching with combined classes of students blended nicely with our portable wall. We were grateful to brighten up a cloudy day with an activity not usually available in smaller communities.

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- A movable boulder wall in Velika Dolina (March, 2024).

- A movable boulder wall in Pišece (March, 2024).

At the end of March, we took our movable boulder wall to the south east of the municipality of Brežice, where another small primary school held a sports day for all classes. We brightened up another cloudy Friday with a unique physical activity, this time also with a slackline under a picturesque hayrack. Due to the large number of participants, we divided them into smaller groups and while they were switching between regular sports day activities, they also experienced bouldering (and slacklining).

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After the class, we prolonged our stay to spice up the extended stay for those who were most enthusiastic about climbing.

In June, we were in Dobova, where we brought our mobile bouldering wall, giving many pupils the opportunity to test their climbing skills. The pupils were thrilled by the challenge and eagerly participated in the climbing activities.

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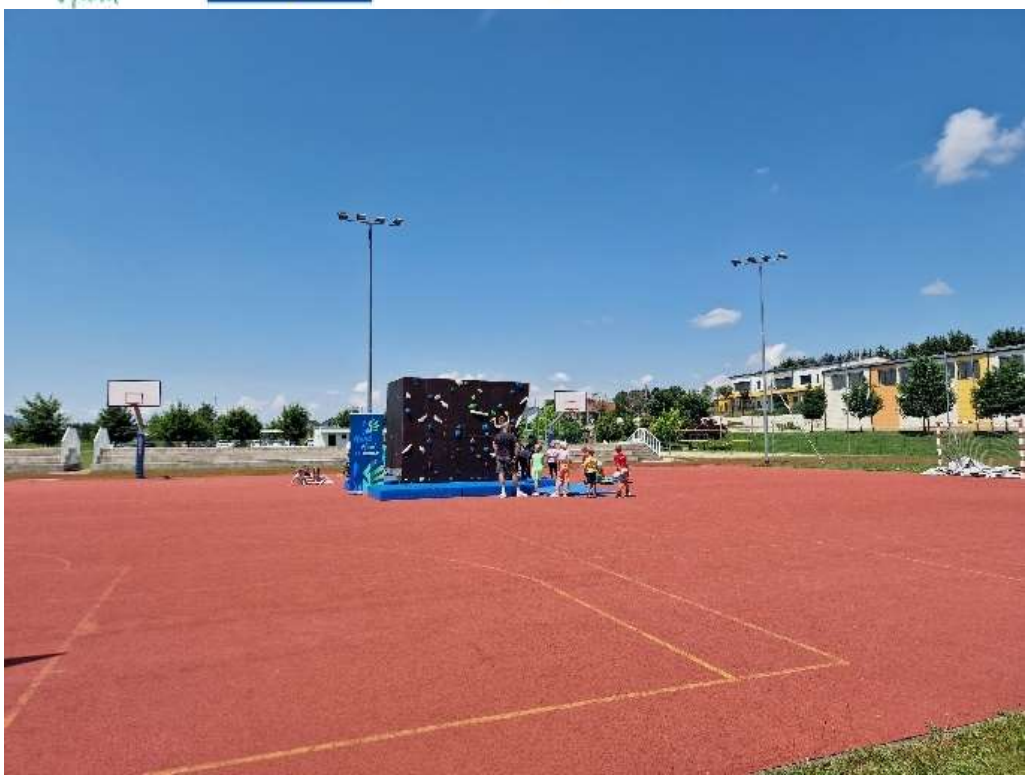

- a movable boulder wall in Dobova (June 2024).

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- a movable boulder wall in Artiče (June 2024).

2. Sport climbing on the big wall - International sports camps HEPA

The Brežice sports hall boasts one of the biggest (and probably one of the most challenging) artificial walls in Slovenia. Climbing on the wall is reserved for professional sport climbers and also for recreational sports climbing enthusiasts, but not for individuals who are not skilled in climbing. Climbing on such walls requires knowledge of rope handling maneuvers, and of course good physical fitness. In order to bring sport climbing closer to others, we organized a kind of open day on our big wall as a part of the HEPA camp.

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For this purpose, we reserved two Tuesdays in April to host groups of young people from secondary schools. In a safe environment (top rope belaying), individuals could test themselves on vertical and overhanging walls and learn how challenging this sport is. For a better experience, together with the PAK (local mountaineering club), we also prepared a short lecture on the club's history and its recognition in the local environment. We presented the climbing equipment and, with the help of one of our competitors, also demonstrated what climbing looks like in the true sense.

3. Outdoor Escape Adventure on St. Vid - an improvised escape game

The "Outdoor Escape Adventure on St. Vid" is an innovative escape game that combines elements of puzzles, physical activity and nature exploration. The participants are divided into small groups, and each group receives a map and a list of tasks to complete.

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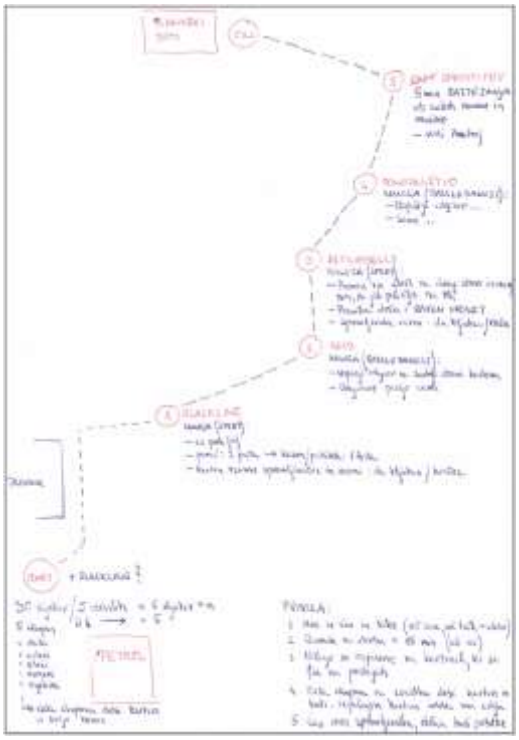

Physical challenges:
Such as hiking, balance and endurance, which test the physical fitness of the participants.

Puzzles and Brain Teasers:
The mysteries that must be solved to progress through the game encourage teamwork and logical thinking.

Interaction with nature:
The game is set on the hill of Sv. Vid, which allows participants to enjoy nature and learn something about the local environment.

Limited time:
Each group has a limited time to complete the game, which adds an element of competition and urgency.

The game is designed to encourage physical activity, thinking and learning in a fun and dynamic way. It is intended for all age groups and fitness levels, as the challenges can be adjusted according to the group. The goal is for participants not only to enjoy the game, but also to develop their skills and learn the value of teamwork and physical activity in nature.

- Outdoor Escape Adventure on St. Vid

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Guided Hike: Strength, Endurance, and Control

In May and June, we organized a guided hike to Sv. Vid every Friday. The hike started at 6 AM, with the meeting point at the Petrol parking lot. The hike focused on three key elements: strength, endurance, and control. This initiative evolved from the Outdoor Escape Adventure on St. Vid—an improvised escape game designed to involve as many people as possible.

The "Outdoor Escape Adventure on St. Vid" is an innovative escape game that combines elements of puzzles, physical activity, and nature exploration. Participants are divided into small groups, and each group receives a map and a list of tasks to complete.

Why is this important?

Strength: Participants strengthened their physical abilities as the hike to Sv. Vid is challenging and includes various terrain obstacles. Building muscle and overall physical strength is crucial for general health and well-being.

Endurance: Regular physical activity, such as hiking, improves cardiovascular endurance. The hikes helped participants gradually increase their stamina, which positively impacts the cardiovascular system and overall fitness.

Control: The hikes also provided an opportunity to develop psychological skills such as concentration, self-discipline, and stress management. By testing their limits in nature, participants developed the ability to control their bodies and minds.

Conclusion

Thanks to these hikes, we contributed to the better physical and mental health of the participants. Together, we built a stronger, more enduring, and balanced community.

- Promotional flyer: Strength, Endurance, and Control

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4. Simulation of the event with a test group of young climbers

Throughout the winter, we conducted simulation training at the Sports gym in Artiče with a group of young promising climbers. For this purpose, we renovated the small climbing wall by setting up the climbing routes and boulder problems, which we later mirrored on the movable climbing wall.

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