

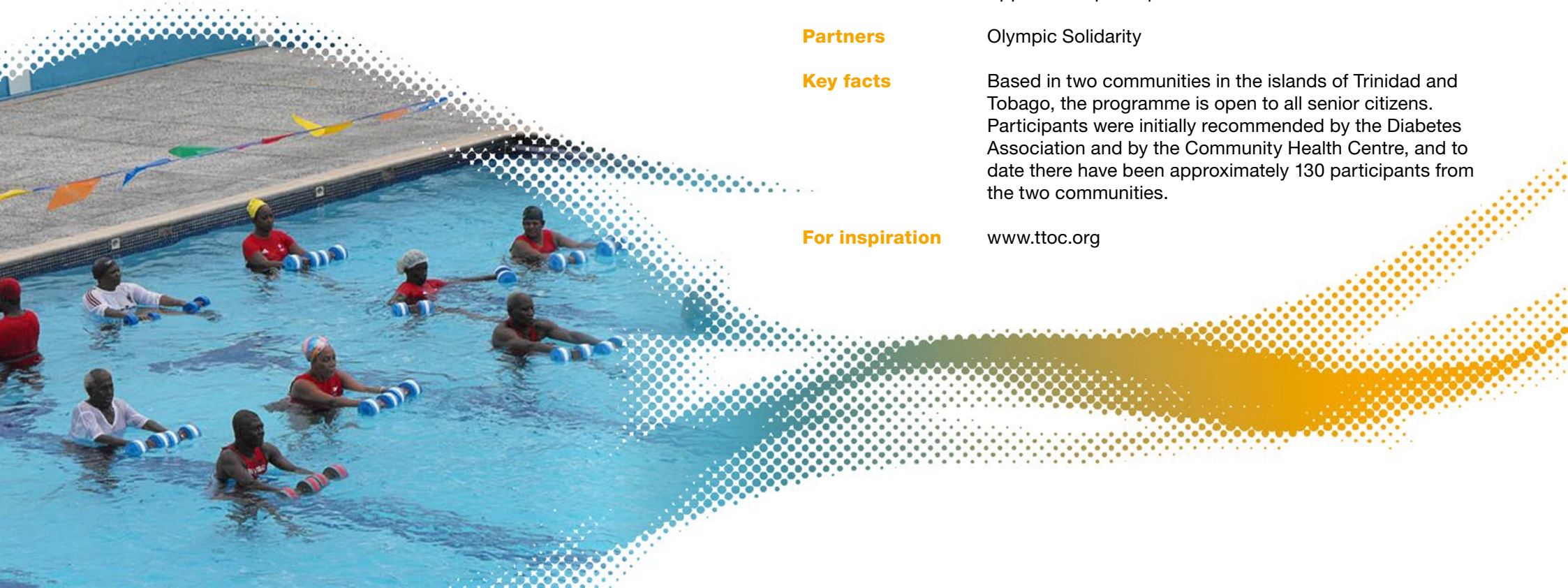
Elderly Aquatics

Providing physical activity for elderly persons in the community

The programme provides water-based recreation to senior citizens who are unable to participate in the more traditional exercise programmes, in a safe and comfortable environment throughout communities in Trinidad and Tobago.



Location	Trinidad and Tobago
Organisation	Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee
Start-end date	2009 – ongoing
Target group age	Over 55 years old
Reach	Approx. 130 participants
Partners	Olympic Solidarity
Key facts	Based in two communities in the islands of Trinidad and Tobago, the programme is open to all senior citizens. Participants were initially recommended by the Diabetes Association and by the Community Health Centre, and to date there have been approximately 130 participants from the two communities.
For inspiration	www.ttoc.org





Summary

The Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee (TTOC) Elderly Aquatic Programme is part of a larger programme named “Shape the Community”. An important part of the Shape the Community programme is the focus on recreation for the elderly with the primary objective being to improve their mental and physical health. Too often this age group is neglected by the community because of false beliefs and misconceptions about their age and abilities, and not enough emphasis is placed on maintaining healthy lifestyles. Activities need to be designed to take into consideration the physical capability of the elderly. The sessions are conducted twice per week for durations of one hour each, by a certified aquatic and therapeutic instructor. The programme also includes therapy sessions which are run in conjunction with the aqua aerobics.

Keys to success

Specifically tailored

In a society where elderly citizens are often seen as weak, frail and inactive, there is the need to design an activity that caters to both physical and psychological enhancement. The provision of water-based recreation is geared towards those persons who, because of their physical limitations, are unable to participate in even low-impact activities. The aquatic programme allows individuals to exercise without putting excess strain on joints or muscles.

Part of a broader programme

The Elderly Aquatics Programme is part of a larger TTOC programme, “Shape the Community”. The programme was developed to fill gaps in the development of sport in communities, as well as to encourage the development of the communities through sport. It intends to achieve positive changes in the community in which it is implemented, to increase participation, contribute to the quality of life, and assist in individual or community development.



Sport for All objectives

Promote sport and physical activity

The programme promotes the values and benefits of exercise for the elderly. It provides an exercise programme that is accessible to senior citizens who are unable to participate in more traditional exercise programmes.

Improve public health and well-being

The programme seeks to establish effective and accessible opportunities for senior citizens in communities with pools that allow them to manage sedentary illnesses. Additionally, the social interaction can help decrease feelings of depression and isolation, and progress in aquatic activities can lead to re-establishing independence and improved self-esteem.

How is the programme communicated?

Word of mouth is the main communication tool. The local chapters of the Diabetes Association and nurses attached to the Community Health Centre have also been instrumental in informing senior citizens in the community.

How is the programme evaluated?

Evaluation takes place via participant questionnaires, where improvement in their quality of life is ascertained. Medical tests are carried out regularly, and these measurements are used as a baseline to monitor the participants. This also enables instructors to adapt the programme to individual needs and make recommendations for improvement.

“I have been involved in the programme for the last three months. My goal was to regain mobility in an injured ankle: the aqua aerobics and dance programmes have helped me achieve it, but I now intend to continue with the programme.”

Lenore – Participant





Join the sporting society!

Globally, 1 in 4 adults is not active enough and more than 80% of the world's adolescent population is insufficiently physically active (World Health Organization). Let's reverse the trend and get moving.



Promote sport and physical activity

Recent changes in leisure and work practices, diet and a host of other trends has led to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle amongst the world's population. Sport for all programmes aim to promote sport and physical activity to mitigate the negative effects associated with these developments.



Improve public health and well-being

Sport and physical activity plays an important role in making societies healthier, happier and safer into the future. Successful sport for all projects help to stimulate these common benefits across entire communities.



Support active societies

Active societies involve many stakeholders such as parents, coaches, schools, local clubs, sports organisations, event organisers and grassroots activities, to name but a few. They can all be hugely influential in promoting healthier lifestyles within a community. Programmes that support and reinforce their efforts are vital for the encouragement and promotion of active societies around the world.



Provide equal access to sport

Every member within a community should have equal opportunity to live an active and healthy lifestyle. Effective grassroots programmes place a heavy emphasis on ensuring that all of their participants can enjoy this opportunity regardless of physical condition, race, gender, social conditions, geographical location or otherwise.



Foster Olympic legacy

The Olympic Games provide a source of inspiration and a vibrant expression of the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect. This unique power can energise communities to develop projects enabling and inspiring people to become and stay physically active into the future.

Become a key player in your community

A useful platform has been designed for organisations across the Olympic Movement that are managing Sport for All programmes, providing them with the knowledge, understanding and tools needed to improve existing programmes worldwide, as well as to create new ones.

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- Sports and Active Society Programmes
- A Guide to Implementation
- www.olympic.org
- activesociety@olympic.org