

Active Aging Policies of Local Governments

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Submitted: 10 Feb 2022; **Accepted:** 17 Feb 2022; **Published:** 30 Apr 2022

Citation: Hayrettin GÜMÜŞDAĞ, Alpaslan KARTAL (2022) Active Aging Policies of Local Governments. *J Nov Psy* 3(1): 51-53.

Abstract

The aim of this research is; The aim of this study is to examine the studies carried out by local governments throughout our country to be physically active during the transition to the aging process, which is a part of life, and to present their recommendations for active aging. Aging is defined as a period in which various functions and abilities, including social, cognitive and psychological, gradually decline. Active aging is a process in which a person continues to use and develops by focusing on his strengths rather than losses. It is known that with aging, problems such as not feeling well in the areas of attention, memory, visual and auditory perception, managerial skills and language occur in individuals. With the active aging process, it is aimed to keep these cognitive losses to a minimum and to experience the old age with the highest possible quality. In this study, the literature on the policies followed by local governments in the name of active aging was examined, the situation was stated and suggestions were made on active aging policies.

Keywords: Local Government, Active Aging, Policy

Introduction

Aging begins with human birth and aging is a process that cannot be prevented [1]. Human life is divided into various phases. According to Lehr (1994), aging is a process of changes in biological, psychological and social areas. According to WHO, individuals aged 65 and over are considered elderly [2]. Aging is a concept that can vary from person to person. It is a fact that each individual has different biological backgrounds, different work experiences and different emotional lives. In addition, aging may differ between societies; The role of society and culture in aging is quite high (DPT, 2007: 10). According to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, human life consists of eight stages. Erikson assigns certain duties and responsibilities to individuals in these stages. If the individual fulfills these duties and responsibilities, he will successfully transition to the next stage. According to Erikson's theory, the eighth stage, the self-integrity versus the despair stage, includes the age of 60 and beyond. In this stage, the aging individual evaluates himself by thinking and analyzing his experiences throughout his life. If he is productive, happy and successful throughout his life, he reaches self integrity, but if he has experienced conflict in any or more of these stages,

he falls into despair [3]. The concept of active aging was first introduced in an editorial by Kalache at the 1999 International Year of Older Persons [4]. In this article, Kalache talked about the relationship between activity and well-being, and talked about the necessity of creating and maintaining opportunities for older people to stay active [5]. Then, the definition of active aging was made by WHO in 2002. According to WHO, active aging is the process of optimizing opportunities in the areas of health participation and safety to ensure that individuals maintain their quality of life as they age.

Active aging includes not only physical well-being, but also active participation in the workforce, as well as psychological, social, economic, spiritual, etc. It also means prosperity in the process [2]. In this context, active participation of the elderly in business life and active participation in voluntary activities; In the fight against financial inadequacies, their social and psychological status and their integration into social life provide positive developments (Ministry of Health, 2011). With the decision taken by the European Parliament and the European Union (EU) Council in 2010, the Intergenerational Solidarity and Active Aging Year

in Europe shows that older people can take an active and healthy place in social and economic life, especially in European countries [6].

According to the World Health Organization, active aging is examined within the scope of health and social services, behavioral determinants, personal factors, social determinants, physical environment and economic determinants [2]. Active aging includes participation in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and urban life as well as social, mental and physical well-being, autonomy and independence. Another definition of active and healthy aging; aging of individuals in a healthy, independent, safe manner and thus participating in both the workforce and unpaid voluntary activities [7].

Active Aging Policies of Local Governments

Supporting active aging in the formation of social policies; It will reduce untimely deaths and chronic diseases, enable people to enjoy their lives in old age, and enable the elderly to be active in the social, cultural, economic and political fields of society [2]. In addition, the fact that people who can protect their health as they get older stay longer in working life will contribute to alleviating the economic burden of early retirement. The extra time spent in working life will help prevent the increase in medical and social care costs as well as income security [8].

It is possible to say that local governments have an important place in the formation of social policies based on active aging, both in the past and today. Although the role of local governments in social policy varies from country to country, it is the laws and regulations enacted by central governments that determine the boundaries of local governments. In many countries, the relationship of local governments with social policy cannot go beyond being the representative or implementer of the central government. However, the role of local governments in social policy has changed significantly in recent years [9].

When we look at the active aging policies of local governments, we see that Ankara Metropolitan Municipality supports active aging with sports activities such as picnics, excursions, concerts, entertainment programs as well as picnics, excursions, concerts, entertainment programs, by establishing women's clubs, an internet access center that the elderly can use with their grandchildren (https://www.ankara.bel.tr/files/5115/2404/0333/Faaliyet_2017.pdf, Access date: 23.11.2021).

It is seen that Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality supports active aging with many activities such as wood painting, ceramics, knitting and choir and sports activities within the scope of active aging. In addition, they offer paid/free sports services in 22 different branches 7 days a week, accompanied by expert trainers (<https://www.ibb.istanbul/SitePage/Index/176>, Access date: 23.11.2021) İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, established by the Healthy Age The Youth and Elderly Hand in Hand activity organized by the

Center for Reception and Solidarity, providing social support to the psycho-social rehabilitation of the elderly population through young volunteers, strengthening intergenerational communication and solidarity, is the main purpose of the project. It is seen that the "Sportive Amateur Fishermen Compete" event was organized in cooperation with the Amateur Angling and Wildlife Conservation Association in order to encourage amateur fishing and popularize conscious amateur fishing in Sarı Sungur Mamuca Pond (<https://www.izmir.bel.tr/tr/Documents/23/43>, Accessed on 23.11.2021).

Kahramanmaraş Metropolitan Municipality has opened healthy life and balanced nutrition and step-aerobics, pilates and fitness courses for women in order to provide healthy life and sports activities for women (<https://kahramanmaras.bel.tr/faaliyet-reporlari>, Access date: 23.11.2021). Bursa Metropolitan Municipality carries out activities such as sports climbing, archery, cave sports and nature sports caving within the scope of sportive activities for active aging (<https://www.bursa.bel.tr/dosyalar/yayinlar/faaliyet.pdf> Access date: 23.11.2021).

Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality organizes a football tournament for over 40 years old and activated the life park facilities for the elderly within the scope of active aging (<http://www.diyarbakir.bel.tr/kurumsal/faaliyet-raporlari.html>, Access date: 23.11.2021) In addition, Mersin Metropolitan Municipality carries out sports activities such as cycling, running and walking free of charge, which the elderly can participate in, with the Yes to Conscious Sports Project. Muğla Metropolitan Municipality is to spread the sports activities of citizens of all ages throughout Muğla and to adopt them to the public; organizes various tournaments to support athletes and sports clubs and offers sports facilities to the public (<https://www.mersin.bel.tr/doc/mbb-faaliyetraporlari>, Access date: 23.11.2021).

Conclusion

One of the areas that local governments should prioritize while creating active aging policies is sports. Ensuring the participation of elderly individuals in sports activities with sports activities suitable for physical conditions is the most important factor for them to have an active and healthy old age period.

Sports, as it is known, is not just a concept with physical benefits. It provides many benefits to individuals of all ages, including psychological, social and economic. Giving importance to sports activities within the scope of active aging policies of local governments will help elderly individuals to lead a healthier life psychologically, mentally and physiologically.

However, local governments in our country remain very weak in terms of active aging, organizing physical and sports activities, facilities and infrastructure, and the elderly in our country generally have to spend a stagnant old age period.

In the field of active aging and sports, sports and recreation areas

created by municipalities within the scope of sports incentive services should be turned into more systematic and sustainable centers, necessary experts should be appointed and the phenomenon of active aging of individuals should be supported [10]. In addition, elderly individuals should be encouraged to participate in physical activities [11].

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