



## Alpine Space Transnational Governance of Active and Healthy Ageing- ASTAHG

### Selected findings obtained through stakeholders interviews in the field of Active and Healthy Aging in the Alpine Space (goriška and gorenjska region)

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

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Aging begins at birth and affects all aspects of our lives. It is important to internalize a healthy lifestyle in childhood and youth to be active and healthy in older age. Aims Active and Healthy Aging (AHA) to encourage healthy lifestyle, it also includes other aspects, such as our consumer and dietary pattern and level of physical and social interaction.

Nacional institute of public health (NIJZ) is part of the three- year's project entitled Alpine Space Transnational Governance of Active and Healthy Ageing (ASTAHG) since 2018. The Slovenian Alps represent area for over 365,000 people<sup>1</sup>. Rural areas in Slovenia and the whole of Europe are contending with ageing of the population. According to the forecasts of the Statistical office of Republican Slovenia (SURs) in 2030 in Slovenia there will be quarter of the population over 65 years of age, which represents a great challenge for the cities and rural areas Alpine space AS<sup>2</sup>.

Aim of the ASTHAG project is to improve capacity of regional policies in AHA, coordination's of actions in different sectors to take into accounts geographical specifics, facilitate the transfer of innovation and initiatives of AHA in AS and provide a framework for social innovation to create and implement innovations of AHA, which involving public and private sector actors<sup>3</sup>.

Ageing constantly affects all aspects of our lives. The ASTAHG project covers the following areas that have been identified as key for (AHA) in (AS): Social inclusion, Health care, Activities and services, Long-term care, Promotion of wellbeing, healthy and active life, Transport connections and Tourism and culture.

Report based on the interviews of selected stakeholders is the last activity of the ASTAHG project in Slovenia. NIJZ team collected data from the local environment through interviews namely from various institutions in the field of AS, with a desire to further reinforce the previously acquired views of stakeholders and the objectives of the ASTAHG project<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Alpin convection. Available at: <https://www.gov.si/teme/alpska-konvencija/>

<sup>2</sup> Strategy EU for alpin space. Available at:  
[https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/cooperate/macro\\_region\\_strategy/pdf/factsheet\\_alpine-region\\_sl.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/macro_region_strategy/pdf/factsheet_alpine-region_sl.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Project ASTAHG Available at : <https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/astahg/en/home>

<sup>4</sup> Alpine Space Transnational Governance of Active and Healthy Ageing. ASTAHG project. Available at::  
<https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/astahg/en/home>



The main purpose of the interviews is to collect the agreement of the selected stakeholders with the findings obtained in the field of AHA in AS based on the stakeholder survey report<sup>5</sup>. With this activity NIJZ team intended to incite the discussion on AHA in remote areas of AS on selected areas in research. Furthermore, it was reasonable to pay attention to better understanding the results and conclusions from survey, because the interviews were conducted during the COVID-19 epidemic.

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<sup>5</sup> Stakeholders survey report. Available at:  
[http://staranje.si/sites/www.staranje.si/files/upload/images/porociloastahg\\_ang.verzija\\_final.pdf](http://staranje.si/sites/www.staranje.si/files/upload/images/porociloastahg_ang.verzija_final.pdf)



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## 2 METHODS

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One of the key activities of the ASTAHG project is coordination and stakeholder networking. ASTAHG involves bodies from different sectors (from health to transport), which should coordinate their efforts and work with private providers, local authorities and researchers. To make this coordination effective NIJZ together with Faculty of Social Science- University of Ljubljana conducted an online survey in 2019. Survey intended to collect information on the situation in AS, taking relationships of the key organizations (stakeholders) into account. Survey covered topics related to the problematic of AHA in remote areas. The topics areas to which they answered: Social inclusion, Health care, Activities and services, Long-term care, Promotion of wellbeing, healthy and active life, Transport connections and Tourism and culture. First, stakeholders from Gorenjska region and Goriška region were invited to participate in the survey.

During the project NIJZ also cooperated and maintained contacts with stakeholders and was open for their opinions through events and e- mail correspondence. All of the above was the basis for structuring interviews and the preparation of this document. We focused on four areas of questions: Social inclusion, Tourism and culture, Transport connections and Transnational Governance Board (TGB). The interviews were realized in March 2021. One stakeholder provided written answers.

Five stakeholders that represent five different organizations participated in the interviews (see Table 1).



Table 1: Participating stakeholders in the interviews

Organization	SECTOR OF OPERATION	REGION	PATICIPATE IN AREAS
Municipality of Bovec	local government	Goriška region	Social inclusion, Tourism and culture, Transport connections and TGB
Municipality of Jezersko	local government	Gorenjska region	Social inclusion, Tourism and culture, Transport connections and TGB
Social Work Center North Primorska, Unit Tolmin	social welfare institution	Goriška region	Social inclusion and TGB
Social Work Center Gorenjska, Unit Jesenice	social welfare institution	Gorenjska region	Social inclusion and TGB
Public institution Tourism Kranjska Gora	economic sector	Gorenjska region	Tourism and culture and TGB



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## 3 RESULTS

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The results of interviews in the following areas are presented below in 4 thematic groups: social inclusion, transport connections, tourism and culture, and the Transnational Governance Board (TGB). NIJZ prepared summaries of results in interviews. Questions and detailed results can be found in the Slovenian version of document<sup>6</sup>.

### 3.1 Social inclusion

In the field of social inclusion were asked three questions. The first concerned the results of the survey<sup>7</sup>: increased social inclusion can contribute to: Mutual exchange of knowledge and assistance (older adults for the older adults). In the second question NIJZ ASTHAG team asked for suggestions for increased mutual exchange of knowledge and assistance the older adults in local areas. The last, third question was about possible partners connections to increase the social inclusion.

#### Municipality Bovec:

- Municipality of Bovec is one of the largest municipalities in terms of area, while it is among the smallest in terms of population per m<sup>2</sup>. Due to sparse population, care for social inclusion is very important.
- Municipality Bovec supports various programs for greater social inclusion (Project Seniors for Seniors, Active age - coexistence of generations,..)
- The municipality participates in several projects, the aim of them is to keep the older adults in their home environment for as long as possible and to make their ageing as beautiful as possible.

#### Municipality Jezersko

- An important role in the social inclusion of the older adults in the municipality is played by different civil societies (sports, firefighters, mountaineering, culture, pensioners society,...).

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<sup>6</sup> Izbrane ugotovitve na področju AZS v AS. Available at:  
[http://staranje.si/sites/www.staranje.si/files/upload/images/astahg\\_izbrane\\_ugotovitve\\_pridobljene\\_z\\_intervjuji\\_izbranih\\_deleznikov\\_na\\_podrocju\\_aha\\_v\\_as\\_goriska\\_in\\_gorenjska\\_regija\\_15.4.2021\\_koncna\\_verzija.pdf](http://staranje.si/sites/www.staranje.si/files/upload/images/astahg_izbrane_ugotovitve_pridobljene_z_intervjuji_izbranih_deleznikov_na_podrocju_aha_v_as_goriska_in_gorenjska_regija_15.4.2021_koncna_verzija.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Stakeholders survey report. Available at:  
[http://staranje.si/sites/www.staranje.si/files/upload/images/porociloastahg\\_ang.verzija\\_final.pdf](http://staranje.si/sites/www.staranje.si/files/upload/images/porociloastahg_ang.verzija_final.pdf)



- It is necessary to encourage the inclusion of all older adults in society and their active participation, because their rich experience is beneficial for the whole community.
- Intergenerational cooperation within the family is very important.
- They are establishing an intergenerational center.
- Encourage cooperation with organizations and intergenerational cooperation of families to ensure the quality of life of the older adults in the home environment and not only in institutions.

#### **Social Work Center Gorenjska, Unit Jesenice**

- Early detection of the social problem and social interaction with people are extremely important.
- There is a working group at Social Work center Gorenjska Unit, aiming to help people in their home environment.
- They face the phenomenon of relatives taking the older adults from a nursing home back to home care. That reduces the financial burden for families, but all-day care is on relatives.
- Older adults hide poverty and their situation. Even when they accepted the help from humanitarian organization and Social Work Center they must pay attention to privacy of users.
- They collaborate with voluntary organizations. They want to attract and motivate more volunteers and involve them in the work.
- Project to help communicate with Albanian speaking immigrants was launched experimentally through public works.
- They find it important to connect young and older adults. More intergenerational cooperation would be needed and beneficial.

#### **Social Work Center North Primorska, Unit Tolmin**

- In the project Seniors for Seniors, it is important to connect key institutions in the environment that can contribute to social inclusion. Voluntary organizations are important for increasing the social inclusion of the older adults.
- The local Triglav National Park Act highlights park local communities and the development of above-standard programs in the field of social protection, developed in municipality Tolmin.
- It is important to work with people in their home (often village) environment.
- Social Work Center had implemented helping programs at home. Older adults can therefore stay longer in their environment with minimal additional help..



- They want to encourage more organized non-paid service work (help in the garden, ...). They work with the Red Cross (humanitarian organization).
- They try to centralize the organization of volunteers from where they will be deployed according to the needs of different organizations.

### 3.1.1 Selected findings obtained of stakeholders

- Strong desire for greater social inclusion of the older adults through the mutual exchange of knowledge and assistance.
- Slovenian program *Seniors for Seniors*<sup>8</sup> stand out also for greater social inclusion of the older adults.
- Slovenian program *Active age- coexistence of generations*<sup>9</sup> takes place in collaboration with Social Work Center North Primorska.
- For greater social inclusion volunteers and society are very important. The challenge is to attract and retain them.
- Expert and working groups maintained to help older adults in the local environmental in AS.
- Support older adults with social help is essential to stay as long its possible in their homes in local environmental.
- It is important to bring social help closer to the users, otherwise only few older adults would seek it for themselves. Stakeholders have established connections to increase the social inclusion with: health centers, the patronage services, Protection Work Centers, Municipalities, Soča Valley Development Centre, Peoples University Tolmin Red Cross, different societies (Spominčica society, sports, firefighters, mountaineering, culture, pensioner's society) and volunteers.

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<sup>8</sup> Senior for Seniors. Available at: <https://zdus-zveza.si/programi-in-projekti/starejsi-za-starejse/>

<sup>9</sup> Active age- coexistence of generations. Available at: <https://www.csd-slovenije.si/csd-severna-primorska/enota-tolmin/programi/>



## 3.2 Transport connections

In the field of transport connections were asked three questions. The first concerned the results of the survey<sup>10</sup>: transportation mobility for older adults can be supported with y better accessible public transport for the older adults. In the second question NIJZ ASTHAG team asked current situations about accessible public transport for the older adults. The last third question was about possible partners connections to increase the transport connections in AS.

### Municipality of Bovec

- Public transport is very problematic in the municipality. Only bus connections are available. Population use public transport less and less, as there are very few regular lines and they only take them to certain places.
- The municipality participates in the project Prostofer.
- The state financial incentive for bus carriers to introduce more regular lines and routes would enable more physically accessible transport for the older adults and all other populations.
- The municipality provides funds to increase the number of lines and routes during the main tourist season.

### Municipality of Jezersko

- Transport connections of public transport are very poorly regulated. In Municipality Jezersko have the option of bus transportation. Train or other alternatives are not in the system. Spacious buses run on a regular line often empty and are inflexible. More flexible public transport could be improved with smaller buses or vans.
- Good regulation of transport connections is one of the major challenges.
- The municipality participates in the project Prostofer.
- Accessibility would be improved through better economic organization of public transport. Larger buses should be replaced with smaller ones or vans.
- It is aiming for greener transport connections in the future, but this is tied to additional resources and significant investments.
- They have enhanced public transport during the tourist season.

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<sup>10</sup> Stakeholders survey report. Available at:  
[http://staranje.si/sites/www.staranje.si/files/upload/images/porociloastahg\\_ang.verzija\\_final.pdf](http://staranje.si/sites/www.staranje.si/files/upload/images/porociloastahg_ang.verzija_final.pdf)



- The desire is to restrict access for cars in congested tourist locations and logistically arrange access for all, especially the older adults.

### 3.2.1 Selected findings obtained of stakeholders

- In remote areas of AS transport for the older adults are severely curtailed.
- Transport mobility should be enhanced in the number of regular lines and routes for better accessible public transport for the older adults.
- Slovenian program Prostofer<sup>11</sup> for older adults its opportunity allows for greater mobility, more accessible transport and relief for their family members.
- With extra lines enhanced public transport in time of tourist seasons for local people and tourists.
- Stakeholders have established connection to increase the transport connections: bus providers, tourism providers and nearby municipalities.

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<sup>11</sup> Prostofer. Available at: <http://www.prostofer.si/>



### 3.3 Tourism and culture

In the field of tourism and culture were asked three questions. The first concerned the results of the survey<sup>12</sup>: Tourism and culture can enrich the lives of the older adults by actions to promote and preserve traditions in the local community. In the second question NIJZ ASTHAG team asked how tourism could be enriched by spreading knowledge of older adults in local remote areas. The last third question was about possible partners connections to increase the tourism and culture in AS.

#### **Municipality of Bovec**

- Culture and tourism can significantly enrich the lives of the older adults and reverse.
- The experience and knowledge of the older adults are very important for preserving the identity of the local areas, which is important for culture and tourism.
- They perceive the need for regularly and continuous education.
- The Primary School has an important contribution to the development of tourism by educating and raising the awareness of young people.

#### **Municipality of Jezersko**

- Tourism is a very important industry. Due to tourism families will stay in Municipality Jezersko and the life of the older adults could be better.
- Municipality Jezersko in tourist season organized events on the topic of traditions from the local environment.
- Culture is incorporated in the work of different societies, which includes many older adults.
- Older people can use their knowledge to guide and help in tourist destinations within societies.

#### **Public institution Tourism Kranjska Gora**

- In the Municipality Kranjska Gora, they focus on the operation of tourist societies. The oldest have been operating for 120 years.
- Members of the tourist societies are mostly older adult which one are also the most active.
- Volunteering is decreasing, because younger generations are not involving in it due to lack of time.
- They adapted activities and destination contributes to the older adults for better well-being, health and quality of life.

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<sup>12</sup> Stakeholders survey report. Available at:  
[http://staranje.si/sites/www.staranje.si/files/upload/images/porociloastahg\\_ang.verzija\\_final.pdf](http://staranje.si/sites/www.staranje.si/files/upload/images/porociloastahg_ang.verzija_final.pdf)



- They regularly organize workshops to interest groups, which are also intended for the older adults (using the digital tools).
- The older adults have modified their homes for the purpose of renting rooms or apartments during the tourist season, which represents an additional income for them.
- In program Ragor much has been done in the field of preserving culture and tradition in remote areas.

### 3.3.1 Selected findings obtained of stakeholders

- Tourism and culture enrich the lives of the older adults and the older adults also enrich the tourism.
- Important it's to involve older adults in different society, where they participate in the preparation and organization of events during tourist season.
- With activity in societies the older adults preserving traditional crafts and spread their knowledge.
- Stakeholders have established connections to increase the Tourism and culture: Public institution Tourism Soča Valley, The Triglav national park, Primary schools, Soča Valley Development Centre, Church Choir, Public institution Sončni Kanin, People University Tolmin also with different projects.



### 3.4 Transnational governance board (TGB)

In the field of TGB were asked four questions. The first concerned on the expectation from the (TGB). The second question: would they participate in TGB, if as a full member or observer. In the third question NIJZ ASTHAG team asked in which 7 areas of AHA they could also involve. The last fourth question was about possible partners in TGB at the national level in the field of developing a policy of AHA.

#### **Municipality of Bovec**

- From TGB they expect more concrete solutions to a particular problem and how to turn theory into practice.
- In TGB they are willing to participate as a full member or observer.
- In addition to their field, they would be involved in the fields: Long- term care, Transport connections, Health care and Social inclusion.

#### **Municipality of Jezersko**

- From TGB they expect receipt of information in the field of AHA in AS. Practical incentives and innovations to improve the lives of older people in AS.
- If they perceive content that would be of interest to their municipality, they would be willing to actively participate as a full member of the TGB.
- In addition to their field, they would be involved in the fields: Transport connections and Tourism and culture.
- In TGB they would like to work with partners: Nacional Institute of Public Health.

#### **Social Work Center Gorenjska, Unit Jesenice**

- They are interested in gathering different practices, exchanging knowledge and experience between members.
- They are interested in obtaining different views and ideas of members in order to enrich the field of AHA for implementation in their area of operation.
- In TGB They are willing to participate as a full member.
- In addition to their field, they would be involved in the fields: Health care, Long-term care, and Promotion of wellbeing, healthy and active life.
- In TGB they would like to work with partners: Nacional Institute of Public Health.



#### **Social Work Center North Primorska, Unit Tolmin**

- From TGB they expected solutions to strengthen the systemic problem solving in the field of the older adults at the national level and not only at the local level.
- They are interested in exchanging practices to strengthen the field of care for the older adults at home (help at home).
- From TGB would like specialist training in the field of AHA in AS.
- They would initially join the TGB as observers and still contribute their views.
- In addition to their field, they would be involved in the fields: Long-term care and Promotion of wellbeing, healthy and active life.
- In TGB they would like to work with partners: Soča Valley Development Centre. They add: The local level in solving problems and systemic arrangements in the field of AHA is not sufficiently heard from the national level.

#### **Public institution Tourism Kranjska Gora**

- They see a contribution in the sharing of useful information in the field of AHA in AS.
- They are convinced that a project that does not have a guaranteed source of funding cannot be successful.
- They see the Municipality Kranjska Gora as more suitable for involvement in active participation. They would to join TGB especially due to weak expertise in the field of older adults.
- In addition to their field, they would be involved in the fields: Transport connections. They pointed out that all field are interconnected.
- In TGB they would like to work with partners: Nacional Institute of Public Health.

#### 3.4.1 Selected findings obtained of stakeholders

- Stakeholders expect tangible solutions and a collection of good practices among board members in particular.
- Stakeholder would also be participating as full members of the TGB. At the national level (Slovenia) stakeholder would cooperate in the TGB with the National Institute of Public Health.



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## 4 CONCLUSIONS

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AHA is eager to develop and support political decision-makers in the local environment, especially to be heard and taken into account at the national level.

In document they are gathered reflections of selected organizations from Slovenian AS findings obtained on questions in interviews on themes of Social inclusion, Tourism and culture, Transport connections and Transnational Governance Board (TGB).

Mutual exchange of knowledge and assistance (older adults for the older adults) based on the views of stakeholders contributes to greater social inclusion. Solutions regarding social inclusion should be focused on: volunteers, inclusion in society, intergenerational solidarity and enabling the older adults to stay in their home environment for as long as possible.

Taking into account that the access to the older adults is financially enabled in Slovenia<sup>13</sup>, but in remote areas transport connections are severely curtailed. Transport mobility should be enhanced in the number of regular lines and routes. Results of interviews show that better accessible public transport for the older adults can be enhanced by organized transport during the tourist season and with changing the transport infrastructure (smaller vans instead buses).

By actions to promote and preserve traditions in the local community that could enrich the lives of the older adults, NIJZ also highlighted at the conference in Gozd Martuljek<sup>14</sup>. With the facts establish in Gozd Martuljek and interviews, authors confirm that local older adults can spread their knowledge of traditional craft mainly with being part of different societies.

As part of TGB questions, most stakeholder expect tangible solutions and a collection of good practices among board members in particular in area that would be useful for implementation in their local environmental. Stakeholder would also be participating as full members of the TGB, which confirms the results obtained in the research of the stakeholder survey report<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Free ublict transport ticket. Available at: <https://www.gov.si/zbirke/storitve/pridobivanje-brezplacne-vozovnice-javnega-medkrajevnega-potniskega-prometa/>

<sup>14</sup> Report from the Conference with international participation. Available at: [https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/astahg/article-slovene-2/astahg-conference\\_slovenia\\_v5\\_koncna-002-.pdf](https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/astahg/article-slovene-2/astahg-conference_slovenia_v5_koncna-002-.pdf)



NIJZ ATAHG team have the opinion that only “together” we can reach effective solutions in the field of AHA in remote areas of AS. Authors of the report would like to emphasize, that it is very important to be prepare for the challenges of demographic changes that future brings, especially in remote areas. This could be reach with help of TGB or some other network.

Demographic changes unfortunately will not be avoided, because they are already here. The question is: *How quickly countries will be able to undertake the challenges of aging and if interventions will be appropriate, effective and targeted needs of population?*