

PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT OF SW-UP PILOT PROGRAMMES



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1 Introduction

This chapter provides details on the background and objectives of the participatory assessment report as well as a reading guideline of the report contents.

Background

The Expert Group on Health-enhancing Physical Activity in its 2015 'Recommendations to encourage physical education in schools, including motor skills in early childhood, and to create valuable interactions with the sport sector, local authorities and the private sector' underlines that sedentary life will increase in the next period, especially in industrialised countries. According to the group, one can speak of a pandemic of physical inactivity. According to several studies (European Commission, 2014; WHO, 2006; Expert Group on Health-enhancing Physical Activity, 2015; Mulier Institute, 2018), the pandemic inactivity risk is much higher among women than men, as they are less involved in both indoor and outdoor sport and physical activities than men. Indeed, as revealed by several authors (Mulier Institute, 2018; Aitchison, 2003; Hargreaves, 1994; Massey, 1994) sports is traditionally designed for and dominated by men.

Several studies (European Commission 2014a and b; Mulier Institute, 2018) point out that lack of time, lack of motivation or interest in sport, derived also from a gender-stereotyping social environment, costs, perceived safety issues, lack of trust in one's capacity of practising sport and not having someone to practise sport with constitute the main barriers to women's regular engagement in sport/physical activity practice.

When looking at the main incentives to engaging women in sports/physical activity, safety and quality of outdoor facilities as well as provision of activities free of charge and close to their homes/work play a relevant role (Mulier Institute, 2018).

Based on evidence on barriers and incentives to women's outdoor sport/physical activity practice, the SW-UP project promoted five pilot programmes in various EU MSs: Italy (Municipality of Corbetta), Spain (Municipality of Granollers), Portugal (Municipality of Guimarães), Romania (Municipality of Râmnicu Sărat) and Bulgaria (Sofia).

In all countries the pilot programmes aimed to enhance women's participation in outdoor sports by tackling the main barriers to women's sport/physical activity identified by the SW-UP survey '[Towards gender equity in urban outdoor sport spaces](#)' (Mulier Institute, 2018) and literature (see above). In order to increase women's engagement in sport/physical activities, the programmes focused on:

- Improving conciliation of sport practice with family care/other personal duties. The pilot programmes tested various ways of increasing conciliation of sport with family care/personal duties: different schedules during the days compatible with mothers' schedule (lunchbreak, evening); location of the activities in different areas of the city so that more women could have access to sport/physical activities close to their homes/workplaces; use of women's 'dead times' (e.g. while accompanying their children to do sport); provision of babysitting sport activities for their children during sport events;
- Ensuring no costs to the participants for all activities provided;
- Animating the public outdoor facilities (e.g. public parks, open spaces of sport facilities or other public buildings, etc.) to increase the feeling of safety;
- Creating inclusive groups to encourage social bonding among beneficiaries;
- Increasing awareness of the benefits of sports for women during their whole life through communication and dissemination activities, and storytelling of personal experiences.

Objectives of the participatory assessment

As part of the SW-UP project, IRS was tasked with the assessment of the pilot programmes implemented within the SW-UP project. The assessment of pilot programmes aims to produce learning on the extent to which they have contributed to obtaining a change in the identified problem (i.e. women's limited involvement in sport/physical activity practice). In addition, the assessment aims to shed light on the way change has occurred. Thus, the participatory assessment pays particular attention to the main programme design and implementation factors, and context elements that have contributed/blocked the achievement of the expected change.

In order to better understand changes obtained and factors favouring/blocking their achievement, the participatory assessment aims to give voice to all actors involved in the programme (i.e. SW-UP project partners and beneficiaries of the tested programmes), as will be further detailed in the next section.

The participatory assessment also aims to provide project partners and the readers with examples of good practices among the pilot programmes. Pilot programmes achieving relevant outcomes will be mapped and included in the SW-UP good practices catalogue.

Furthermore, the participatory assessment also aims to feed the process of drafting local road maps and EU guidelines on how to enhance sport practice for women.

Reading guide

This report presents the main findings of the participatory assessment of the five pilot programmes tested during the SW-UP project. The report starts with an introductory section, detailing the background, the purpose and the contents of the report. It continues with a chapter specifically dedicated to the assessment of each of the five pilot programmes. The sections provide evidence on the results of the programme and on the main factors contributing/blocking their achievement, and on the sustainability of the programmes after the end of the SW-UP project. Besides an assessment of each pilot programme, the report also provides a transversal reading of the assessments of pilot programmes. The report closes with conclusions and recommendations for future implementations.

2 Methodology

2.1 Theoretical and methodological framework

From a methodological point of view the participatory assessment combines the following theoretical approaches.

- *Participatory evaluation approach*

The participatory evaluation is a partnership approach in which stakeholders actively engage in developing the evaluation and all phases of its implementation. Fundamentally, participatory evaluation is about sharing knowledge and building the evaluation skills of the beneficiaries and implementers of a programme, funders and others. This approach ensures that the perspectives and insights of all stakeholders are taken into consideration and that stakeholders and beneficiaries validate that their actions and effects are linked to the analysed intervention. The participatory approach is very much action oriented. Those who have the most at stake in the programme — partners, programme beneficiaries, etc. — play active roles.

The International Association for Public Participation has identified several levels of public participation distinguished by the intensity of citizen involvement, the so-called participation spectrum which is presented below (2007).

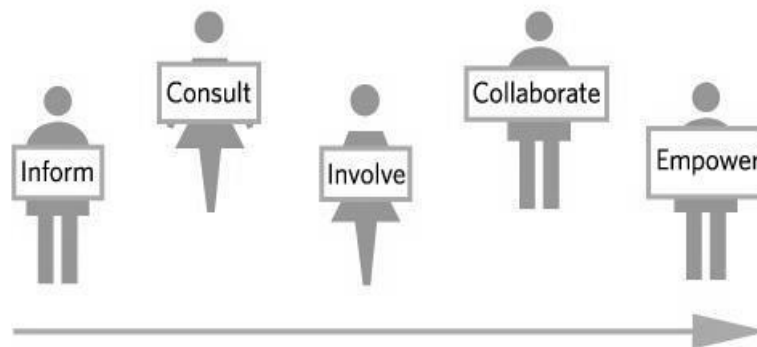


Figure 1 Spectrum of participation¹

The SW-UP participatory assessment uses different levels of participation for the various stakeholders involved in the assessment. Involvement, collaboration and empowerment mainly targets the SW-UP project partners involved in the design and the delivery of pilot programmes, while consultation targets in particular the beneficiaries of the activities of pilot programmes.

- *Realist policy evaluation*

Assessing pilot programmes tested within the SW-UP project means analysing whether changes have been achieved in the problem on the basis of the intervention (i.e. women's limited participation in sport/physical activity). The realist evaluation aims to understand what works in a public intervention, for whom, why and under which conditions. The realist evaluation considers that in order to understand what works the following aspects should be considered: context, mechanisms and outcomes. Thus, besides analysing the outcomes achieved by the programmes, the assessment will pay particular attention to the factors that have favoured/limited their achievement. Understanding the factors that enhance positive changes in women's sport/physical activity practice provides guidance on the main issues to be considered in transferability and replication of pilot programmes.

From this point of view, the assessment provides an answer to the following questions:

- Have pilot programmes contributed to obtaining changes in the initial problem?
- Who has benefitted most from the changes?
- How have changes occurred? What has worked and what has not worked in the design and delivery of the pilot programmes?

From a methodological point of view, the assessment combines qualitative (focus groups with some of the beneficiaries of pilot programmes and focus groups with the SW-UP project partners) with quantitative (survey of the beneficiaries of the programme) methodologies.

2.2 Phases of the assessment

The assessment includes several steps:

- 1) Definition of the expected outcomes of pilot programmes

¹ Information refers to providing citizens with impartial, transparent and balanced information on the decision-making processes; consultation refers to the obtaining of public feedback on specific issue, solutions, decisions or analyses engaging those affected by a public decision; community active engagement (i.e. involvement, collaboration and empowerment) refers to developing direct relational processes with stakeholders, including citizens, involving them as active users contributing to the decision-making process (IAPP, 2007).

The definition of the expected outcomes of the programme was based on a desk analysis of the international literature on the social impacts of sport. The documents were collected through a web search of websites of international organisations (e.g. European Commission, WHO), sport associations (e.g. Sport et Citoyenneté). Using Google Scholar, a key terms search (social impacts of sport, physical impacts of sport, well-being impacts of sport, sport evaluation, gender equality in sport, etc.) was carried out to identify relevant literature on social impacts of sport and on impacts of sport from a gender equality perspective.

Expected outcomes of sport interventions

In literature, there is a significant evidence of a number of social impacts from participation in sport. The highest quality evidence concerns health benefits. In this area, sport plays a critical role in the prevention and management of many diseases that account for a large proportion of health care costs. In addition, sport offers mental health benefits. In the area of mental health, sport and exercise is distinct from physical activity as it offers opportunities for social interaction, which contributes particularly to emotional health and overall well-being. Indeed, according to the literature review conducted by Taylor et al. (2015), this results in a higher participation not only in sport but also in community life, impacting positively and simultaneously on the personal well-being of the person involved in sport and on community social cohesion.

In addition some authors (Taylor et al., 2015; Temple et al., 2011; Reide et al., 2000) underline that participation in sport also has positive effects on the development of social relationship skills, including self-esteem, self-efficacy, cooperation and reciprocity. According to the authors, in the long run this triggers positive outcomes on the education/job attainment level.

Several authors (Bloom et al., 2005; Taylor et al. 2015; Holt et al., 2009; Cunningham and Beneforti, 2005) pinpoint that sport acts as a 'social glue' creating social capital. According to the authors, sport can contribute to the creation of various types of social capital.

- Bonding capital: greater social connectedness, networking, social interaction – largely among a fairly homogeneous population;
- Bridging capital: greater awareness of others, better understanding of others, greater social inclusion/connectedness and mixing across heterogeneous population groups;
- Linking capital: ties between people in dissimilar social situations, enabling individuals and groups to access formal institutions.

From a gender perspective, sport can contribute to achieving the following outcomes:

- Gender equality through the establishment of general values such as fair play, non-discrimination and teamwork;
- Access to public spaces where women can gather, develop new skills, gain support from others and enjoy freedom of expression and movement;
- Women's empowerment through the promotion of education, communication, negotiation skills and leadership.

In addition, a specific workshop with project partners was held to discuss impacts of sport and to identify the main expected outcomes of the pilot programmes and the SW-UP project. In discussing expected outcomes, the findings of the literature review and the expected impacts included in the initial project were taken into consideration.

Expected outcomes of the SW-UP pilot programmes

Based on the desk analysis and workshop with project partners, the main expected outcomes of pilot programmes are:

- Increased awareness and knowledge on the benefits of outdoor sports;
- Physical and mental well-being;
- Increased self-esteem, self-confidence and self-identity;
- Increased social capital;
- Increased participation in outdoor sports/physical activity;
- Increased motivation to practise sport after the end of the programme.

2) Design of the assessment tools

The assessment uses two main tools: a survey of participants in the programme (see Annex) and a focus group.

The survey questionnaire was designed by IRS based on the findings of the previous phase and through a continuous interaction with project partners.

As pilot programmes include different activities, the common survey questionnaire was slightly adapted to the purpose and activities of each programme. The questionnaire was translated into partners' languages.

The common assessment tool was integrated with additional surveys designed by project partners in collaboration with IRS to assess the quality of the programme, and changes in the knowledge and behaviour of beneficiaries throughout the implementation of the programme. Such surveys were conducted in Spain and Portugal.

A focus group outline was also designed in this phase.

3) Data collection and data analysis

The common survey and additional surveys were submitted on paper/online to participants in pilot programmes at their end. In one case (Italian) the survey was submitted slightly before the end of the programme due to the need to feed into the process of drafting the local road map.

As mentioned previously, the participatory assessment also relied on data collected by project partners (in Spain and Portugal) through additional surveys.

Focus groups were conducted with beneficiaries of the programmes in the Italian case and with the SW-UP project partners.

The focus group with programme beneficiaries (in Italy) was aimed at deepening learning on changes brought about by participation in the programme and what has worked and what has not in the programme delivery.

The focus group with project partners aimed to gather information on their perspective on strengths and weaknesses of pilot programmes as well as on success/failure factors and the future sustainability of the programme activities.

Once collected, data was analysed. Data analysis occurred through the triangulation of the different data sources. This allowed for the synthesis of the different types of evidence gathered during the assessment activities, in order to derive robust and evidence-based assessment conclusions.

The data analysis was validated with project partners.

3 Assessment of the pilot programme ‘Women on the move’ (Corbetta)

3.1 Introduction to the pilot programme

The pilot programme ‘Women on the move’ was implemented in the Municipality of Corbetta over a period of ten months. The programme was led by Polisportiva Corbetta with the support of the Municipality of Corbetta. In addition, local stakeholders (e.g. sport organisations) have been involved in the communication of the programme activities.

The programme aimed to tackle one of the main barriers to women’s sport/physical activity practice revealed by the survey ‘Towards gender equality in urban outdoor sport spaces’ – the difficulty in conciliating family care with sport/physical activities.

In particular, the programme aimed to promote the regular participation of women in physical activities and game sports to improve their physical and psychological well-being.

The programme focused on improving conciliation of family care with sport/physical activities by better accommodating the schedule of the sport activities so they can respond to women’s need for conciliation and by creating sport/physical activity opportunities close to their homes/offices. In addition, the programme combined various types of activities so it could reach different target groups: gymnastics classes and volleyball.

Three types of activities were designed within the ‘Women on the move’ programme.

- *Getting acquainted with sport (‘Educare alla motoria’)*

The activity targeted women working in the public and private sector and, in particular, women employees of the Municipality of Corbetta. The activity was implemented during the lunch break in the municipal building (covered open-air terrace) and in the Villa Ferrario municipal park. The programme included two weekly sessions (from 12.30 p.m. to 1.30 p.m. and from 1.30 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.) consisting of gentle gymnastics to alleviate discomfort caused by muscle imbalances. Two trainers and one coordinator for each group were involved in the implementation of the activity. A questionnaire was submitted to participants upon registration to collect details of their sport habits and health state in order to better target the activities.

- *Sporting (Sportivando)*

The activity targeted women and in particular mothers who are passively involved in the physical activity of their children. The programme consisted of two evening weekly sessions (from 6.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. and from 7.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.) including a training session focused on strengthening and toning the legs, abdomen and buttocks. The programme was implemented in the Via della Repubblica municipal park and in the offices of Polisportiva Corbetta (during the winter period). One trainer for each group was involved in the implementation of the activity. A questionnaire was submitted to participants upon registration to collect details of their sport habits and health state in order to better target the activities.

- *Volleying (Pallavolando)*

The activity included two weekly sessions of volleyball targeted in particular to women over 40 years who were ex-athletes. However, the programme was also open to women without any sport experience. The sessions were delivered during evenings (from 8.00 p.m. to 10.30 p.m.) in San Girolamo Gymnastic building in Corbetta, which is specifically equipped for this sport. Two trainers were involved for each session. A questionnaire was submitted to participants upon registration to collect details of their sport habits and health state in order to better target the activities.

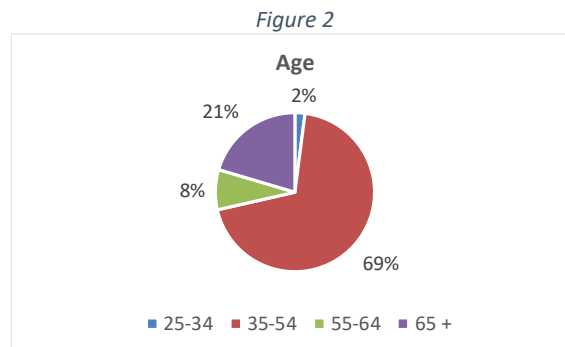
In addition, the programme included several communication and dissemination activities using various communication channels (the municipality’s website, traditional media, social media, word of the mouth, etc.). In addition, SW-UP days and multiple events were organised to disseminate the programme. In order to enhance socialisation and facilitate logistical communications, a Whatsapp group was created.

3.2 Main findings

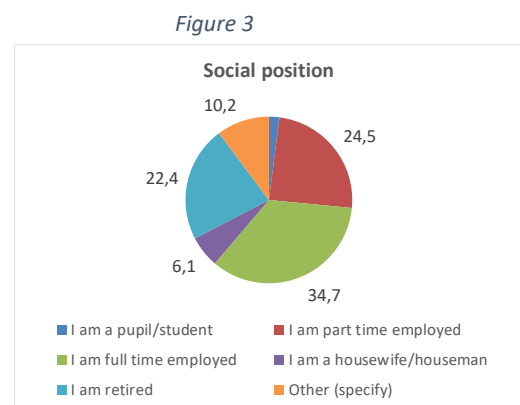
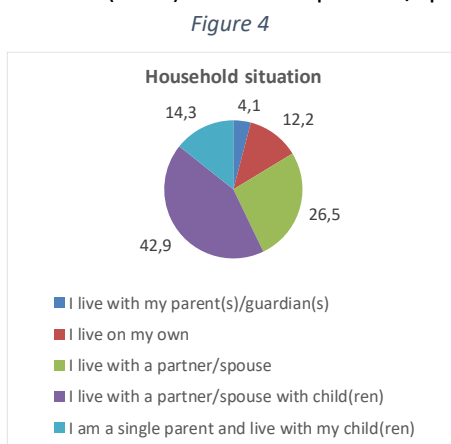
This section draws on the findings of the participatory assessment survey submitted to all participants in the three activities, on focus groups with participants in the programme and on a focus group with SW-UP project partners, including the Italian partners.

3.2.1 Profile of respondents and motivation

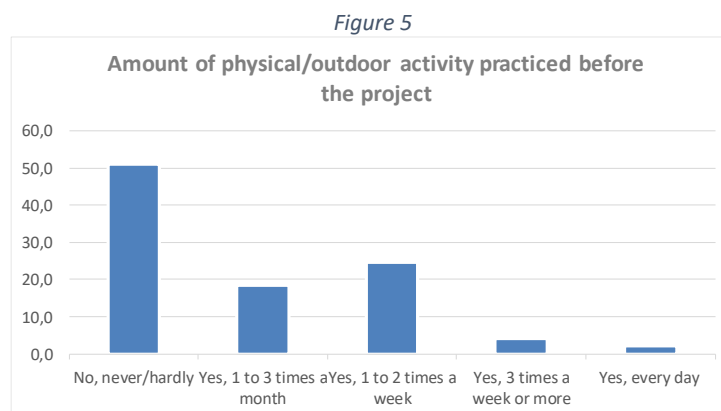
All respondents are women, of whom a large percentage (69 %) are aged between 35 and 54 years.



Most of them (70 %) live with a partner/spouse and with children and are full-time or part-time employees.



Half of the women involved in the programme report having practised hardly any sport/physical activity before joining the SW-UP programme.



Most of the women involved in Getting acquainted with sport (70 %) and Sporting (75 %) stated they had practised hardly any sport/physical activity before the programme. On the contrary, a relevant percentage (38 %) of women involved in volleying reported having practised sport regularly before joining the programme.

According to the focus groups with women involved in the programme, difficulty in conciliating sport practice with family care was the main barrier that stopped respondents from exercising regularly.

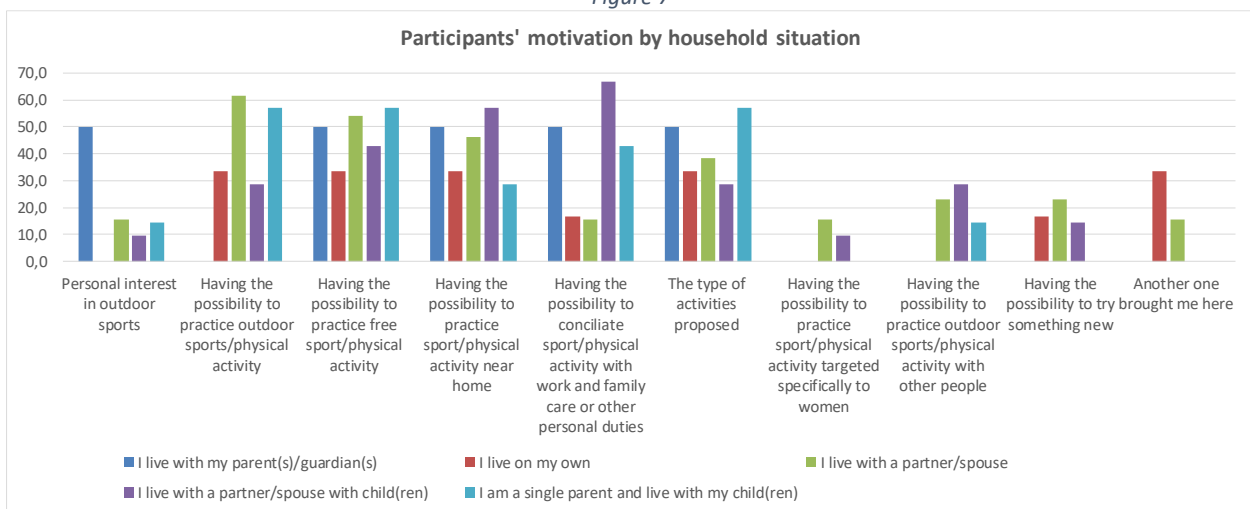
Closeness to participants' homes and being able to conciliate the SW-UP activity with family care are two of the most common reasons for joining the SW-UP programme. Focus groups with participants in the programme revealed that the timetable chosen for the three activities and their delivery close to participants' homes allow for the conciliation of SW-UP activities with family care/personal duties.

Figure 6



Absence of cost is another relevant reason for joining the programme, according to the survey and focus group data. Being able to practise sport without any charges represents a relevant reason for joining the SW-Up activities in particular for single parents with children. Some of the single parents involved in the focus group underlined that they would probably stop the SW-UP activities if they have to pay for them.

Figure 7



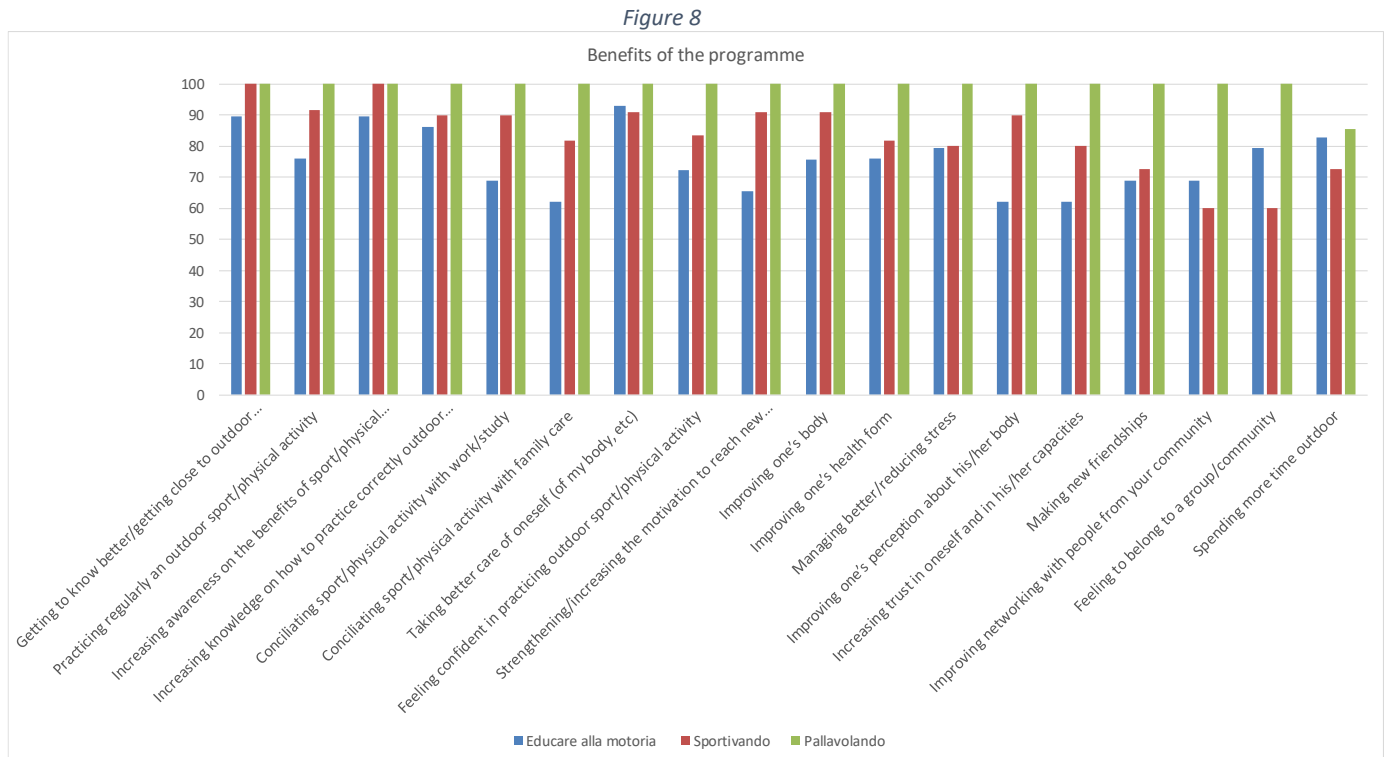
Being able to dedicate time to oneself and the inclusiveness approach adopted by the programme (i.e. sport for all; group sports) represent additional reasons for joining the programme raised by participants in the focus group.

The types of activities proposed is also a relevant reason for joining the programme (see Fig. 7). Indeed, most of the women involved in the programme report that they were looking for a sport activity targeted to people that pass many hours seated at work and the programme provided them with these types of sport activities.

Over half of the women participating in the programme were involved in the activity 'Getting acquainted with sport', while 25 % of them were involved in sporting and 16 % in volleyball.

3.2.2 Outcomes of the programme

Women involved in the survey and focus groups pointed out that they have obtained various benefits from participating in the programme activities.



*women reporting a high/enough contribution to the programme of the benefits included in the graph

In detail, the main benefits triggered by participation in the programme are:

- Increase in awareness and knowledge of outdoor sports

Over 80 % of the survey respondents from all SW-UP activities reported an increase in their awareness and knowledge of the benefits of sport practice as well as on how to practise sport correctly. According to focus group participants, the programme increased their knowledge on how to avoid physical injuries while practising sport by maintaining a correct posture.

- Physical benefits

Over 70 % of the survey respondents reported an improvement in their body and health after participating in the SW-UP activities. Participants in the assessment focus groups also confirm the achievement of physical benefits. According to them, the main physical benefits obtained from participating in the programme are: increased elasticity; reduction of body pain due to cervical arthritis, hernia and back problems; improved posture; increased equilibrium and coordination of movements; increased tone; increased agility; loss of weight.

- Psychological benefits

Participants in both the survey and the focus groups revealed that the programme also contributed to improving their psychological well-being.

For over 80 % of the survey respondents and those in the focus groups, participation in the programme resulted in a reduction of stress levels. Participants in the focus groups also underlined also other psychological benefits

triggered by the programme: increased energy and happiness; an increased feeling of relaxation; increased overall well-being.

In addition, both survey respondents and participants in the focus group acknowledge an increase in their self-esteem. Over 60 % of the survey respondents in all the programme activities declared an improvement in their perception about their bodies and an increase in their trust in themselves. Furthermore, over 70 % of the survey respondents revealed an increase in their confidence of being able to practise sport.

Both survey respondents and participants in focus groups also acknowledged an increase in self-efficacy as a benefit triggered by the programme. For over 66 % of the survey respondents, the programme contributed to an increase in their motivation to reach new objectives in sport. Participants in the focus groups also mentioned an increase in their ability to face the day-to-day problems and their confidence in their physical capacities. Moreover, they also maintained that the programme supported them in taking control over their body.

- Increase in social capital

For over 68 % of the survey respondents, participation in the programme contributed to an improvement in their social networks. Making new friends and strengthening the feeling of belonging to a group constitute two benefits also mentioned by participants in the focus groups.

- Better conciliation of family care with the care for oneself

Conciliation of sport with family care and dedicating time to oneself represent other benefits triggered by the programme for women involved in the programme. Indeed, over 60 % of the survey respondents identified conciliation of family care/personal duties with sport as a benefit of the programme. As pointed out by participants in the focus groups, conciliation was favoured by the schedule of the activities (lunchbreaks and evenings) and the location (near beneficiaries' workplace or home).

In addition to better conciliation, participants in the focus group also revealed that participation in the programme activities allowed them to find a moment dedicated to themselves, during which they could remove thoughts related to work or family and relax.

- Spending more time in nature

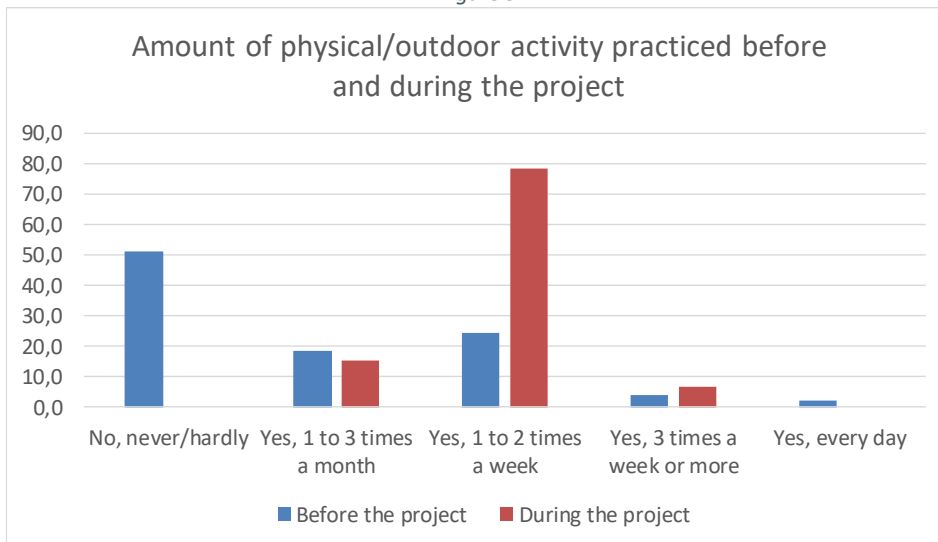
Participants in both the focus groups and the survey revealed that an added value of the programme was providing participants with the possibility to spend more time in nature. As underlined by participants, this is particularly relevant nowadays when most people spend a large amount of time indoors (at home or at work), losing contact with nature and with their own territory.

- Increase in the regularity of sport practice

Practising sport regularly constitutes one of the main benefits of the programme for participants in both the survey and the focus groups. Over 76 % of the survey respondents identified regularity of sport practice as one of the benefits of the programme. This result is also confirmed by focus groups with participants in the activities of the programme.

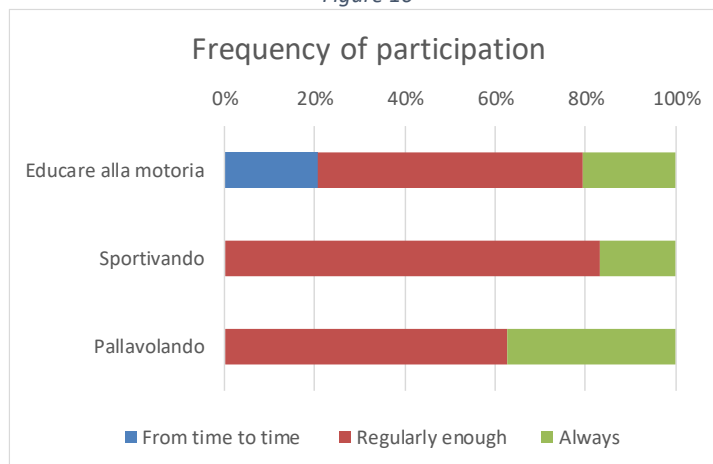
Survey data show a decrease in women practising sport occasionally and an increase in those doing it frequently.

Figure 9



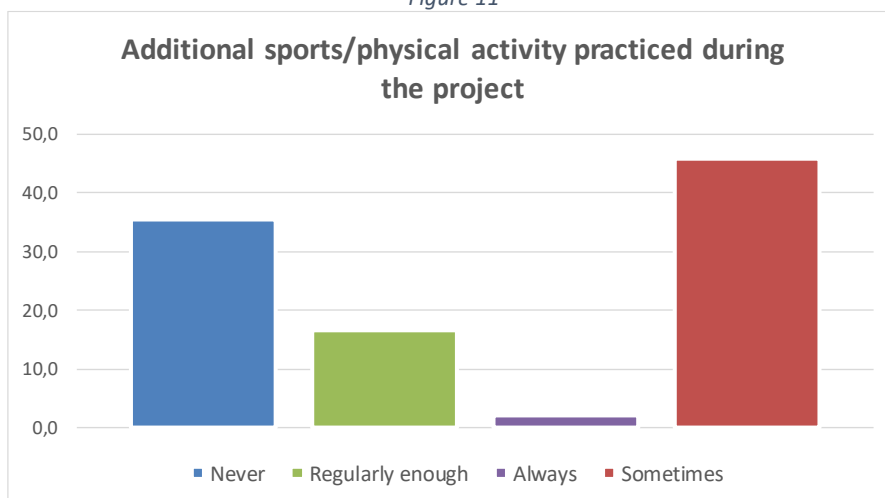
In addition, it is worth mentioning that most of the survey respondents attended the programme activity regularly enough. However, a slight decrease in participation was noted during the winter. Project partners involved in focus groups associate it with a cultural tradition of staying mostly indoors during winter.

Figure 10



Some of the participants also practised additional sport activities during the programme.

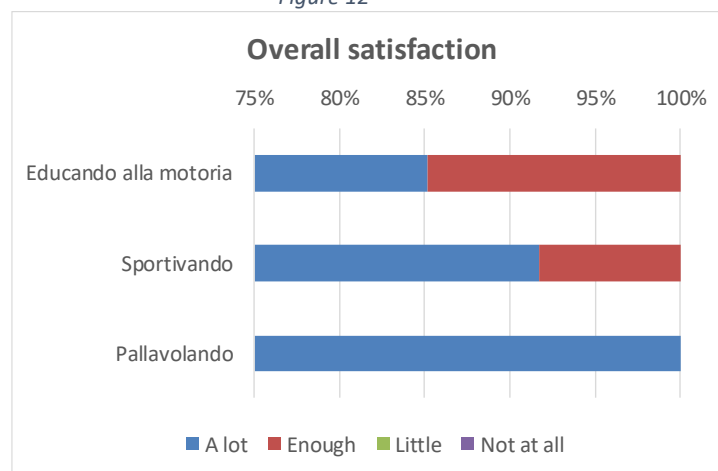
Figure 11



According to participants in the focus groups, several reasons explain the increase in the regular practice of sport.

- There is better conciliation of the sport practice with family care/personal duties.
- Trainers' ability to create inclusiveness and strengthen the group identity acted as a motivation trigger.
- Trainers were able to pay attention to the specific needs of each beneficiary and design sport exercises tailored to their needs and capacities. Some of the participants in the focus group reported feeling like they were being trained by a personal trainer. According to them, this stimulated them in participating regularly in the proposed activities.
- Fun activities were designed. According to the participants in the focus group, being able to enjoy the proposed activities and having fun represented a relevant reason for practising the activity frequently.
- The proposed activities were of high quality. Over 85 % of the survey respondents were very satisfied with the proposed SW-UP activities.

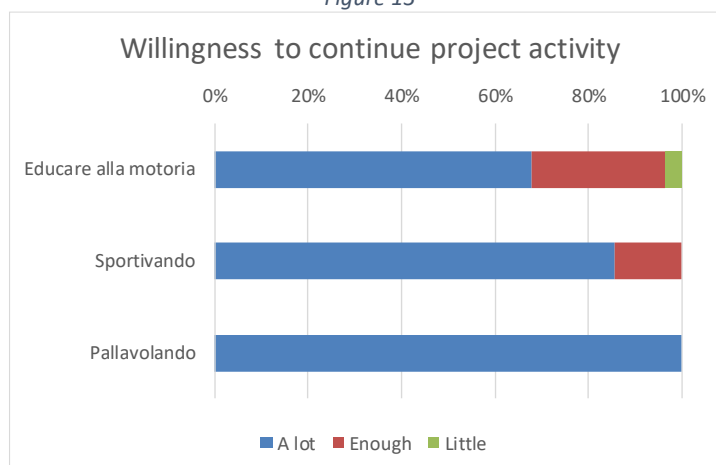
Figure 12



Survey respondents and participants in the focus groups pointed out that the high quality of the intervention, the high level of competence and empathy of trainers, the type of proposed activities and their adaptation to beneficiaries' needs, the personalised training and follow-up, the possibility to practise sport outdoors, in particular with other women, and to better conciliate sport and family care represent the main reasons for their satisfaction.

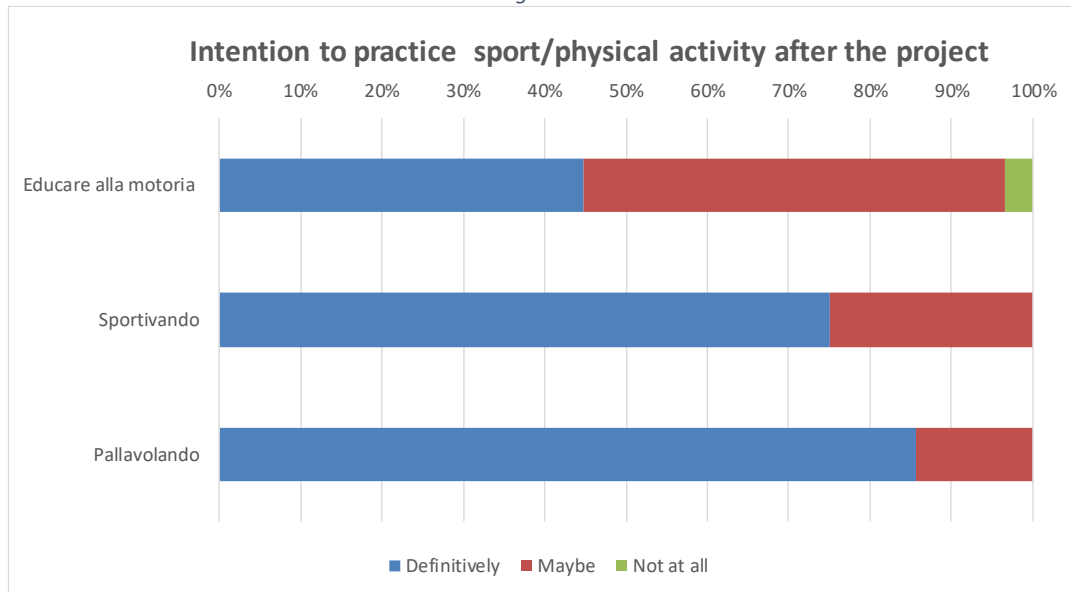
The high level of satisfaction with the proposed activities also explains their willingness and interest to continue the activity even when required to pay for it, and to recommend the programme to other women.

Figure 13



Moreover, the various benefits obtained from participating in the programme coupled with the high level of satisfaction with the sport activities proposed by the programme motivated a large part of the survey respondents to continue practising sport/physical activity after the end of the programme.

Figure 14



Some survey respondents reported that they were not sure of continuing the sport practice. They stated that continuity after the end of the programme will depend on the type of sport/physical activity, schedule, costs, availability of time and the possibility to conciliate the activity with work and family care. Furthermore, some of the respondents also reported not being sure of being able to do it regularly in an autonomous way (i.e. in the absence of other people to practise with).

This picture is also confirmed by focus groups of beneficiaries. Some of the participants said they might not do it if they do not find an activity with the same schedule, the same level of quality and in the same location, and in a group of people that stimulate them to practise sport.

It is worth noting that the timetable proposed by the project is particularly relevant for continuing to practise sport. Participants in the focus groups considered that a change in the schedule of the activity might impact negatively on their ability to attend it.

The possibility to combine sport and work by exercising at work during the lunch break also represents a relevant incentive to practise sport for the beneficiaries. Indeed, many women involved in *Educare alla motoria* underline that they might not continue practising sport in the absence of the opportunity to do it at work or near to the office.

In addition, most of the single mothers participating in *Pallavolando* mention costs of the activity as a reason for not being able to continue practising this or other sport activities.

Several factors pointed out previously explain the programme outcomes: i) the quality of the proposed activities and staff; ii) the tailoring of the activities to each beneficiary's needs; iii) the inclusiveness of the sport groups and the creation of a group identity; iv) the provision of the activity at different times of the day appropriate to a mothers' needs and its delivery close to beneficiaries' homes and workplaces; v) the zero cost to participants of the activities.

In future implementations, specific attention should be paid to using various communication channels and to maintaining the same level of commitment to outdoor sport during the winter (e.g. through testimonials, awareness-raising campaigns).

3.3 Sustainability of the programme

According to project partners, the activities offered during the programme will continue even after its end, considering the beneficiaries' high interest in it. Project partners underline that the activities will be provided in the same time slots and probably all trainers will be reconfirmed. However, as partners also received several requests from men to join the programme, the original activities will be probably be complemented with activities dedicated to the whole family to allow them to enjoy quality time outdoors. This might also attract more women into the programme.

In addition, in order to institutionalise the programme activities, they will be included in the sport plan of the Municipality of Corbetta. Furthermore, the sport bonus offered by the Municipality of Corbetta for incentivising sport practice among people with a low level of income can be used in the future for the SW-UP activities.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that some sport associations from other municipalities have expressed interest in promoting the programme in their municipality.

4 Assessment of the pilot programme 'While your kids do sport so can you' (Granollers)

4.1 Introduction to the pilot programme

The pilot programme 'While your kids do sport so can you' was implemented in the Municipality of Granollers between October 2018 and May 2019. The programme was implemented by Granollers City Council, SW-UP partner, in collaboration with several local sport organisations: Padel Club, the Basketball Club, the Carles Vallbona Sports Association, Granollers Skating, the Athletics Club, the Fencing Club and the Swimming Club. Local sport organisations were mostly involved in the promotion and communication of the pilot programme.

The pilot programme drew on several national evidences (i.e. Spanish survey of sport habits, Catalan Sport Observatory data on sport) and evidence produced within the SW-UP project (SW-UP survey) on barriers and incentives to women's involvement in physical activity. According to the national and SW-UP evidence, lack of time due to family care duties and work/study represents the main reason for women's lower practice of sport/physical activity compared to men. Indeed, 92 % of the participants in the SW-UP survey (most of whom were women) declared that lack of time is the main reason for practising hardly any sport/physical activity. Among the reasons, respondents' lack of time due to family care and in particular childcare, is the predominant one.

In this context, the pilot programme 'While your kids do sport so can you' aimed to improve conciliation of family care with sport/physical activities and to motivate participating women to continue practising sport/physical activity after the end of the programme.

The programme provided parents, and in particular mothers whose children attended the municipal sport facilities in Granollers, with opportunities for practising sport at the same time as their children.

The programme idea derived from the fact that the municipal sport facilities register the highest usage between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. when activities for children (aged between 4-5 and 15 years) are organised. During this period parents, generally mothers, wait for their children to finish their sport activity. The programme aimed to use this time frame to allow parents, mostly mothers, to undertake sport while waiting for their children.

The programme focused on two facilities highly used by children: the Palau d'Esports and the athletics track. Besides being highly used, these locations also offer other advantages essential for enhancing sport practice:

nearby parking, changing rooms and the possibility of practising indoor sport in case of extreme weather conditions.

The programme consisted of the provision of various sport activities (aerobics, muscle toning, flexibility and stretching, sit-ups and hypopressive abs) with musical support. In order to allow for high-quality training, the programme created two working groups of 20 people in each. Access to the provided sport activities was free of charge.

Several channels were used to communicate the programme activities: local sport organisations, municipal website, municipal newsletters delivered to all residents, posters in all sport facilities, traditional and social media.

4.2 Main findings

This section draws on two surveys submitted to the users of the service and a focus group with SW-UP project partners, analysing the programme design and implementation in Spain.

4.2.1 Profile of respondents and motivation

The first survey was submitted in January 2019 and aimed to assess the quality of the intervention, while the second survey was submitted in April 2019 to assess its effectiveness.

All respondents to both surveys are women, most of whom (93.5 %) are aged 35-54 years. With the exception of two respondents, all have children. Slightly over half of them (57 %) are aged between 0 and 11 years.

Over 80 % of the respondents are full-time or part-time employed and live with a partner/spouse.

Over half of the respondents had practised sport rarely or not at all before joining the SW-UP programme.

Figure 16 January survey

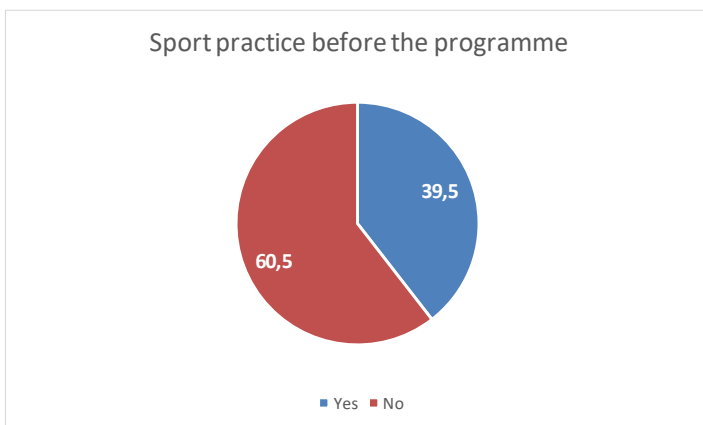
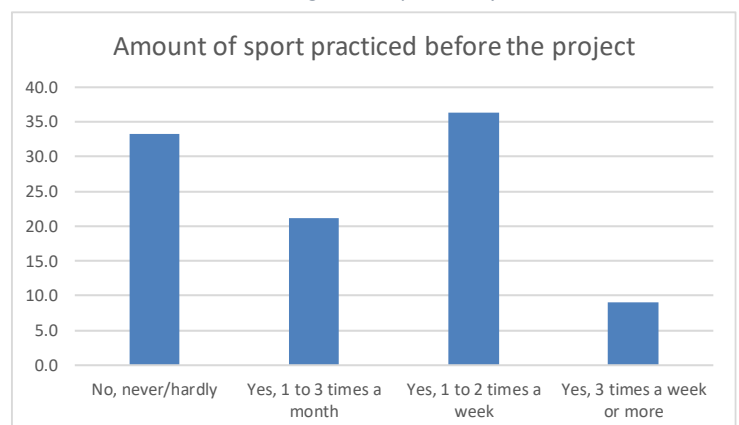
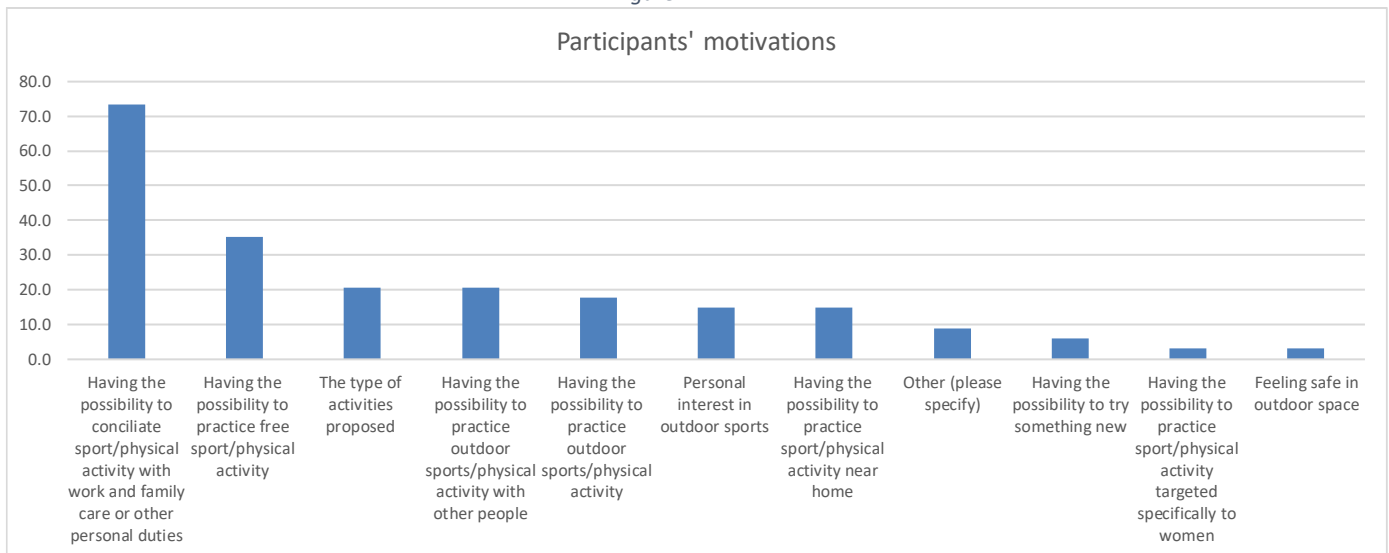


Figure 15 April survey



Two of the main motivations of respondents for joining the programme are: conciliation of sport activities with work/family care duties (73.5 %) and the cost-free aspect of the programme (35.3 %).

Figure 17



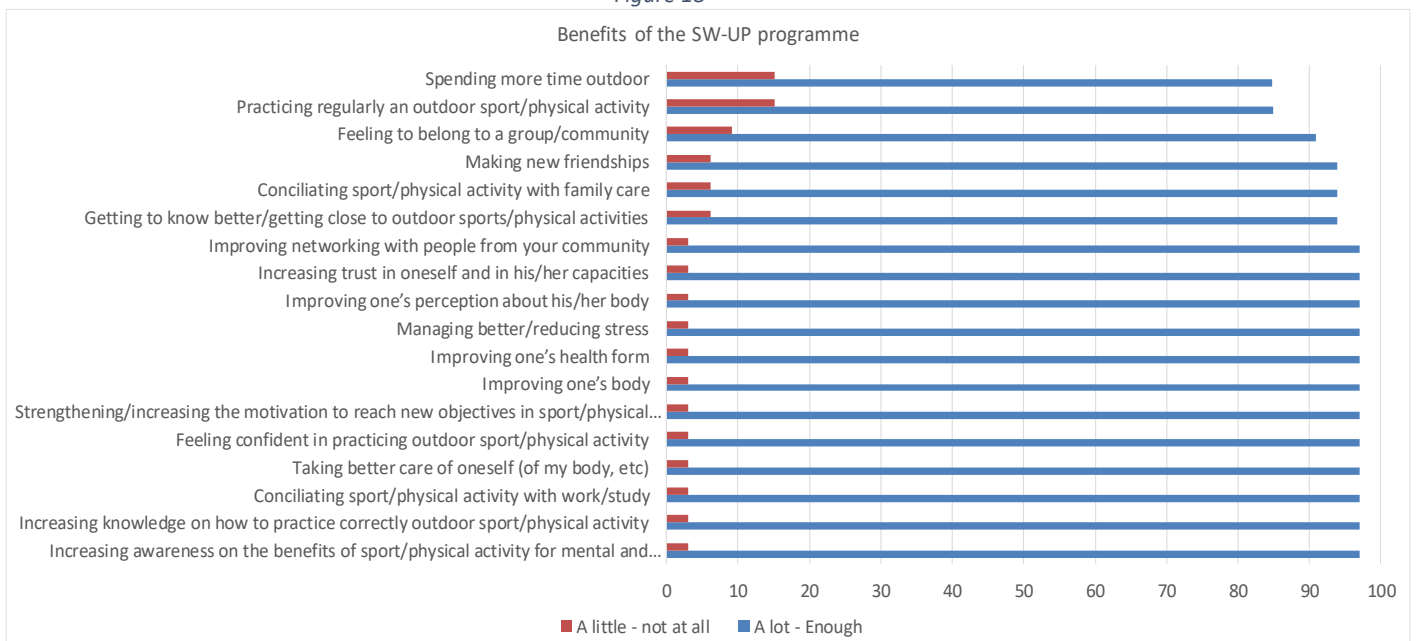
Most of the respondents (82 %) attended the programme regularly.

Data on attendance and on reasons for joining the programme show that the programme managed to provide an answer to women's need of conciliating family/work duties with self-care. As previously mentioned, this represents the main barrier for not practising sport for Catalan and Granollers women.

4.2.2 Outcomes of the programme

The survey shows that the programme brought about several benefits for respondents.

Figure 18



Participation in the programme increased almost all respondents' knowledge and awareness of the benefits of sport for both mental and physical health as well as on how to practise outdoor sports correctly in order to prevent injury risks.

Besides producing knowledge, the programme contributed to improving respondents' self-efficacy and self-esteem. In particular, the programme triggered the following benefits in this area:

- confidence in practising outdoor sports (97 %);
- increase in the motivation to reach new objectives in sport (97 %);

- more trust in oneself (97 %);
- better perception about one’s body (97 %).

In addition, the programme contributed to improving respondents’ mental and physical health condition. In particular, respondents to the survey underlined the following benefits in this area:

- improvement in one’s body and health form (97 %);
- better management of/reduction in stress (97 %).

Moreover, the programme acted as a ‘social glue’, according to the survey respondents. Over 90% of the people reported an improvement in community networking, making new friendships and increasing their group/community identity.

The programme also allowed participants to spend more time outdoors (85 %).

Most of all, the programme contributed to overcoming the conciliation barrier to sport practice. Over 90 % of the survey respondents reported the contribution to improving conciliation of sport with work/study and family care duties.

Furthermore, for almost 80 % of the survey respondents, participation in the programme allowed them to practise sport regularly. Not only did respondents to the survey report practising sport regularly, but they also reveal that they practised other sport activities besides the ones proposed by the programme. This is particularly relevant considering that several women participating in the programme were not active at all or not regularly before joining SW-UP.

Figure 20

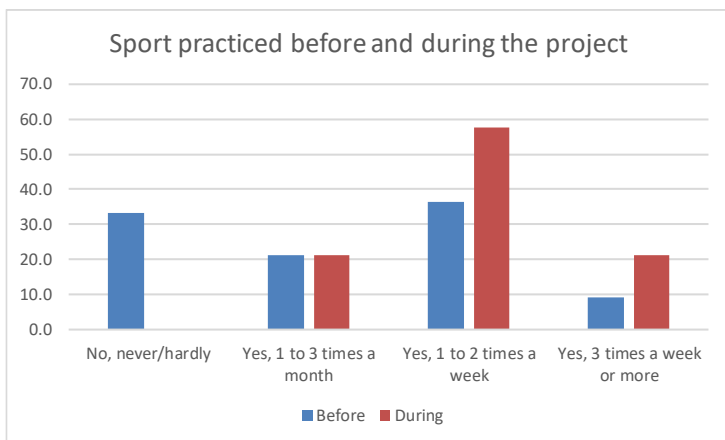
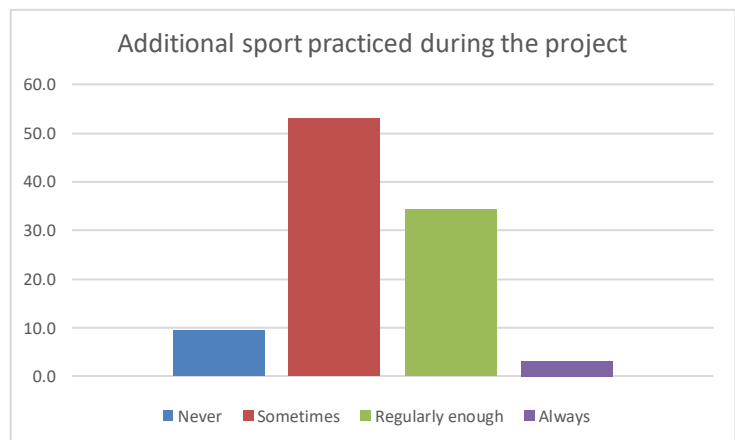
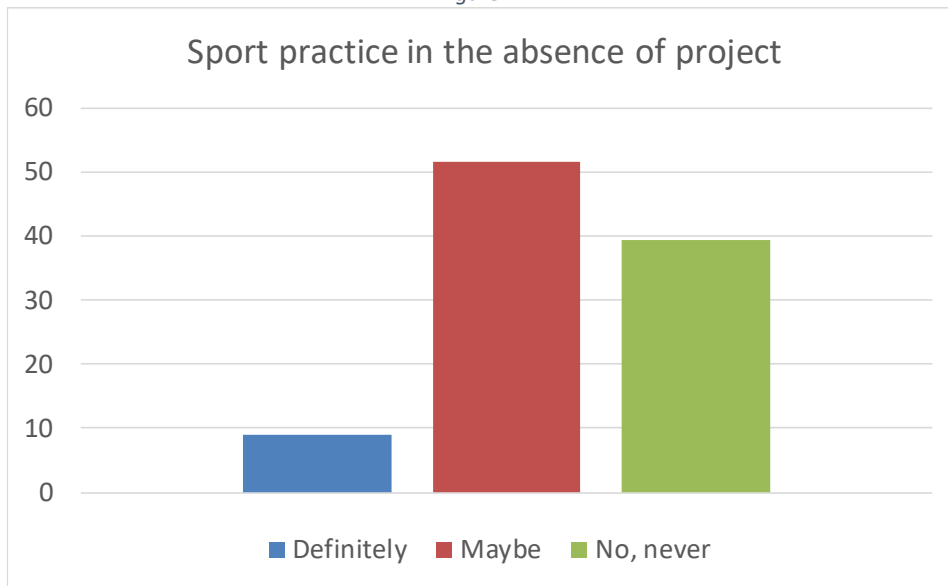


Figure 19



It is important to note that almost 40 % of the survey respondents would have not practised sport in the absence of the programme, while only 9 % would have certainly done so.

Figure 21



The programme also managed to motivate participants to continue sport practice after its end: 76 % of the survey respondents stated their intention to continue the sport practice after the end of the programme. In addition, 88 % of them would like ‘a lot’ or ‘enough’ to continue the SW-UP activities.

Figure 23

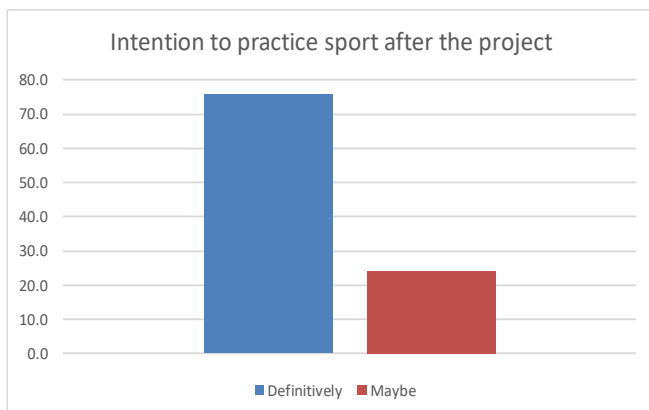
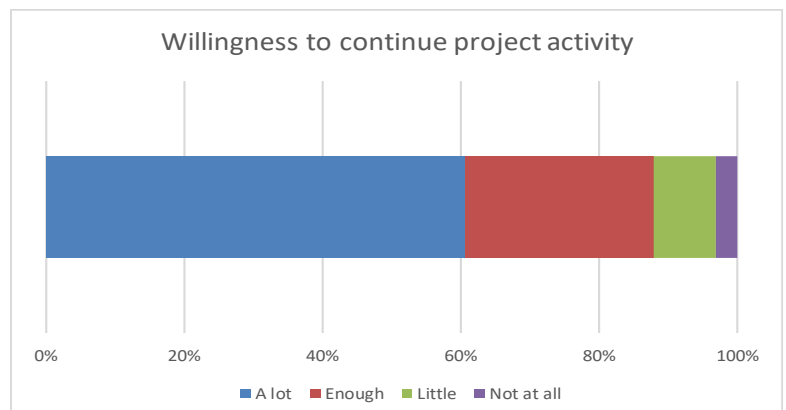


Figure 22



According to the surveys submitted to participants and focus groups, several factors contributed to the effectiveness of the programme.

- The novelty of the activities presented triggered participants’ curiosity to discover the programme.
- The programme was seen as important on the public agenda. It was extensively publicised at local level through awareness-raising and communication activities (e.g. social media campaign, sport on the local television station, website and newsletter of the municipality, posters in municipal facilities in the city). The involvement of local clubs and sport organisations was particularly relevant for diffusing the programme.
- A specific target group was identified (i.e. parents, and in particular mothers, whose children practise sport between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.) and activities were provided that were tailored to their needs.
- Access to the programme was free of charge.
- A variety of fun and engaging sport activities were provided that do not require specific abilities.
- Qualitative facilities were provided.

- Trainers' specific attention to favouring the creation of a group identity allowed participants to feel they belonged to the respective group. In turn, this contributed to enhancing their participation in the activity.
- The intervention was of high quality (activities proposed and trainers).

The high quality of the intervention is confirmed by the fact that over 90 % of the survey respondents considered themselves very satisfied with the programme activities. Over 80 % of the survey respondents were very satisfied with the duration of the activity. However, satisfaction decreases to 63 % when it comes to the number of participants/activity group.

Over 70 % of the survey respondents considered the course topical.

Survey respondents emphasised the trainers' high level of skills. Over 90 % of the survey respondents strongly agree that the trainers were punctual, had in-depth knowledge of the sport activities proposed, paid particular attention to participants and managed guidance and control well. The percentage decreases to 79 % when it comes to the trainers' capacity to challenge participants to do their best. A lower percentage may be due to the trainers' specific focus on making participants enjoy the activity rather than on performing at their maximum capacity.

The programme also faced some barriers in the implementation phase.

- There was opposition to the activities being dedicated only to women. Opponents raised concerns that such activities could further reinforce gender stereotypes related to family care. According to them, such programmes could risk reinforcing the idea that women need specific measures to allow them to care for both family and themselves, instead of encouraging men to take over their share of responsibility, freeing time for women.
- Participation was reduced during winter months.
- There was a lack of specific places that were fully air conditioned.

In order to increase the effectiveness of the programme in the future, attention should be paid to:

- maintaining a certain degree of innovation in the activities proposed;
- organising activities in other time slots when women and their children are together (e.g. before/after school);
- accompanying positive discrimination (women-only activities) with awareness-raising campaigns on gender balance in family care to avoid opposition to the programme.

4.3 Sustainability of the programme

The programme will continue after the end of the SW-UP programme. Women-only activities between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. will be complemented with activities open to the whole family, delivered immediately after accompanying children at school in nearby outdoor/indoor areas.

5 Assessment of the pilot programme 'Moving together' (Guimarães)

5.1 Introduction to the pilot programme

The programme 'Moving together' was implemented in the city of Guimarães between 8 March and 7 April 2019.

The programme was implemented by Tempo Livre jointly with Câmara municipal de Guimarães and with the support of local stakeholders. Local stakeholders (e.g. family doctors, recreational and cultural associations, parish priests, parish councils) were mainly involved in the promotion of the programme activities.

The programme aimed to overcome three of the main barriers to women's participation in outdoor sports in Guimarães, revealed by the SW-UP survey:

- not having someone with whom to practise outdoor sports;
- feeling unsafe/being afraid of the annoying behaviour of others;
- having never participated in outdoors activities before.

In particular, the programme aimed to encourage women's engagement in sport/physical activities through the provision of gymnastics classes and walks for the whole family in the public parks of Guimarães. The organisation of workshops and medical advice sessions helped to enhance awareness on the benefits of physical activities for physical and mental well-being.

Four parks in the city and suburban area were selected for the implementation of the programme. The choice of organising the activities in the public parks was not random, as, according to the analysis on the use of public parks in Guimarães, there was limited information on sport/physical activities that could be carried out in the city parks. In addition, according to the same analysis, one of the selected parks was not deemed safe.

The programme included the following activities:

- Four workshops analysing the following issues that generally cause reticence in practising sport/physical activity: chronic diseases or cancer; ageing; youth and sport; and pregnancy. The workshops combined professional advice on sport practice with storytelling.
- Four gymnastics classes in the park organised on Sunday mornings and taught by physical education teachers. The classes were complemented by medical advice on active and healthy life styles, provided by doctors and nurses.
- Walking together for health – walking in one of the public parks of Guimarães to engage the whole family, and in particular women, in doing physical activity and enjoying quality time together outdoors.
- Communication and dissemination activities (e.g. creation of a SW-UP passport with the calendar of the activities, social media campaigns, diffusion of the programme through traditional media and the websites of the local council and Tempo Livre).

Participation in the programme was free of charge. Even though women were the main target group of the programme, it was also open to men.

5.2 Main findings

This section is based on the findings of the assessment questionnaire submitted at the end of the programme by the participants, on the results of the surveys submitted by the programme leader during the implementation phase and on the focus group held with the SW-UP project partners.

5.2.1 Profile of respondents and motivation

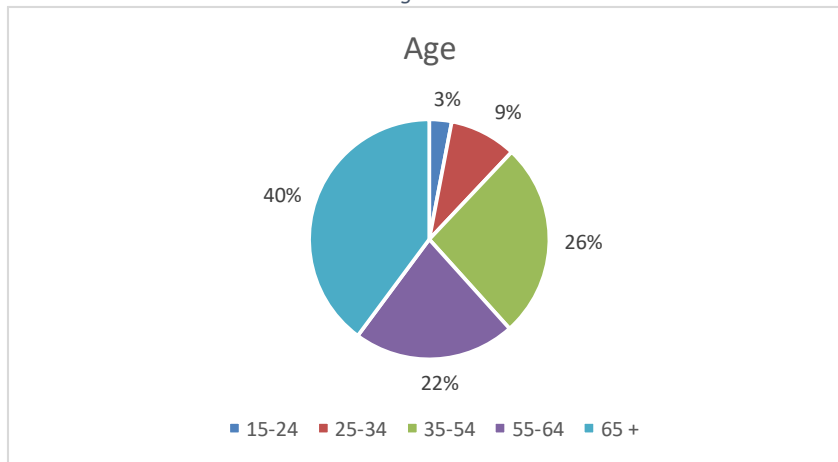
More than half of the survey respondents were involved in the public walk (61 %). Workshops involved 43 % of the respondents, while gymnastics in the park involved 38 % of them. Over half of the respondents involved in gymnastic classes attended them regularly. On the contrary, over half of the respondents involved in workshops attended them only occasionally.

Lack of transport, lack of time, weather conditions, lack of knowledge about the programme and overlapping with other activities are the most frequent reasons mentioned by survey respondents for not participating regularly in the programme.

Even though the programme was also open to men, most of the participants (81.2 %) were women. Men participated in particular in the workshops and the walk in the park.

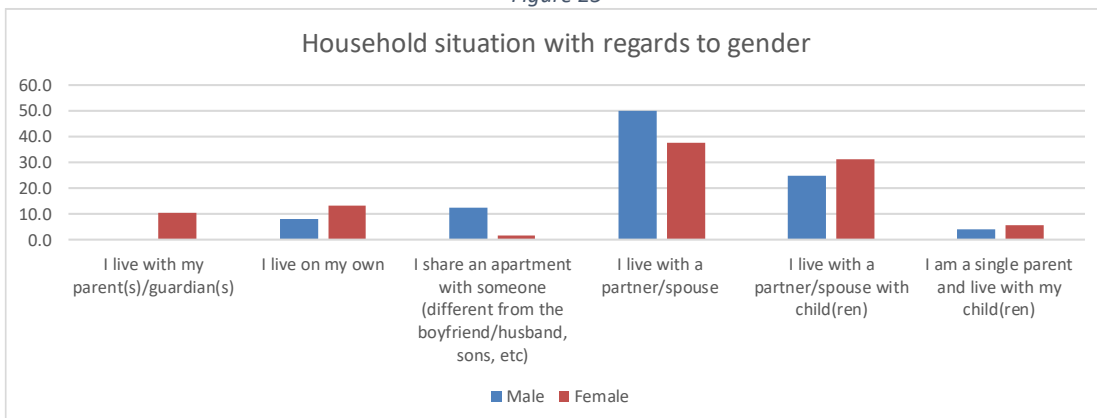
The programme attracted older women in particular (40 % of the participants).

Figure 24



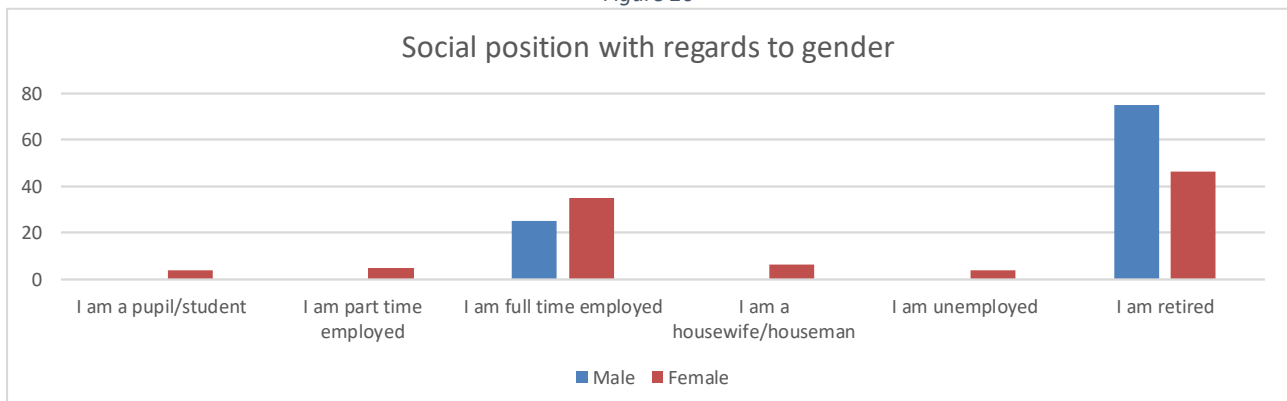
Almost all respondents live with a partner/spouse (70 %). Only 30 % of them live with children. There are slightly more women than men who live with children.

Figure 25



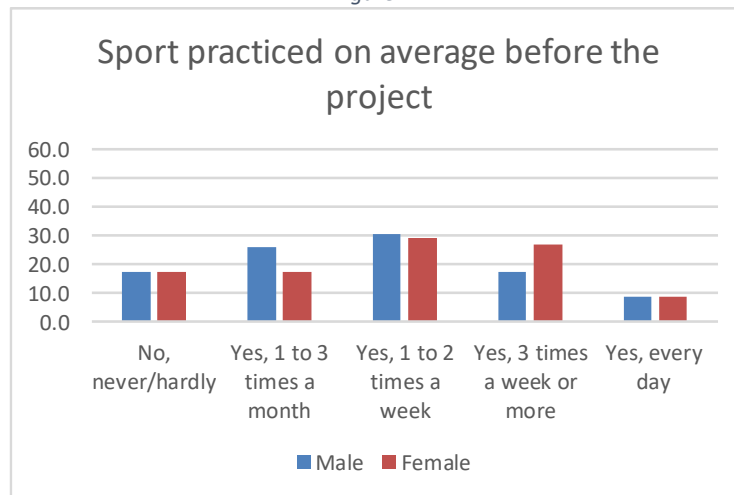
Most of the respondents are retired.

Figure 26



Most of the survey respondents involved in the programme were physically active before the programme. This holds true for slightly over half of the female respondents.

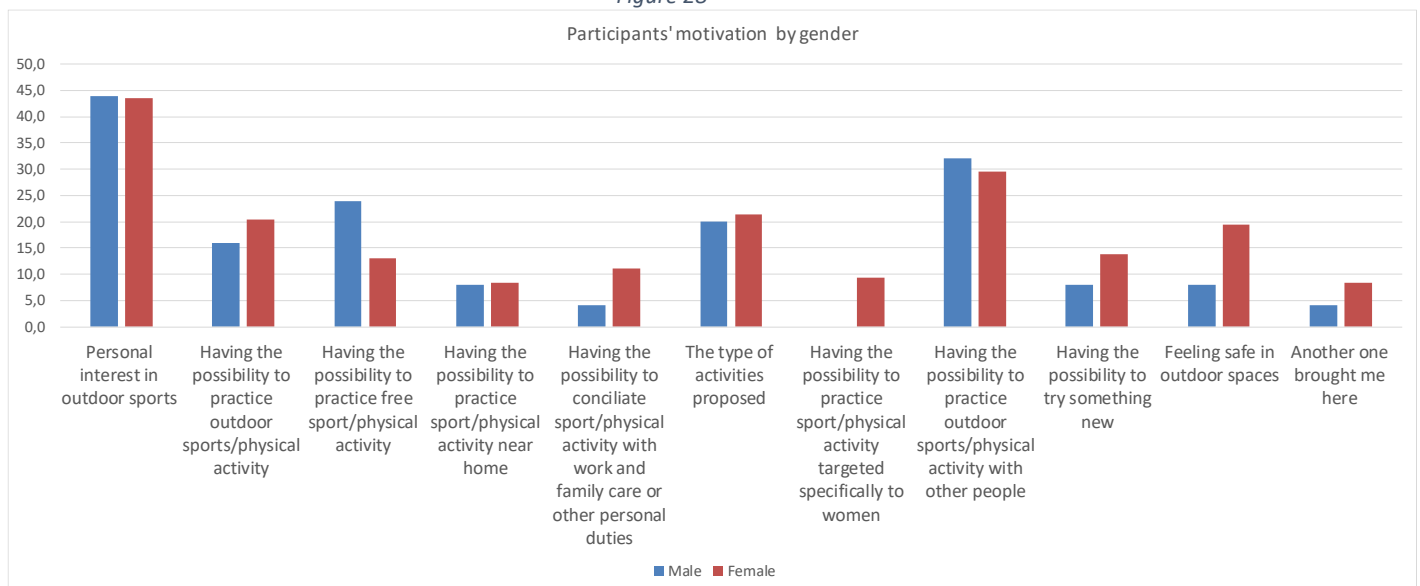
Figure 27



Personal interest in outdoor sport/physical activity, practising sport/physical activity with other people and the type of activities proposed were the first three main motivations for enrolling in the programme for both male and female respondents. It is worth noting that over twice as many women than men mention conciliation of family care with sport/physical activities and feeling safe as reasons for joining the programme.

This shows that the programme represents a relevant option for tackling some of the barriers to outdoor sport/physical activity practice mentioned previously (i.e. lack of someone to practice sport with; feeling unsafe).

Figure 28



5.2.2 Outcomes of the programme

Findings of the evaluation activities show that the programme contributed to achieving several results for both the participants and the partner organisations involved in it.

According to the survey respondents, the programme contributed to:

- Increasing their knowledge/awareness on the benefits of sport/physical activity for their well-being and on how to practise sport correctly

Physical activity is halfway to healing! (programme participant)

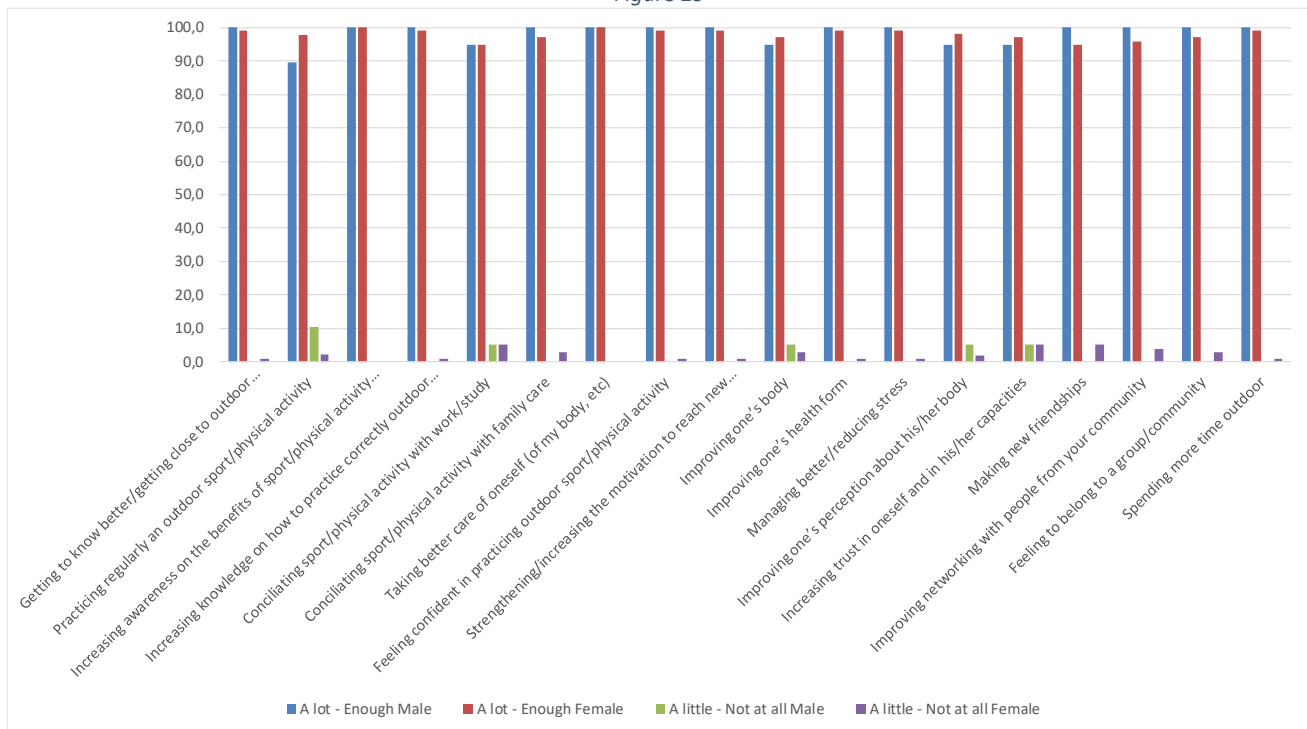
Sport is good for everyone, so it also works for those who are older (programme participant)

Regular physical activity is very important, in addition to improving physical health also helps in psychological health (programme participant)

- Increasing their self-esteem and self-efficacy (i.e. feeling more confident in their capacities and sport practice; improving perception about their body, motivation to reach new objectives in sport);
Physical activity and sports increase my concentration and I feel more willing to study; I feel I can do more
- Increasing their physical and psychological well-being (i.e. improvement in their body and health; better management of stress);
- Increasing their social capital (i.e. better networking with community members, making new friends, feeling part of a group/community);
- Conciliating sport with physical activity and study;
- Practising outdoor sports regularly and spending more time in nature.

Slightly more women than have benefitted from the programme when it comes to self-esteem, self-efficacy and regular sport practice. On the contrary, slightly more men than women have increased their social capital.

Figure 29



The programme managed to get close to outdoor sports people that had never practised it. It also contributed to slightly increasing the sport/physical activity practice of those already engaged in outdoor sports/physical activity. However, a decrease in the percentage of people involved in regular sport practice can be noted. According to the focus group, the unfavourable weather conditions during the programme might explain the decrease in sport practice. As in the Spanish case, according to the SW-UP Portuguese project partners, weather conditions strongly influence people's practice of outdoor activities.

In addition, it is worth noting that over 60 % of both female and male survey respondents reported they had practised additional sport/physical activities. Most of them have done it occasionally.

Figure 31

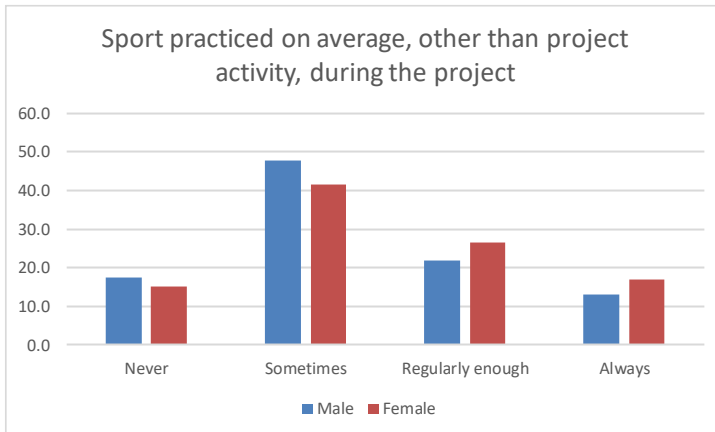
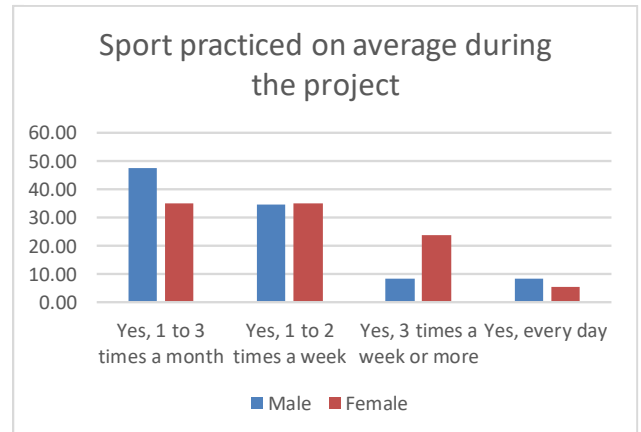


Figure 30



Most of the respondents (84.6 %) involved in the programme activities reported that they intend to practise sport/physical activity with the same regularity after the end of the programme. It is worth noting that the intention is slightly higher among those involved in gymnastics and walking, and among women.

Figure 33

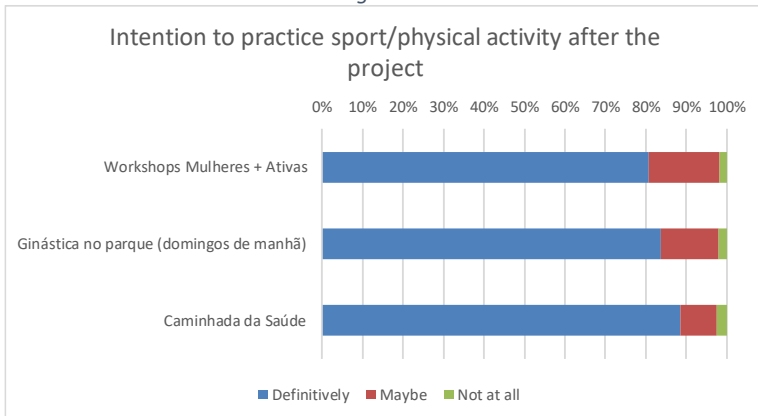
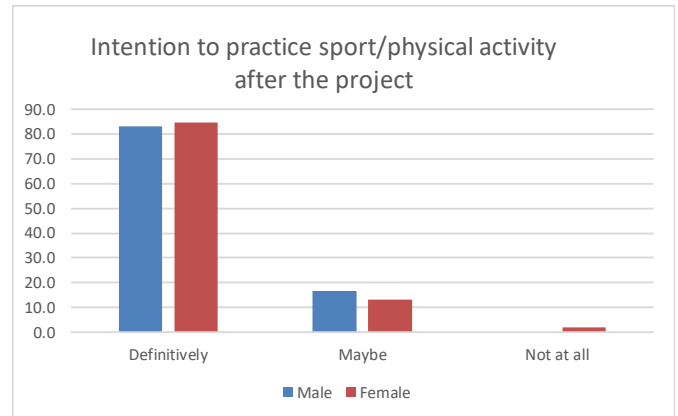


Figure 32



Besides benefits for participants, the programme contributed to triggering results for the Portuguese organisations involved in it. The focus group revealed that the programme shed light on a topic that was innovative, but at the same time relevant for women's sport/physical activity practice: women-friendly urban environments for sport/physical activities. The programme also increased knowledge of local authorities in charge of sport (city councils, Tempo Livre) on the need to improve communication of the outdoor sport/physical activities (i.e. parks) existing in Guimarães and to animate them.

According to participants in the focus group, the programme also contributed to increasing awareness of public staff on the relevance of data collection and evaluation in the sport area.

As to the main factors explaining the outcomes achieved, these are as follows.

- The design of mixed activities encouraged sport practice by the whole family and in particular by women.
- Fun activities were devised that do not require advanced sport capacities and are adapted to all ages (i.e. gymnastics and walk).
- The sport/physical activity offer was innovated through combining sport with cultural activities (i.e. traditional Portuguese music) and with the discovery of new places (i.e. parks in the suburban areas of Guimarães).
- Additional benefits were offered to participants in the programme (gadgets, prizes).

- Local stakeholders were involved in the promotion of the programme activities (e.g. doctors, priests).
- Using the EU logo that legitimised the programme acted as leverage for participation in it.
- Quality of the intervention; the quality of the intervention is also shown by the high level of satisfaction with the programme activities, and in particular with the “Walk for health”, as well as by the intention of almost all participants to continue the programme activities, even if they have to pay for it.

Figure 35

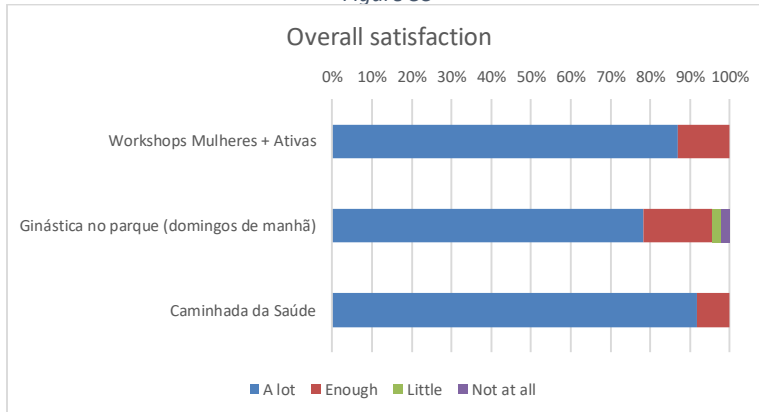
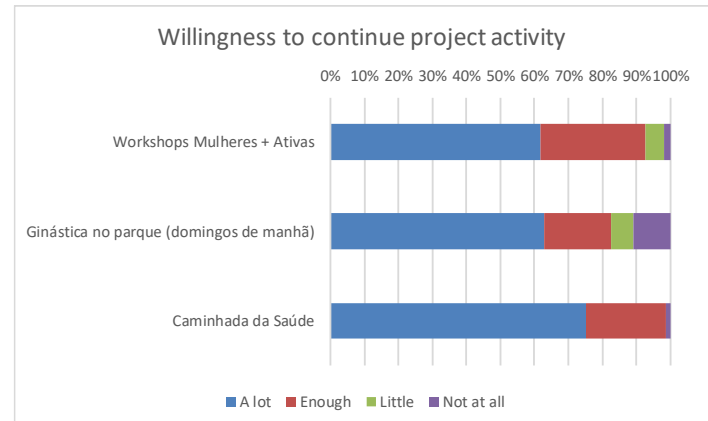


Figure 34



However, the programme also faced some barriers that should be considered in the future programme implementation in order to improve its effectiveness.

- Lack of transport makes it hard to reach the parks selected for the programme implementation. Attention should be paid to improving transport connections or to enhancing alternative mobility (e.g. bike sharing, car sharing).
- There is a lack of sport trainers specialised in training for people with chronic diseases (e.g. breast cancer). Since physiotherapists are the ones specialised in physical activity for people with specific health conditions, most of the training has a medical purpose and not a recreational; physical activity is limited by the physiotherapy prescribed. Local institutions as well as sport organisations should pay more attention to increasing the skills of their trainers to better target the specific needs of various target groups (e.g. women with chronic diseases such as cancer).
- Communication of the programme was limited by the European Parliament (EP) elections. The programme planned the installation of billboards for its diffusion. However, this was not possible due to the regulations on communication activities of the city council during the EP elections. Wide diffusion of the programme through the combination of different communication channels (e.g. social media, traditional media, institutional websites, word of mouth) should be carefully considered.
- The workshops were held during working hours, which proved counterproductive for attracting employed women, who are also more subject to sport inactivity. Activities should be organised in different time schedules to allow the participation of various target groups. In deciding the time schedule, the specific needs of all target groups (e.g. employed women, retired women, women with children) should be carefully considered.
- People’s engagement in activities, particularly workshops, needs to be enhanced. To increase participation, in particular of inactive people, specific attention should be paid to the following.
 - Particular attention needs to be paid to the specific needs of the target groups.
 - Details of the programme should be widely communicated.
 - There must be an appropriate timetable.

- Programmes over a longer period might allow for more participation opportunities. In addition, they could also strengthen people's group identity, which may act as a leverage for increasing their engagement in the programme.
- Sport activities should be combined with other recreational activities.
- Fun and engaging activities should be devised.
- The involvement of trustworthy people in the community can introduce models for the others.
- There should be additional advantages for those involved in the activities (e.g. gadgets, prizes).

5.3 Sustainability of the programme

The programme findings and the programme activities will be integrated in the sports plan of the Municipality of Guimarães. In addition, both Tempo Livre and the city council intend to continue the programme activities with some changes (e.g. additional issues to be tackled by the workshops, combination of sport with cultural activities, activities targeting women, but also open to the whole family). However, continuation of the programme depends on the approval of the budget allocated to it by the city council.

6 Assessment of the pilot programme 'SW-UP SUS RAMNICUL' (Râmnicu Sărat)

6.1 Introduction to the pilot programme

The programme was implemented in the Municipality of Râmnicu Sărat in the period February–March 2019 by the Municipality of Râmnicu Sărat, with the support of local sport organisations. Local sport organisations were involved mainly in the promotion of the programme.

The overall aim of the programme was to encourage women to practise outdoor sport activities. In particular, the programme aimed to tackle two of the main barriers to sport practice for women from Râmnicu Sărat: a lack of anyone to practise sport with and feeling unsafe in public spaces. The programme achieved this by combining activities targeted to the creation of social networks with those targeted to the animation of public areas (e.g. outdoor sports in public parks or other public areas).

In detail, the programme included the following activities:

- Creation of SW-UP Sus Ramnicul Women Sport club;
- Creation of an informal group of mothers;
- Pilates sessions;
- SW-UP bike cross;
- Handball – a way to unify people;
- Debate on the role of women in mass sports at local level;
- Public café on sport as a strategy to build people's health and future;
- Communication and dissemination activities.

The programme was specifically targeted to women. However, it was also open to men.

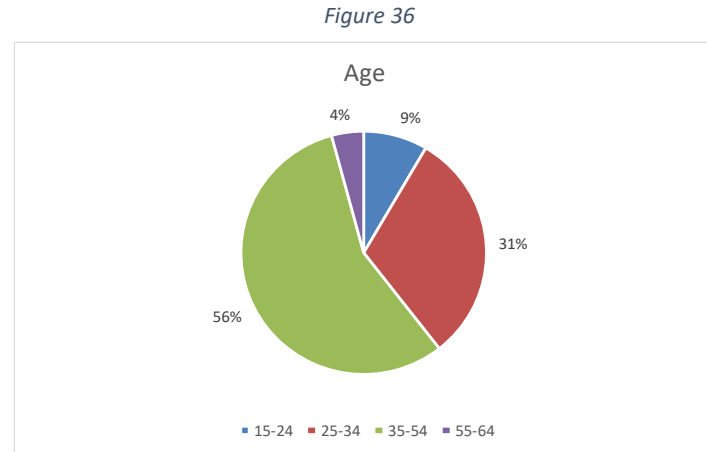
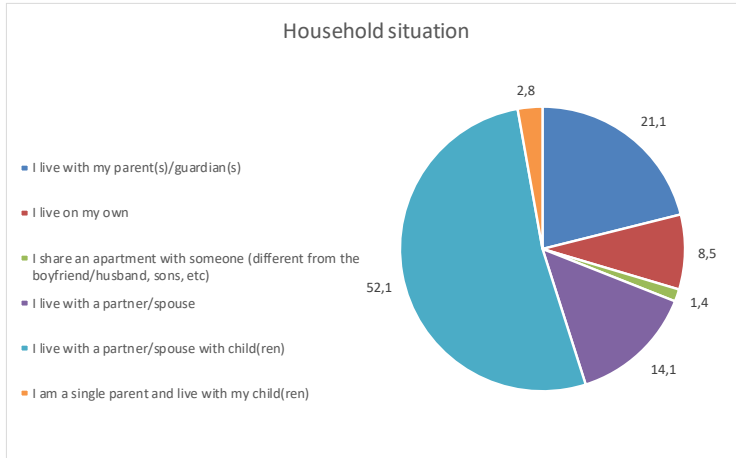
Participation in the programme was free of charge.

6.2 Main findings

This section draws on the findings of the assessment survey submitted to the participants in the programme activities and on the focus group with project partners.

6.2.1 Profile of respondents and motivation

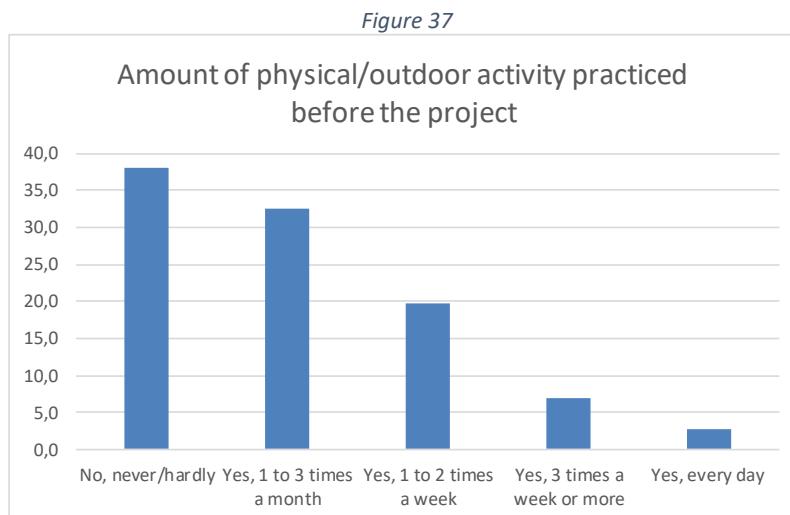
Even though the programme was also open to men, almost all survey respondents were women (94 %).



Slightly over half of the respondents are aged between 35 and 54 years and live with a partner/spouse and children.

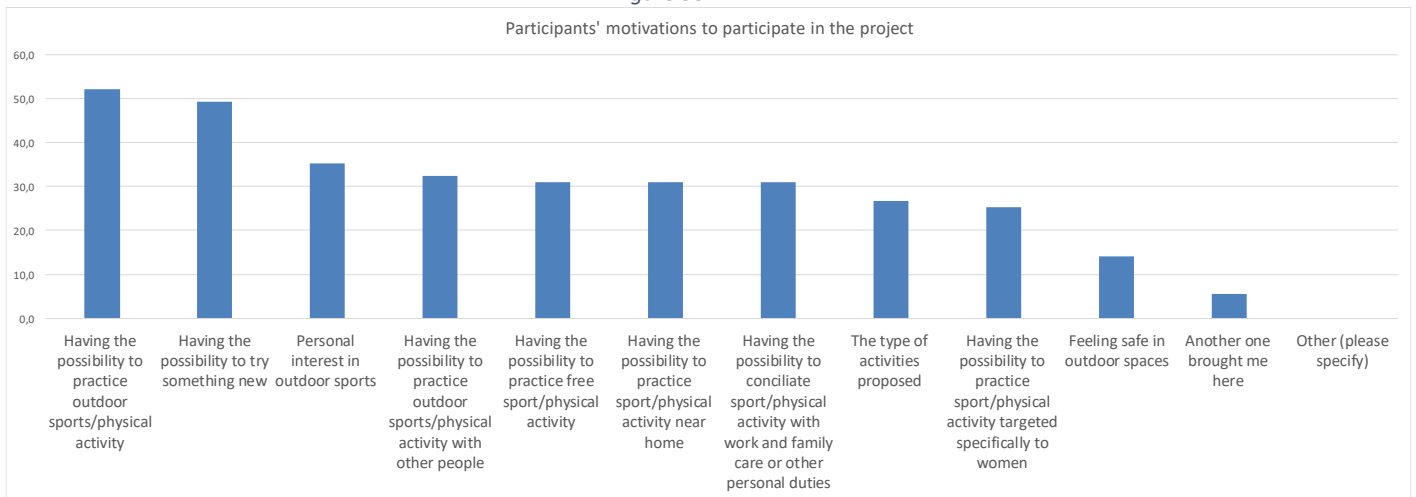
Most survey respondents are full-time employees (79 %). The remaining respondents are students (8.5 %), housewives/housemen (5.6 %), part-time employees (1.4 %) and people with other occupations (5.6 %).

A significant percentage of the respondents (38 %) had never practised sport activities before the project, while 28 % of them had practised sport regularly.



The novelty of the programme and having the possibility to practise outdoor sports represent the main reasons that motivated respondents to join the SW-UP programme. Having the possibility to practise outdoor sports with other people and joining the programme free of charge also represented important reasons for participating in the programme activities. It is worth noting that the programme managed to provide a relevant solution to women not engaged in sport practice due to the lack of people to share it with.

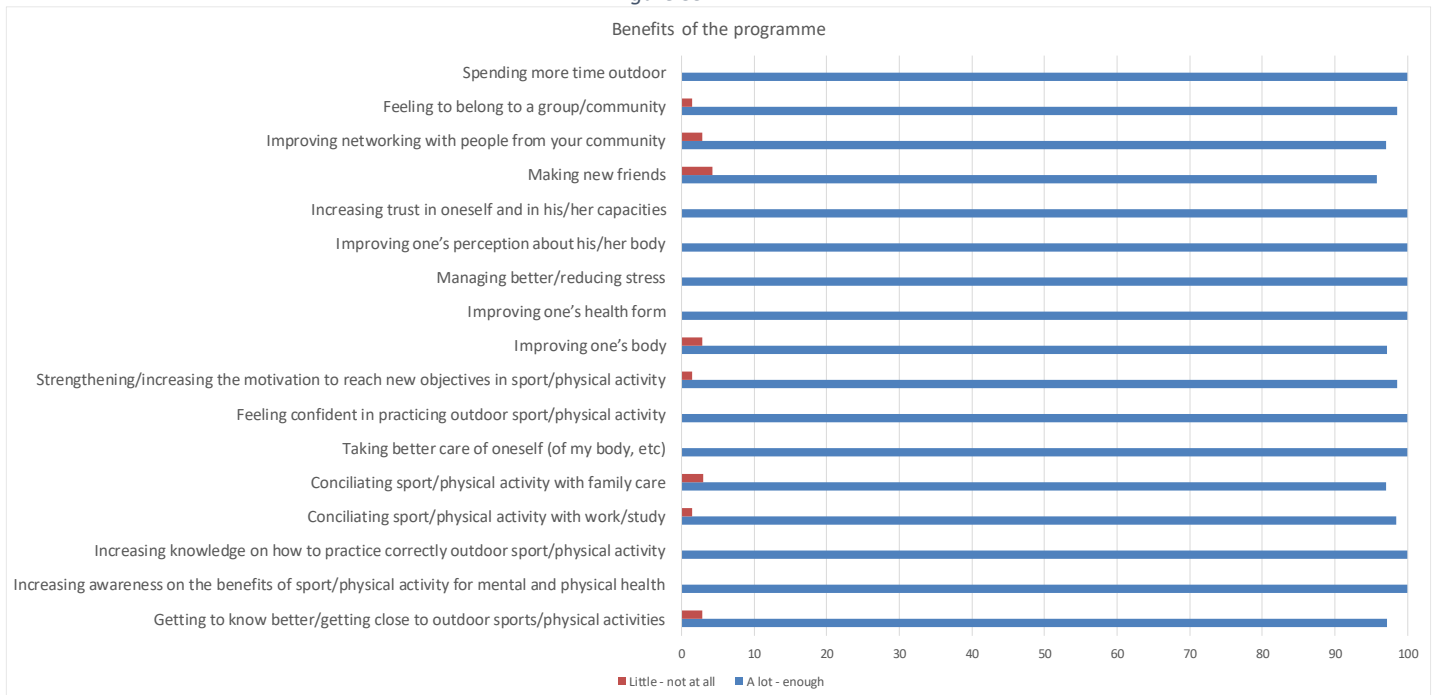
Figure 38



6.2.2 Outcomes of the programme

The survey results show that the programme triggered several benefits for participants.

Figure 39



The programme contributed to improving all respondents' knowledge on the benefits of practising outdoor sports/physical activity as well as on how to practise it correctly.

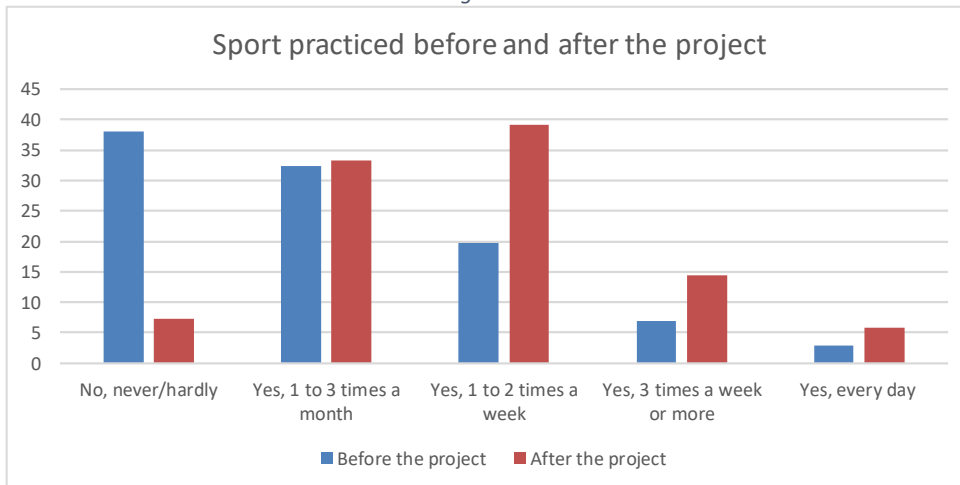
In addition, the programme triggered an increase in all respondents' self-esteem (trust in their capacities, improvement in the perception about their body, confidence in practising outdoor sports). The programme also contributed to increasing all respondents' motivation to reach new goals in sport practice.

The programme allowed almost all respondents to improve their physical and psychological well-being and to take better care of themselves.

The programme has also achieved relevant results in terms of improving respondents' social capital (e.g. improving networks, making new friendships, increasing the group/community identity), even though to a lesser extent compared to the above-mentioned benefits.

The programme also resulted in an increase in the time spent outdoors and in sport practice. In particular, the programme proved effective in increasing the number of respondents that practice sport/physical activity regularly after its end.

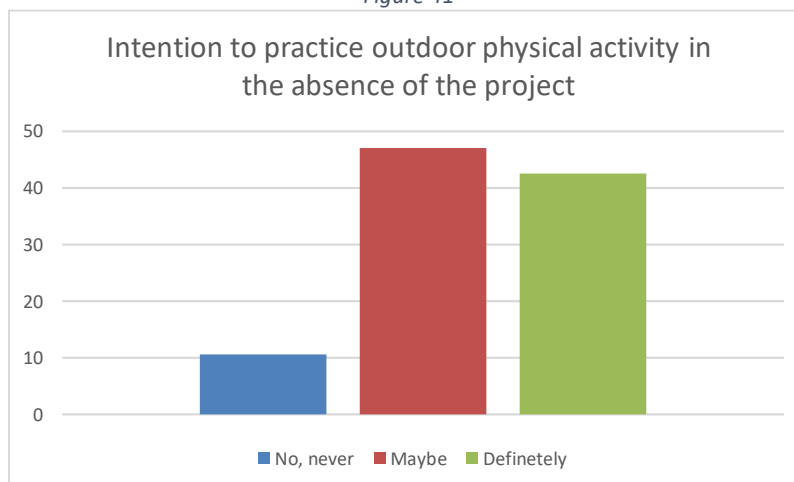
Figure 40



Respondents involved in handball (64 %) and Pilates (60 %) are those that more frequently reported practising sport regularly (i.e. at least 1 or 2 times a week) after the project.

A large part of the respondents (47 %) reported that they would have probably practised some sport in the absence of the programme. It is worth noting that most of them were engaged in handball and in bike cross, two popular sport activities in Romania.

Figure 41



The main factors that favoured the achievement of the above-mentioned outcomes are as follows.

- The programme concept (i.e. outdoor sport/physical activity targeted to women) was innovative. The novelty of the proposed concept stimulated participants' curiosity to discover the activities planned and take part in them.
- Women recognised by the community as role models were involved. This stimulated participation of other women.
- The creation of socialisation and engagement opportunities (e.g. informal group of mothers) can favour regular sport practice.
- Providing participants with detailed information on the activities of the programme and visibility campaigns can ensure its wide diffusion.

- The zero cost of the programme helped, as many women from Râmnicu Sărat cannot afford to pay for the activities.
- The SW-UP logo and the EU identity of the project contributed to stimulating participants' curiosity and trust in the programme proposed. In turn, this favoured their participation in the programme activities.
- The quality of the intervention and in particular of trainers was high. This is shown by the high level of satisfaction of survey respondents involved in the programme as well as by their intention to continue the programme activities.

Figure 42

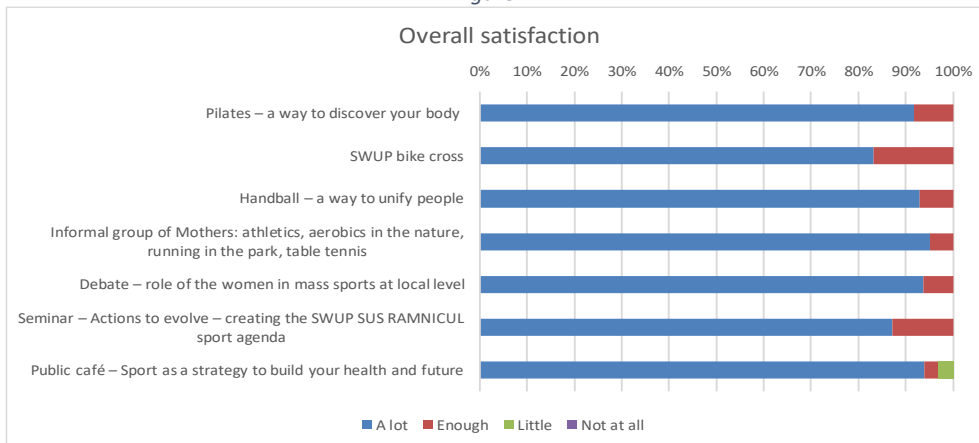
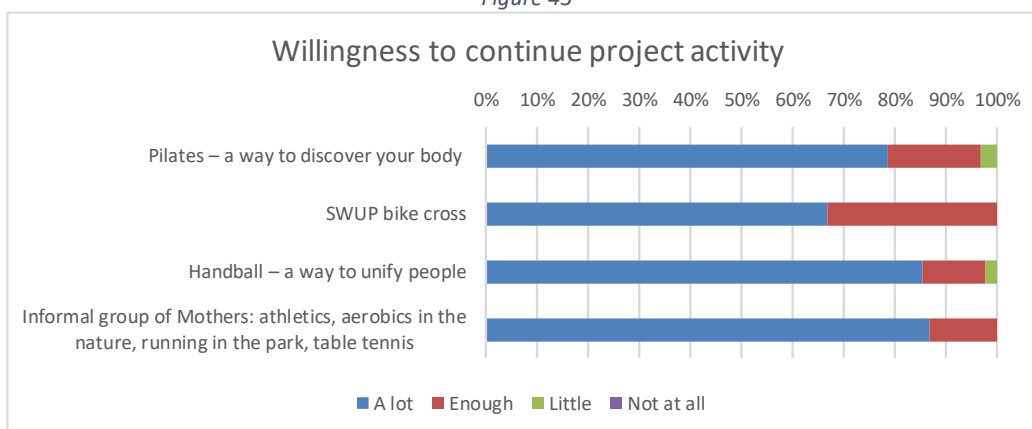


Figure 43



The programme also faced some difficulties that should be carefully considered in future implementations.

- The number of staff was limited due to administrative difficulties within the municipality, which created delays in the start of the programme and restricted its extension. First, administrative difficulties were due to obstacles in contracting external experts, due to the complexity of the tendering procedures. Second, the municipality failed to appoint municipal staff specifically dedicated to the project, due to work overload risks. In future implementations, particular attention should be paid to the administrative planning of the programme to avoid delays or a low quality of the intervention.
- There was a limited culture of participatory governance in public decision-making processes. This triggered difficulties in engaging women in informal groups and the SW-UP club, and in designing specific initiatives targeted to women. However, the involvement of role model women allowed the municipality to partially overcome this barrier. As women's engagement in the design of sport/physical activity programmes and services and of the urban environment is essential for understanding their

needs and for creating relevant initiatives in this area, particular attention should be paid to stimulating participation. This is particularly relevant, especially in contexts characterised by mistrust in public administrations and a poor tradition of collaborative processes in public decision-making and implementation. Participation in the decision-making process can be stimulated in various ways:

- involving trustworthy front runners that can trigger a bandwagon effect in the respective community;
 - economic (e.g. free subscription to sport activities, gadgets) or moral incentives (e.g. rewards, legitimization of participants) to participation;
 - ensuring openness, inclusiveness and transparency of the decision-making process;
 - providing participants with feedback on their participation;
 - involving women from the early stages of the process when no decision has yet been taken.
- Lack of qualitative outdoor sport facilities suitable for women's needs. In the future projects for the design of sport facilities, which are ongoing in the municipality, specific attention should be paid to women's needs. Conducting gender analyses and engaging women in the planning phases are particularly relevant for mainstreaming gender in the design of the respective sport facilities.

6.3 Sustainability of the programme

According to project partners, the debates held during the project have allowed for the creation of an agenda of sport activities targeted to women that includes the SW-UP activities. In future, the programme will be integrated with other activities, such as healthy ageing and lifestyles, and storytelling.

7 Assessment of the pilot programme 'Making women more active with a child-friendly approach' (Sofia)

7.1 Introduction to the pilot programme

The pilot programme 'Making women more active with a child-friendly approach' was implemented in the Municipality of Sofia. The programme was led by Sofia 2018, which aims to strengthen the engagement in sport by youth by building on national traditions and fostering a legacy to embrace the future.

The pilot programme was implemented in the context of Sofia, European Capital of Sport², which aimed to enhance sport policies and sport practice for all in the Municipality of Sofia.

The pilot programme was implemented between June 2018 and June 2019, with the aim to encourage more women to engage in outdoor activities.

The pilot programme aimed to tackle two of the barriers revealed by the survey undertaken in the initial phase of the SW-UP project: lack of time due to family obligations (42 % of the surveyed women) and lack of company (23 % of the surveyed women). The programme did it through the adoption of a childcare-friendly approach to the organisation of the events planned within Sofia, European Capital of Sport. The approach consisted of the creation of facilities that allowed women to participate in the event together with their children. In particular, the pilot programme tested a childcare service.

² The European Capital of Sport project is was developed on the initiative of the Sports Association of European Capitals and Cities (ACES Europe) and the European Commission. The award aims to enhance cities to promote an active lifestyle, to develop sport policies and good sport facilities infrastructure, programmes and activities.

The service targeted women with children aged between 2 and 10 years old. Access to the service was free of charge.

The service was tested in ten of the events organised within Sofia, European Capital of Sport between 2018 and 2019. It consisted of sport activities specifically designed for children of women involved in the sport event. The sport students enrolled in the fifth and sixth semester at the National Sports Academy delivered the service. To facilitate students' engagement an agreement was signed between Sofia 2018 and the National Sports Academy; according to the agreement, students' involvement in the pilot programme was achieved through internships.

Several communication channels were used to inform women of the service: billboards placed in different parts of the capital; the webpage of Sofia, European Capital of Sport; the info-centre of Sofia, European Capital of Sport; banners during the sport event.

7.2 Main findings

This section draws on the results of the survey submitted to the users of the service and a focus group carried out with project partners.

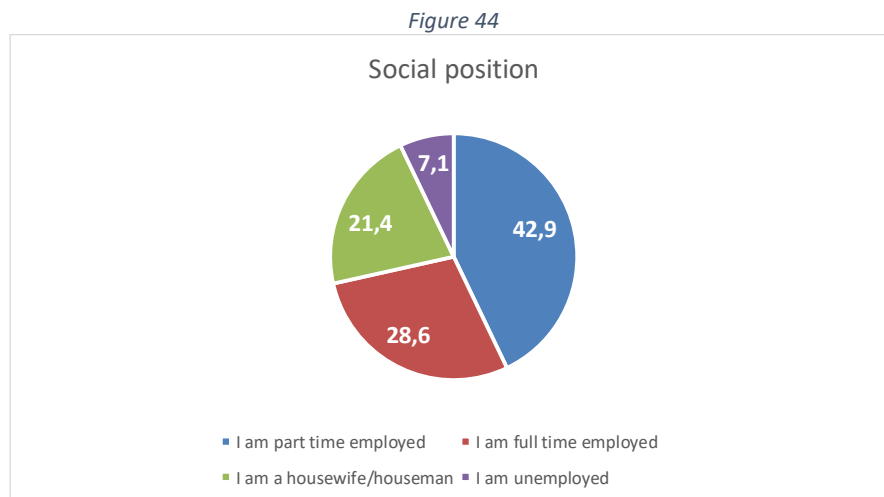
The survey was submitted in three of the ten events where the service was tested.

7.2.1 Survey respondents: profile and motivation

All respondents to the survey are women; 64.3 % were aged between 25 and 34 years and 35.7 % between 35 and 54 years old.

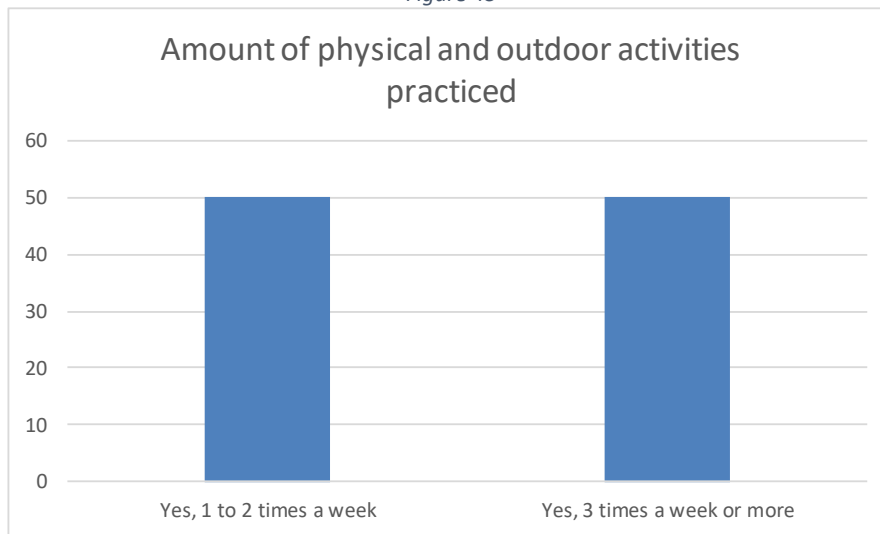
Almost all of the surveyed respondents (91.7 %) live with a partner/spouse, while only 8.3 % of the respondents are single parents.

Over half of the respondents are full-time or part-time employees.



Most of the respondents had been active in sport before the project. According to the SW-UP survey, Sofia is characterised by a large number of women involved in sport activities: 67 % of women surveyed in the initial phase of SW-UP were engaged in sport activities compared to 49 % in Corbetta (IT) or 56 % in Râmnicu Sărat (RO).

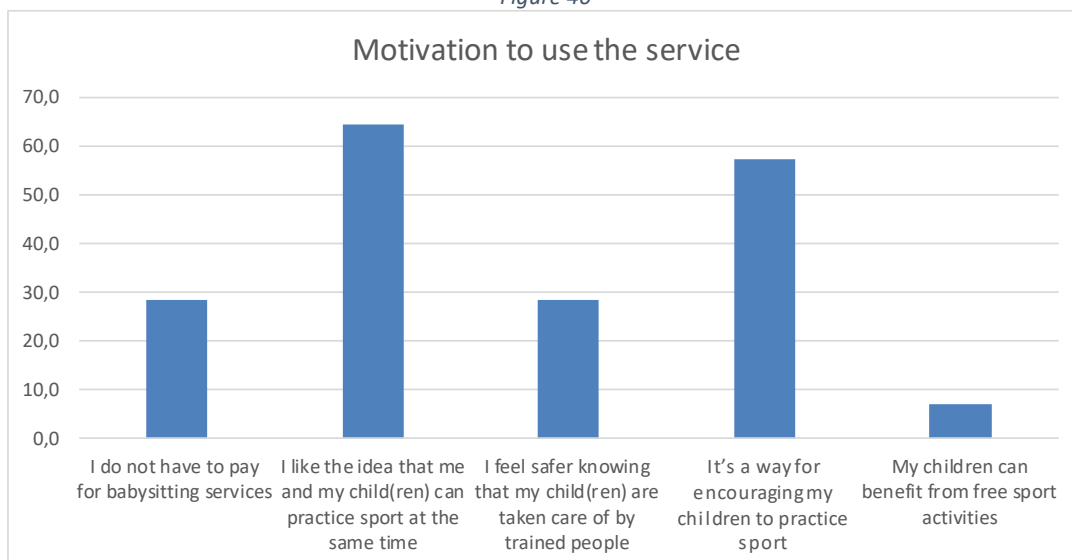
Figure 45



There were two main motivations for using the childcare service: practising sport at the same time with their own child (64.3 %) and encouraging children to practise sport (57.1 %). The service responds to two needs of women: on the one hand conciliating family care with the care for themselves and on the other hand leading by example (teaching children the value of practising sport from an early age by being active in sport as a parent)³. In the debate on a child-friendly approach to sport organised within the SW-UP project, participants argued that the practice of sport from an early age is important, not only for the development and well-being of children, but also for leading them to conduct a healthy lifestyle as adults⁴.

A free-of-charge and professional service are other relevant reasons for using it.

Figure 46



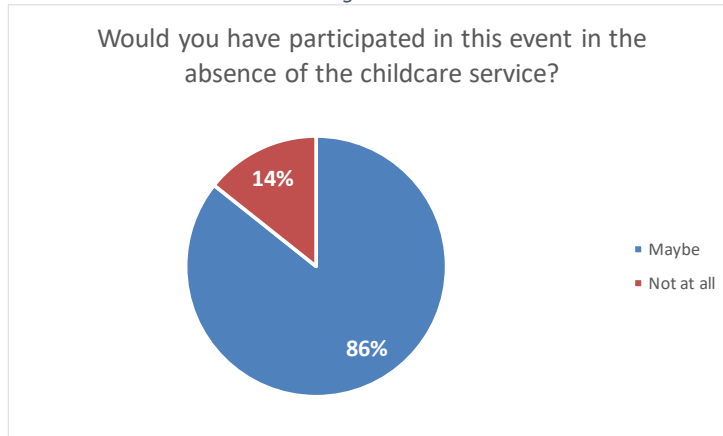
³ Exchange report 'A child friendly approach – insights from the exchanges among the SW-UP Project Community' drafted within the SW-UP project

⁴ Exchange report 'A child friendly approach – insights from the exchanges among the SW-UP Project Community' drafted within the SW-UP project

7.2.2 Outcomes of the programme

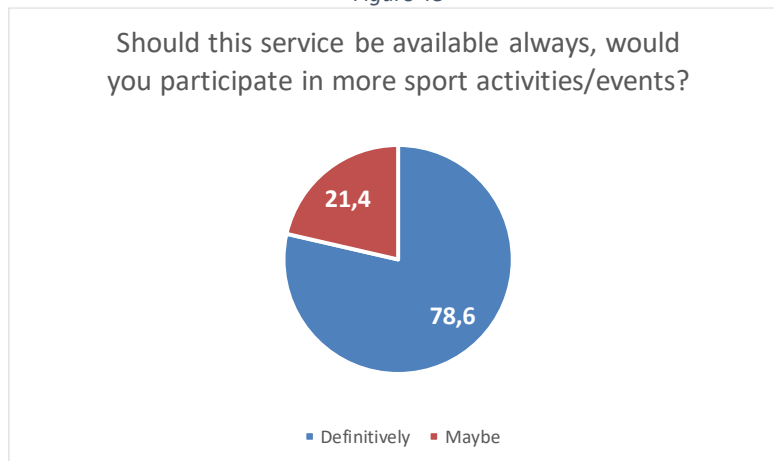
Most of the respondents declare that they might have participated in the sport event even in the absence of the service. However, this result has to be interpreted taking into consideration that all respondents to the questionnaire had practised sport regularly before the SW-UP project.

Figure 47



Nevertheless, most of the respondents reveal that they would practice more sport if the childcare service were provided continuously during all sport events.

Figure 48



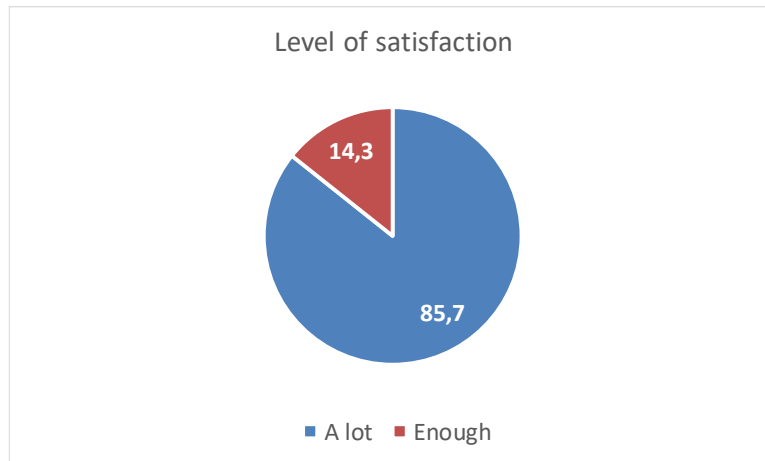
According to the Bulgarian project partner, sport events that had used a child-friendly approach registered an increase in women's participation compared to those that had not used it.

In addition, according to the Bulgarian project partner, the project contributed to providing students in physical and sport education with qualitative internships offers.

Several factors favoured the achievement of the above-mentioned outcomes.

- Identification of a specific target group (i.e. women with children aged 2-10 years) and its needs, which allows better tailoring of the activities planned by the programme;
- Provision of detailed and written information on the service and on the carers involved in its delivery;
- Placing the childcare activity near to the place where the sport activity takes part so that women are able to see their children;
- Organising a wide range of activities tailored to different ages, among which children can select the ones they like;
- Quality of the intervention and, in particular, of the carers (i.e. students), which enhances women's confidence in the service by overcoming their concerns about their children's safety in their absence.

The high quality of the intervention is also shown by the high level of respondents' satisfaction with the pilot programme activities as well as that all respondents would recommend the childcare service to other people.



In order to increase the effectiveness of the programme in the future, specific attention should be paid to the following issues:

- Providing guidance on minimum rules for accessing the service, such as suitable clothing for children and their good health (e.g. children should not be placed in the childcare service in case of flu, fever);
- Paying attention to intersectionality (e.g. migration background, disability) in the design of sport activities offered by the childcare service;
- Providing facilities for baby care (e.g. changing tables);
- Extending the service to non-competitive and small events that could attract women who are inactive.

7.2.3 Sustainability of the programme

The childcare service will continue after the end of the project. The service will be provided free of charge, thanks to the collaboration with the National Academy of Education and Sports. This collaboration allows Sofia 2018 not to sustain additional costs for carers, as students are involved as volunteers within the internship activity planned as part of the academic curriculum.

8 SW-UP pilot programmes: a transversal analysis

This section provides a transversal analysis of the assessments of pilot programmes carried out within the SW-UP project. As the section draws on the findings of the common survey submitted to participants in the SW-UP programmes, it refers in particular to Corbetta, Granollers, Guimarães and Râmnicu Sărat. The results of the participatory assessment of the pilot programme implemented in Sofia are taken into account to a lesser extent, as the assessment questionnaire was different from the one submitted to participants from other cities. This is due to the fact that the programme implemented in Sofia had different features from the ones implemented in the other SW-UP cities and required a tailored questionnaire for assessing its outcomes.

The section focuses on the three core questions of the participatory assessment:

- Have pilot programmes contributed to achieving changes to the initial problem?
- Who has benefitted most from the changes?
- How have changes occurred?

Have pilot programmes contributed to achieving changes to the initial problem? Who are the beneficiaries?

Framing the problem at the basic pilot programmes

The WHO estimates that annually 35 million people die of diseases associated with physical inactivity. Apart from human costs, there are huge financial costs caused by the increased rates of heart diseases, stroke and diabetes, which put pressure on health expenditure.

Sport, exercise and physical activity are key components of a healthy lifestyle. Nevertheless, living conditions in the context of contemporary societies have changed implying a reduction of physical activity and a shift towards a sedentary lifestyle strictly linked to the use of computers, TVs and smartphones. In the so-called WEIRD societies (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic) physical inactivity is becoming a new norm, and 'for the first time in recorded history children have a shorter lifespan than their parents due to non-communicable diseases' (Bailey, 2018). Indeed, the Expert Group on Health-enhancing Physical Activity speaks of a 'pandemic of physical inactivity' (2015).

The risk of the increase in the pandemic of physical inactivity is higher in urban contexts, where most of the population will live in the next years. By 2030 the proportion of European citizens living in urban areas is expected to increase to 80 % (WHO, 2017). City expansion, urban sprawl and extension of transport networks might lead to even greater reliance on motorised transport. Coupled with a prevalently sedentary lifestyle, limited access to green areas and recreational facilities, it might negatively affect citizens' health.

Furthermore, the continuous increase in physical inactivity is expected to affect more women than men, as both sports and public spaces are traditional social domains constructed for and led by men (Mulier Institute, 2018; Aitchison, 2003; Hargreaves, 1994; Massey, 1994). Women are less engaged in both indoor and outdoor sport/physical activity than men (European Commission, 2014; WHO, 2006; Expert Group on Health-enhancing Physical Activity, 2015; Mulier Institute, 2018).

As revealed by the SW-UP survey '[Towards gender equity in urban outdoor spaces](#)' (Mulier Institute, 2018), in order to close this gap and ensure gender equality in the practice of sport/physical activity, particular attention should be paid to ensuring the following main conditions:

- Safety and quality of the sport facilities;
- Closeness of facilities to women's homes/workplaces;
- Zero or reduced costs of sport activities;
- Facilities appropriate to both women's and men's needs;

- Good guidance of activities.

Based on literature and the SW-UP survey evidence, in all five cities the pilot programmes aimed to increase women's sport practice through improving the conditions required for women to engage in outdoor sports/physical activity.

Tackling the identified problem

Within the framework of the SW-UP project, the pilot programmes tackled the following conditions in order to increase women's involvement in sport practice and motivate them to continue outdoor sport practice even after the end of the programmes.

- Safety of outdoor areas

According to the SW-UP survey, safety of outdoor areas were deemed particularly relevant for sport practice in Râmnicu Sărat and Guimarães. Several aspects contribute to the feeling of being unsafe, such as structural conditions of facilities (e.g. lack of lighting), a lack of people to practise sport with and a fear of men's annoying behaviour. Indeed, in both cities women identify lack of people to practise sport with as a relevant barrier to practising sport. In Râmnicu Sărat, women also identified the fear of annoying behaviour as a barrier to sport practice.

In both cities, the pilot programmes focused on the one hand on creating opportunities for animating the public places and on the other hand on providing women with the opportunity to practise outdoor sport with other people. Thus, in both cities the programme provided outdoor activities (Pilates, gymnastics in the park, walks, bike cross) in public parks. In Guimarães, public parks were selected that were deemed not secure.

- Closeness of facilities to women's homes/workplaces

Pilot programmes of Corbetta, Granollers and Guimarães tackled this issue in two ways: providing outdoor sport opportunities in various locations; providing outdoor sport opportunities within public offices (in Corbetta) during lunchbreaks.

- Free of charge/limited costs of sport activities

In all pilot programmes, participation in all programme activities was free of charge.

- Facilities adequate to both women's and men's needs

While the programmes could not intervene on the structural conditions of outdoor facilities, they provided the municipality and other public institutions with information on the reasons, explaining the feeling of being unsafe by women involved in the survey.

However, in all cities pilot programmes focused on providing outdoors activities tailored to women's needs and services that could support women's engagement in sport.

In all pilot programmes, activities were specifically designed for women, even though in some cases (PT, BG) they were also open to men.

It is worth mentioning that specific questionnaires were submitted to participants in pilot programmes of Corbetta and Guimarães to understand their level of sport practice, their awareness of outdoor sports and their needs.

In all cases, the programmes focused mainly on 'soft activities' (gymnastics, walks, etc.) so as to be appropriate for various groups of women (young women, older women, women with specific diseases, etc.) with or without experience in sport practice.

Furthermore, the programmes focused on increasing the opportunity to better conciliate sport with work/family care, identified as one of the main barriers to sport practice by women who never/hardly practise sport. Pilot programmes adopted various solutions aimed at tackling this issue:

- Provision of outdoor sport activities during work hours – lunchbreak – in Corbetta;
 - Provision of outdoor sport activities during women’s dead times (i.e. while accompanying their children to practise sport or in parks) in Guimarães and Granollers;
 - Provision of outdoor activities for the whole family during the weekend in Guimarães;
 - Provision of babysitting at sport activities for children during sport events in Sofia;
 - Provision of outdoor activities during evenings in Corbetta.
- Good guidance of activities

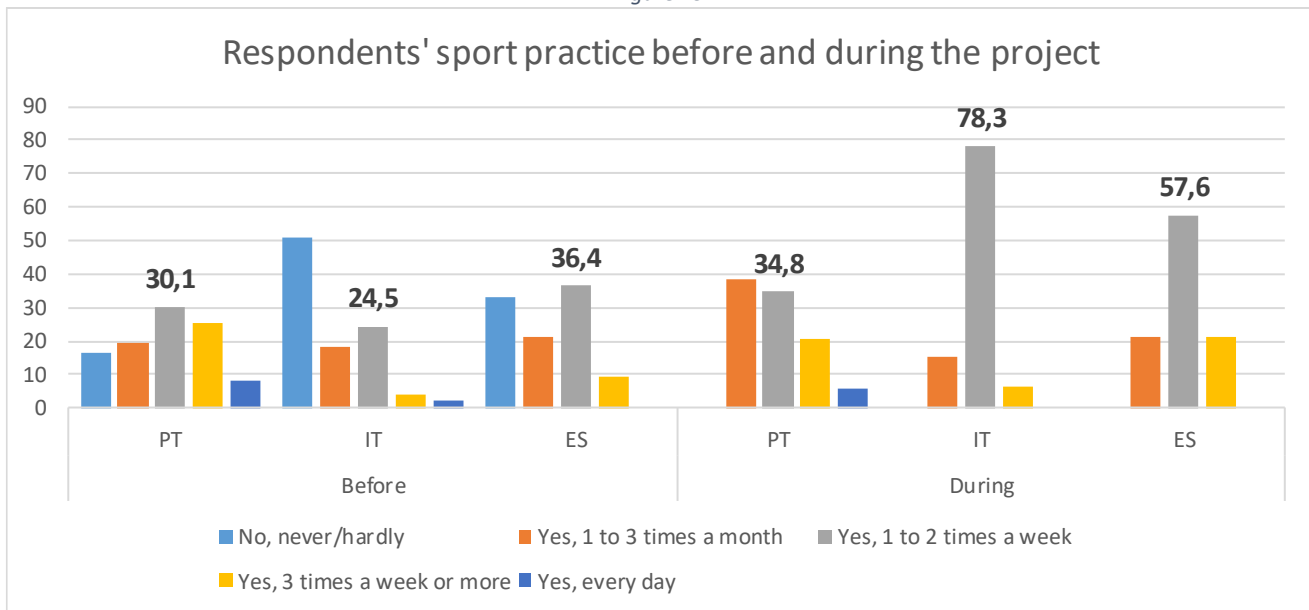
In order to ensure good guidance of activities, specialised trainers were engaged in all pilot programmes. In Sofia, an agreement was signed with the National Academy of Sports in order to involve students in physical education and sports in the third and fourth year of university in the delivery of the babysitting at sport activities.

Contribution of pilot programmes to changes in the identified problems and the beneficiaries

In all cases **pilot programmes contributed to increasing women’s sport practice during its delivery**. Regular sport practice (at least once or twice a week) increased in particular in Corbetta (+220 %) and Granollers (+58 %), while it remained more limited in Portugal (+16 %). While in Italy and Spain, occasional sport practice (one to three times a month) was completely replaced by regular sport practice, in Guimarães a 97 % increase was registered during the programme period. This may be due to the fact that the programme implementation lasted for less time than in Corbetta and Granollers (one month in Guimarães compared to eight months in Granollers and ten months in Corbetta). This, coupled with the combination of sport activities with workshops, resulted in a more limited offer of regular outdoor sport activities during the programme implemented in Guimarães.

Daily sport activities decreased in Portugal and Italy during the implementation of the programme. As pointed out by project partners, this may be due to bad weather conditions during the programme (winter period in Italy and beginning of spring in Portugal). According to the SW-UP project partners, in both countries people generally reduce their participation in sport and in particular in outdoor sports/physical activity under extreme (cold or hot weather) climate conditions. In addition, in Portugal some of the participants reported diseases (infarct) and limited transport to outdoor facilities as other reasons for reducing daily participation in outdoor sports.

Figure 49



In all the above-mentioned cities, increase in regular sport practice within the programme was in particular favoured by the following.

- There was better conciliation of sport activities with family care (i.e. 98 % of respondents in PT, 97 % in ES and 69 % in IT) and work (i.e. 97 % of survey respondents in ES, 95 % in PT and 69 % in IT).
- Provision of activities was free to participants (in particular in Corbetta and Granollers).
- An inclusive group of people to practice with was available (in particular in Corbetta and Granollers).
- Fun activities tailored to participants', and in particular women's, needs and capacities were devised. In some cases (PT), their combination with traditional music or discovery of new outdoor places was particularly relevant for engaging people and in particular women.
- The quality of the intervention and, in particular of trainers involved, was high. Indeed, over 80 % of participants in pilot programmes in Corbetta, Guimarães and Granollers reported a high level of satisfaction with participation in programme activities. A large part of survey respondents from Guimarães and Corbetta identify trainers' high empathy and capacity to adapt training to their specific needs as relevant reasons for practising sport regularly.

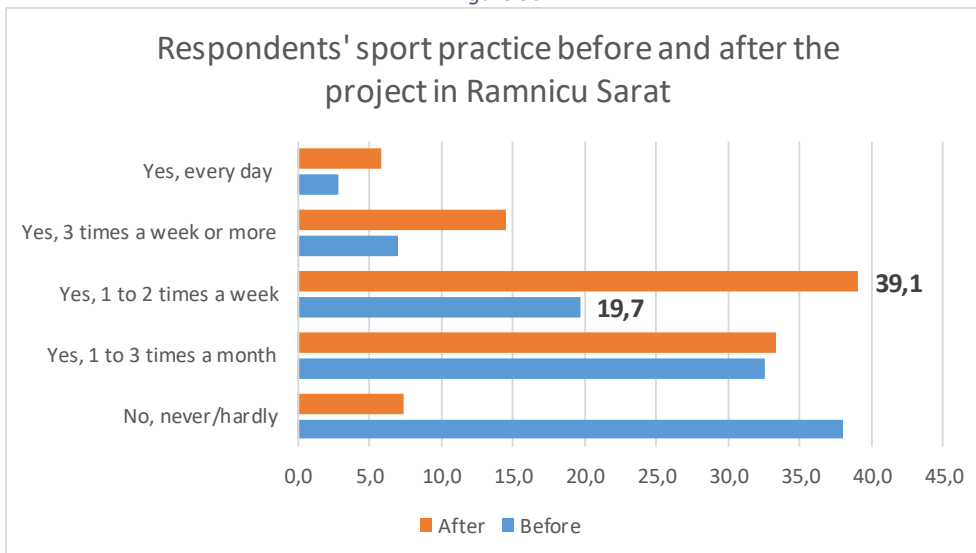
This confirms the capacity to effectively tackle some of the conditions required for women's regular sport practice mentioned previously (conciliation, provision of free activities and safety).

Not only have pilot programmes provided women with opportunities to practise sport regularly, but they **have also motivated them to continue practising sport after the end of the programme**⁵.

In Râmnicu Sărat, regular sport practice (at least once or twice a week) after the end of the programme activities increased by 98 % compared to the period before the programme, while daily practice increased by 107 %. A relevant increase (107 %) is also noted in occasional sport practice (one to three times a month). This may be due to the fact that women who had hardly ever practised outdoor sports before the programme started to do it occasionally. A reduction of 81 % in women practising none/hardly any outdoor sport activity can be noted after their involvement in the programme.

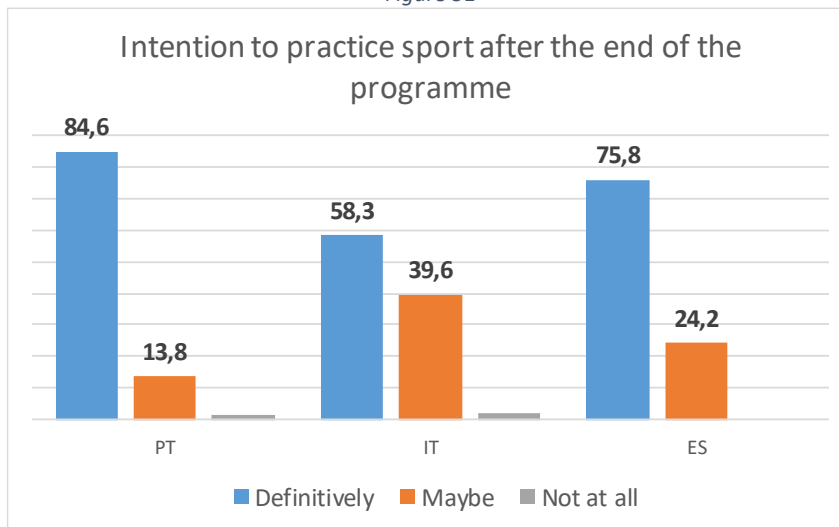
⁵ In Romania, some of the activities were provided only once. Thus, it was possible to assess sport practice after the project. In Guimaraes, Spain and Italy activities were offered continuously during the programme implementation. As the questionnaire was submitted at the end of the programme or before its end, it was possible to assess only the intention to continue the sport practice.

Figure 50



In Corbetta, Granollers and Guimarães over 58 % of the participants in the programme reported the intention to continue practising sport even after the end of the programme.

Figure 51

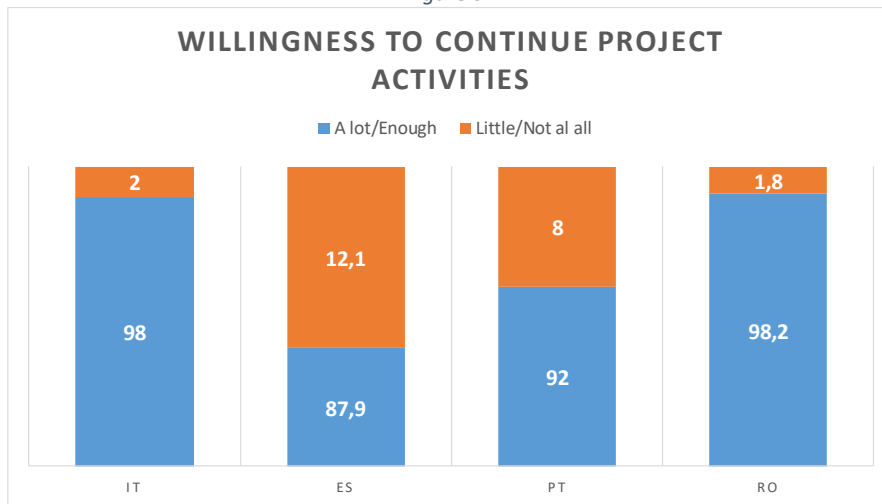


As revealed by focus groups with Italian women participating the programme, **the large percentage of people declaring that they would probably continue outdoor sport practice depends on the availability of a programme with the same features as the SW-UP programme.** This means the possibility to conciliate sport with family care/work, qualitative trainers and activities offered, an enjoyable group of people to practise sport with and free of charge or low costs for taking part in outdoor sport activities.

In Sofia, over 70 % of survey respondents involved in the programme reported that, even though probably they would have still participated in the respective outdoor sport event in the absence of the programme, they would definitely practise more outdoor sports if the SW-UP babysitting service were offered in all sport events.

In the other cities as well, **over 60 % of participants** in surveys and focus groups **expressed a high interest in continuing to practise the SW-UP activities** offered during the pilot programmes.

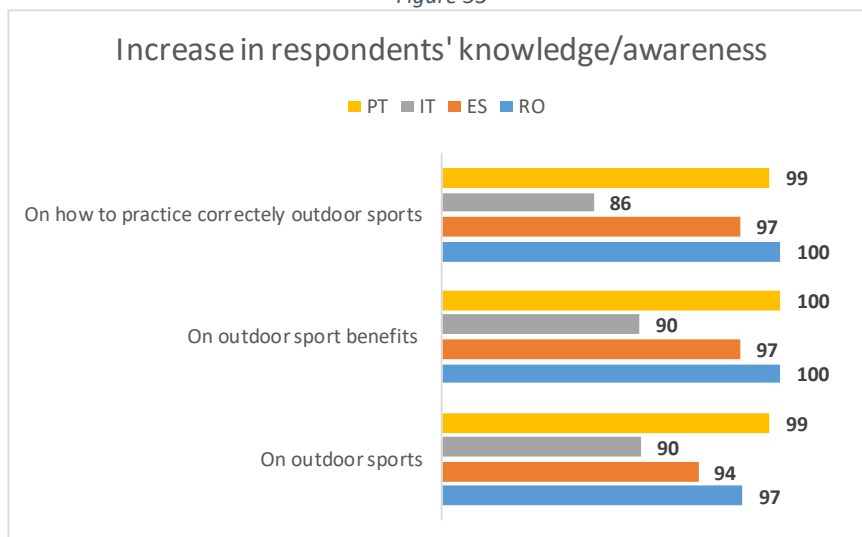
Figure 52



Besides increasing women’s practice of outdoor sport activities, pilot programmes have also contributed to achieving other outcomes.

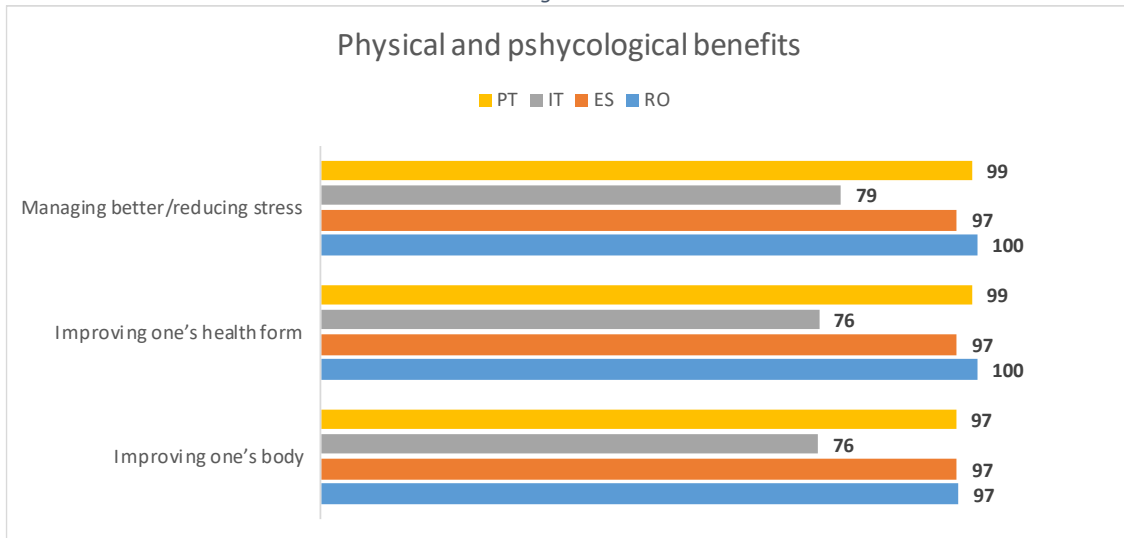
First of all, the programmes **increased women’s knowledge and awareness of outdoor sports**, and in particular on how to practise them correctly to avoid injuries, and regarding their benefits.

Figure 53



In addition, pilot programmes also contributed to **improving the physical and psychological health** of the participants. A high proportion of participants in the SW-UP assessment survey and focus group reported an improvement in their physical condition (e.g. less back pain, losing weight or toning up) and psychological condition (e.g. reduced stress, better management of emotions, feeling of relaxation, overall well-being).

Figure 54

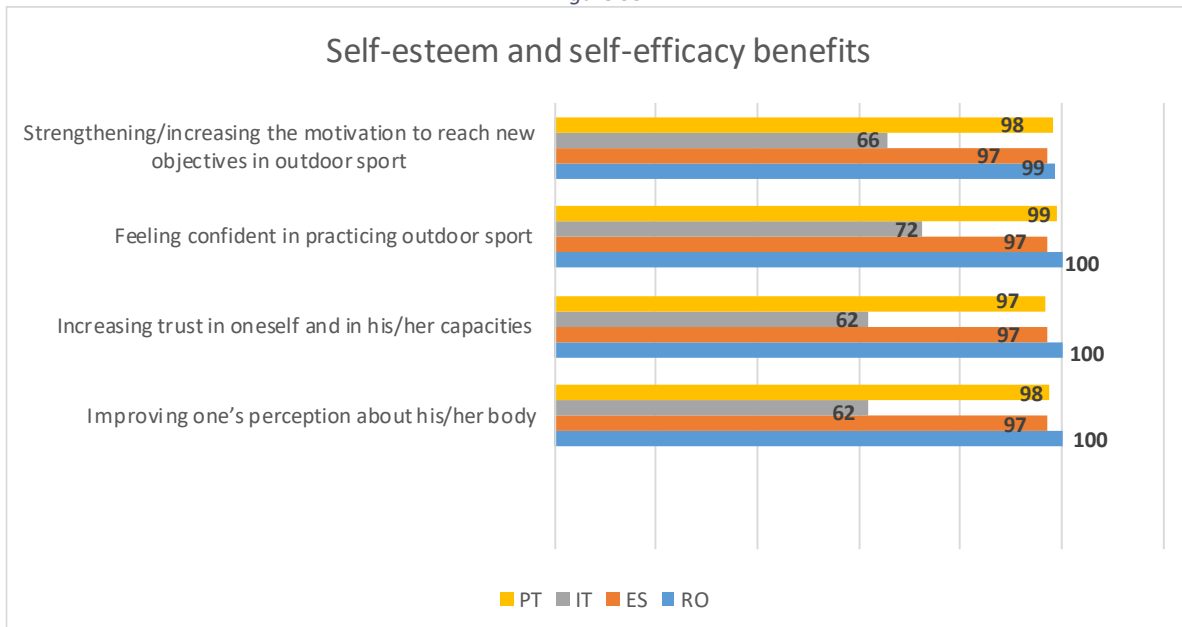


Moreover, over 90 % of respondents to the assessment survey and focus groups carried out in Corbetta, Guimarães, Corbetta and Râmnicu Sărat underline that participation in pilot programmes allowed them to improve care for themselves.

In the long run, improvement in participants' physical and psychological condition coupled with greater self-care may contribute to a reduction in health care expenditure. As most of the participants are women, improvement in their well-being and health is particularly relevant for reducing health care costs, as women tend to live longer than men, but spend more years in worst health (EuroHealthNet, 2017).

Increasing participants' self-esteem and self-efficacy is another outcome of the pilot programmes. This is particularly relevant in the case of women, who represent most of the programme beneficiaries, as they experience a greater lack of confidence in themselves than men do (Dunning D. and Ehrlinger J., 2003).

Figure 55



Increase in self-esteem and self-efficacy coupled with physiological and physical well-being can favour an improved job/education attainment in the long term (Taylor et al., 2015). Focus groups with participants in the Italian programme unveiled an increase in some of the participants' ability to cope with daily tasks as well as in their energy level. In addition, an increase in self-esteem and self-efficacy can trigger a higher motivation to

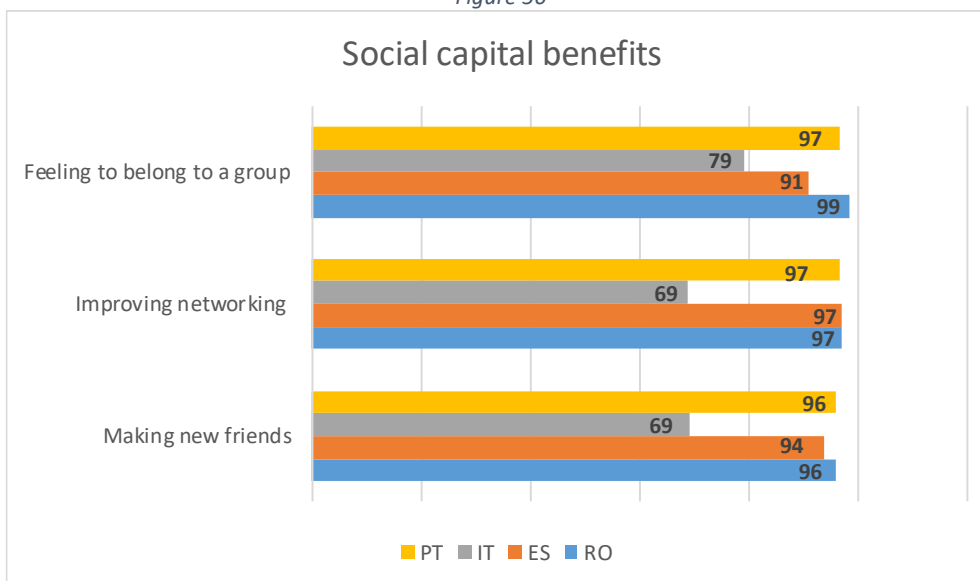
practise sport. Feeling insecure about their body and having never practised outdoor sports are two relevant barriers to sport practice mentioned by women responding to the SW-UP survey.

An **increase in social capital** represents an additional benefit revealed by survey and focus groups respondents involved in pilot programmes. Increase in social capital is particularly relevant for women, the main beneficiary of this outcome, as several studies point out that women suffer a ‘closure penalty’, especially when they have children, while men benefit from their larger networks (Lutter, 2015; Addis and Joxhe, 2016). In addition, several authors (e.g. Addis and Joxhe, 2016; Norris and Inglehart, 2003) underline that women have higher access to bonding social capital (connecting with similar people), which is more often associated with negative externalities, rather than to bridging capital (connecting with different people) leading to positive externalities. Increase in participating women’s social capital is particularly relevant as it allows them to have access to bridging social capital; sport acts as a ‘social glue’ between people of all sorts.

The programme contributed in particular to creating a group feeling. As pointed out by the survey respondents and focus group participants, most of the trainers involved in SW-UP programmes paid particular attention to creating inclusive groups that could further motivate participants to keep a constant engagement in the programme. Participants in both Granollers and Corbetta pilot programmes identified the existence of a group that stimulates participation as a reason to attend the programme regularly. Furthermore, in the case of Guimarães and Râmnicu Sărat pilot programmes, the increase in social networks may provide an answer to participants’ need to have someone to practise sport with.

Besides increasing motivation to practising sport, a higher social bounding reduces the feeling of social isolation and favours participation in community life (Bloom et al., 2005; Taylor et al., 2015; Holt et al., 2009).

Figure 56



How have changes occurred?

In answer to this question, the analysis will focus on factors that have favoured the achievement of the outcomes of pilot programmes. A specific attention will also be paid to factors that have hindered their achievement.

What has worked?

Participatory assessment activities point out several factors that have favoured the achievement of outcomes. Identifying a specific target group (women, women with children, women with chronic diseases problems, etc.) and the analysis of its specific needs allowed for a better **tailoring of the proposed programmes**. The

programmes proposed to tackle some of the most common barriers to women's sport practice caused by lack of time due to the limited possibility to conciliate sport with family care and work, costs of the activities and no one to practise sport with. Evidence from Corbetta and Granollers shows that the timing of the activity (i.e. compatible with family care and work requirements) and the type of activity proposed ('soft' sport activity suitable for all ages and sport capacities) are particularly relevant for keeping participants in the programme. The Guimarães experience also confirms that the timing of the activity can favour or hinder all women's participation in the activity. In this case, the organisation of workshops during office hours limited the participation of employed women and attracted mostly retired women.

In addition, evidence from Corbetta, Granollers and Râmnicu Sărat shows that the **free-of-charge feature of the activities** provided is also particularly relevant for motivating women to participate in the programme. While this is particularly relevant for attracting women – in particular single mothers – into the programmes, it is not sufficient for keeping them engaged over a long period of time, as evidence from Corbetta suggests.

The **provision of a personalised follow-up** represents another reason explaining women's desire to take part in the programme and constant engagement in it over a certain period of time. Indeed, women involved in the pilot programmes of Corbetta and Granollers pointed out the value of the personalised follow-up and training for motivating them to regularly attend the programme activities. This is consistent with the SW-UP survey 'Towards gender equity in outdoor sport spaces', according to which good guidance represents one of the conditions for women's regular sport practice.

Providing **different types of fun sport activities** (gymnastics, walks, volleyball, handball, bike cross, etc.) and their **combination with other types of activities** (e.g. culture) also explain women's engagement in the programme activities. The provision of various types of activities allowed the programmes to attract women already engaged in sport and women without any sport experience. Their combination with other activities (e.g. culture, discovery of new places) proved particularly relevant for attracting women that practise hardly any sport, as the Guimarães experience points out.

The Guimarães experience also shows that the provision of whole family activities (e.g. walks) can also incentivise women's participation in outdoor sports.

In addition, the experience of Sofia shows that providing women with **services** that not only ensure a higher **conciliation of sport with family care**, but also **support women in acting as role models** for their children also constitute a relevant incentive to constant outdoor sport practice.

High quality of the interventions provided is a reason explaining women's regular engagement in sport practice in all the pilot programmes. In all pilot programmes, high quality of the interventions resulted in an increase in participants' level of satisfaction with programme activities, which in turn acted as leverage for constant engagement in the programme activities.

The **high level of trainers' skills and competences** is crucial for ensuring regular involvement in proposed outdoor sport activities. Indeed, in all pilot programmes trainers' competences, their empathy, their capacity to create inclusive groups and to accommodate the specific needs of all participants was not only a reason of satisfaction with the programme activities, but also a relevant reason for participating in them.

The **provision of opportunities for social interaction and the creation of an inclusive group with whom all participants can identify** themselves increases women's regular sport practice. While in Granollers and Corbetta, practising outdoor sports with other people was not reported as a primary motivation for joining the programme, it represented one of the reasons that stimulated regular participation during the programme delivery. In Corbetta, finding a similar group was considered one of the conditions for continuing to practise outdoor sport after the end of the programme.

The **novelty of the programmes concept** triggered women's curiosity in discovering the programme and participating in it, as pointed out by the experience of Granollers and Râmnicu Sărat.

The **legitimisation of outdoor sport/physical activity programmes** also acted as leverage for women's participation in the programme. In the SW-UP pilot programmes, two main factors contributed to their legitimacy: the involvement of trustworthy testimonials (Râmnicu Sărat, Guimarães) and displaying the EU logo (Guimarães and Corbetta). While trustworthy participants triggered a bandwagon effect (emulation of the testimonials' behaviours by other people), the display of the EU logo was considered a sign of quality of the intervention.

Providing moral (awards, etc.) **or economic** (discounts, bonuses, vouchers for sport practice, access to additional free services such as the medical advice, etc) **incentives** for participating in programme activities increased participation in sport activities, as the experience of Guimarães points out. Focus groups with project partners shows that the provision of a gadget to those joining the walk represented an incentive for participating in the activity. The number of people increased once the provision of a gadget was announced.

What has not worked?

The implementation of the programmes was also characterised by barriers that should be carefully tackled in future implementations.

- **Opposition to the activities being dedicated only to women** (in Granollers). Opponents raised concerns about the fact that such activities could further reinforce gender stereotypes related to family care. According to them, such programmes could risk reinforcing the idea that women need specific measures for allowing them to care for both family and themselves, instead of encouraging men to take over their share of responsibility, freeing time for women.
- **Lack of sport trainers specialised in training for people with chronic diseases** (in Guimarães). Since physiotherapists are the ones specialised in physical activity for people with specific health conditions, most of the training has a medical purpose and not a recreational one and physical activity is limited by the physiotherapy prescribed.
- **Limited communication** (in Guimarães). In Portugal, communication of the pilot programme was limited by the rules on publicity during the elections for the European Parliament. The need for increasing communication through the use of various channels (social media, traditional media, institutional websites and newsletters, word of the mouth) was signalled in all the five cities.
- **Bad transport connections**, which limit participants' access to outdoor facilities. Bad transport connection implies higher time journey times, which may increase women's difficulties in conciliating the activity with other family/personal duties. This represented a problem in particular in Guimarães. Guimarães is also one of the largest cities among those involved in the programme.
- **Reduction in participation in outdoor activities during winter periods or bad weather conditions** (in Guimarães and Corbetta). According to SW-UP project partners, this is an issue typical of southern European countries, where people are less accustomed to practising outdoor sports under bad weather conditions.
- **Lack of outdoor qualitative and aesthetic facilities** (in Râmnicu Sărat). It is widely acknowledged nowadays that high-quality and attractive outdoor facilities can stimulate their use.

9 Conclusions and recommendations

Nowadays, European societies are characterised by increased physical inactivity, in particular affecting women of all ages (European Commission 2014; WHO, 2006). As evidenced by the literature review and the survey conducted within the SW-UP project by Mulier Institute, the main barriers to women's practice of sport are the limited conciliation of sport activities with family care and work, the unsafe feeling, the lack of someone to practise sport with and the costs of sport/physical activities. The Mulier study 'Towards gender equity in urban outdoor sport spaces' (2018) points out that safety and quality of outdoor facilities, their closeness to women's homes, their adaptation to both women's and men's needs and no/low costs represent the main conditions for getting women into/maintaining their engagement in outdoor sports. In addition, having someone to practise sport with represents a relevant condition for engaging women who hardly practise any sport, in outdoor sports.

In this context, the SW-UP pilot programmes implemented in Corbetta, Granollers, Guimarães, Râmnicu Sărat and Sofia aim to increase women's participation in outdoor sports by improving conditions required for their constant engagement: conciliation of sport with other activities (family care/work/personal duties); providing activities adapted to women's needs and free of charge; providing opportunities for practising outdoor sport with other people.

Conciliation of outdoor sports with personal duties is tackled in all pilot programmes through:

- The adaptation of the schedule to mother's and working women's needs: in Corbetta, activities were provided in different times of the day (during the lunch break; during the late afternoon and during the evening); in Granollers, activities were provided during the dead times of mothers accompanying their children to practise sport (in the late afternoon); in Guimarães, activities were provided on Sunday to allow for participation of all categories of women;
- The provision of support services: the pilot programme of Sofia tested a babysitting sport activity for women participating in the outdoor sport events organised within Sofia, European Capital of Sport;
- The provision of activities in different areas of the city: this allows a higher number of women to be reached close to their homes.

Providing mixed and fun group outdoor sport activities (gymnastic classes and volleyball in Corbetta; gymnastics in Granollers; gymnastics, walks and workshops in Guimarães; Pilates, bike cross, handball, debates in Râmnicu Sărat) is a feature of pilot programmes in all cities. In Sofia, the pilot programme ensures variety of outdoor sports for children participating in the babysitting service provided during outdoor sport events targeted also/specifically to women.

Participation at no cost is also ensured in all pilot programmes.

Even though some of the activities promoted within the programmes (i.e. Guimarães, Râmnicu Sărat, Corbetta) also addressed men, they were designed taking into consideration women's specific needs. Indeed, almost all programme beneficiaries in all cities are women.

These programme features allowed pilot programmes to obtain relevant outcomes in all five cases. An increase in the regular sport practice (at least once or twice a day) was noted in Granollers (+58 %), Guimarães (+16 %) and Corbetta (+220 %) during the implementation of the programme. In addition, in all these cases over 50 % of participants involved in the assessment survey reported the intention to continue practising sport after the end of the SW-UP programmes. In Râmnicu Sărat, an increase of 98 % was noted in women's regular outdoor sport practice after the programme.

Besides increasing women's participation in outdoor sports and motivating them to maintain a constant engagement, pilot programmes also contributed to the achievement of relevant outcomes that can help to narrow the gender gap in various areas (e.g. health, community participation, labour market).

When it comes to health, in all cases a large proportion of women involved in the assessment survey reported physical (e.g. reduction in body pain, correct posture, losing weight, toning up) and psychological (e.g. reduced stress, increased energy, overall well-being, etc.) benefits. Maintaining the same benefits over a long period of time is particularly relevant for improving women's healthy ageing, in a context where women are expected to live longer than men, but in worst health conditions.

Long-term effects on women's participation in the labour market are favoured by an increase in women's self-esteem and self-efficacy as well as by the increase in their bridging social capital resources. Several studies point out that women experience a lower confidence in their own capacities than men that prevents them from seizing relevant education/job opportunities. In all cases, pilot programmes showed that they have the potential to contribute to an increase in women's self-esteem and self-efficacy that goes beyond sports.

In addition, evidence from literature shows that women, in particular women with children, pay a 'closure penalty', as they have more limited social networks than men. In addition, when networks are present they are mostly composed of similar people. On the contrary, men interact more with people with from different social layers. This allows them to increase their opportunities of participating in community life and having access to better occupations. Outdoor sport can act as a 'social glue' for women, allowing them to improve their bridging social capital resources. This is confirmed by experience in Granollers, Guimarães, Corbetta and Râmnicu Sărat where over 68 % of respondents to the survey assessment reported a growth in their social networks.

However, it is important to note that long-term effects on health, education/job performance and community participation depend on maintaining the sport practice over a long period of time. The SW-UP pilot programmes may contribute to obtaining the above-mentioned long-term effects, as in all cases the SW-UP pilot programmes will continue after the end of the SW-UP project.

The experience of the SW-UP pilot programmes shows that in implementing outdoor sport activities for women, particular attention should be paid to the following aspects.

- *Tailoring interventions to women's needs*

In order to better tailor interventions to women's needs, it is recommended that the target group is involved in the design of the intervention. In addition, a gender analysis should be conducted in order to gather detailed information on women's needs.

Evidence from the SW-UP pilot programmes shows that in order to adapt interventions to women's needs particular attention should be paid to:

- The scheduling of the activities – the activities should be programmed at various times of the day to allow to different groups of women (e.g. mothers, employees, retired women) to participate in the activity.
- The localisation of the activities – activities should be spread around the territory in order to be closer to women's homes and allow a greater number of women to participate in them. In addition, particular attention should be paid to mobility towards the selected places in order to ensure the participation of women that do not live nearby the selected place.
- The low costs/no charges for the activities – this is particularly relevant for single mothers, as pointed out by the experience of the pilot programme of Corbetta.
- The type of activities proposed – a mix of outdoor sport activities suitable to all women (with or without experience in practising sport, women with specific diseases, etc.) should be offered. Furthermore,

personalised follow-up and training should be carefully considered, as it responds better to women's needs in practising sports.

- The combination of outdoor sport activities with other types of activities – the combination of outdoor sport activities with other types of activities, ensuring conciliation of sport with family care (e.g. babysitting sport services for women's children; outdoor sports for the whole family) and enhancing self-care (e.g. medical advice, nutritional advice), can increase women's participation in the programme.
- *Mixing women-only activities with activities open to the whole family*

According to focus groups carried out within the participatory assessment, involving the whole family in outdoor sports may represent an additional incentive to outdoor sport practice. However, for some women opening the activity to the whole family may represent a disincentive, as they might not be able to detach themselves fully from family care duty. In addition, women might also fear being observed by men and not wish to take part in the activity. Therefore, the outdoor sport offer should be varied and should include both types of activities, so that women can select the one most suitable to their needs and expectations.

- *Ensuring high quality of the intervention and, in particular, of trainers*

Evidence gathered during the assessment of pilot programmes shows that the quality of the intervention resulted in women's satisfaction, which in turn acted as leverage for their constant participation in the programme.

Particular attention should be paid to trainers' level of skills, competences and empathy. In all pilot programmes the competences of trainers and their ability to include everyone in the activity and in the group was one of the main reasons explaining women's constant participation in the programme. Furthermore, specific emphasis should be put on trainers' capacity to adapt outdoor sport activities to women with diseases.

- *Providing opportunities for social interaction*

In most of the SW-UP pilot programmes, the creation of inclusive groups of women represented an incentive for attending the programme. As noted previously, the lack of someone to practise sport with is one of the major barriers to women's sport practice. In addition, the provision of social interaction opportunities can also contribute to increasing women's social capital resources, supporting their higher participation in community life and the labour market. Therefore, particular attention should be paid to providing opportunities for outdoor sport groups, creating inclusive groups and enhancing the group spirit.

- *Involving the local community*

Besides involving women in the design of the activities, particular attention should be paid to local stakeholders' involvement. Local stakeholders should have a relevant role not only in the promotion of outdoor activities, but also in their design and delivery. For instance, sport businesses could be involved in the provision of incentives (e.g. prizes, discounts) to participation. In addition, trustworthy local actors could be involved as role models for enhancing women's participation.

- *Ensuring multichannel communication*

In the experience of SW-UP pilot programmes, the limited communication hindered participation in the programme activities. Multichannel communication (social media, traditional media, institutional websites and newsletters, word of mouth, etc.) is particularly important for diffusing outdoor sport activities to all women in the respective city.

- *Accompanying positive discrimination in access to outdoor sport programmes with awareness-raising campaigns on gender equality in family care*

One of the major oppositions raised during the SW-UP programme was pointing out the risk of spreading a message that contradicts the spirit of the pilot programmes and reinforces gender stereotypes on women's role in society: i.e. women need specific interventions to cope with both family burden and self-care.

However, the SW-UP pilot programmes shed light on the fact that activities specifically tailored to women's needs represent an effective way for getting women into sports and keeping them engaged over a long period of time. Furthermore, positive discrimination is widely acknowledged and used to enhance gender equality.

Nevertheless, in order to avoid such a risk, pilot programmes should be complemented with awareness-raising campaigns on gender equality in sport and all spheres of life.

- *Ensuring quality and aesthetic facilities adapted to women's needs*

As mentioned in the beginning of the report, the quality of the facilities is one of the conditions for women's constant engagement in outdoor sports. In the cities where outdoor sport facilities are not highly qualitative and adapted to women's needs (e.g. Râmnicu Sărat), this hinders women's motivation to remain engaged in the respective sport/physical activity. Women involved in the pilot programmes of Corbetta and Granollers also raised this issue. In both cases, the poor quality of some of the facilities was a reason for dissatisfaction.

- *Providing incentives to women's participation*

The experience of some of the SW-UP pilot programmes shows that providing incentives (e.g. gadgets) may enhance women's participation in the outdoor programmes. Incentives may be both economic and/or moral.

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Annex: SW-UP standard participatory assessment questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of the evaluation of the **SW-UP Sport for Women in Urban Places** project, which is co-financed by the European Union's Erasmus + Sport programme. This questionnaire is anonymous, and your answers are confidential and will only be used for this study. The data will be analysed in an aggregated manner and will be dealt with according to the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation EU no. 2016/679. At no time will the data be transmitted to third parties. The estimated time to respond is around 15 minutes. Thank you for your cooperation and sincerity in the answers!

1.1 Sex (please specify) Male Female

1.2 Age (please specify)

1.3 In which of the programme activities did you participate?

.....

1.4 How often did you participate in the above-mentioned activities?

- Once
- From time to time
- Regularly enough
- Always

If you answered once or from time to time, can you please explain why?

.....

1.5 What corresponds best to your own current household situation?

- I live with my parent(s)/guardian(s)
- I live on my own
- I share an apartment with someone (different from the boyfriend/husband, sons, etc)
- I live with a partner/spouse
- I live with a partner/spouse with child(ren)
- I am a single parent and live with my child(ren)
- Other, namely _____

1.6 How would you describe your social position at the moment? Choose the answer that most applies to you.

- I am a pupil/student
- I am part time employed
- I am full time employed
- I am a housewife/houseman
- I am unemployed
- I am retired
- Other, namely...

1.7 Before participating in the SW-UP project, were you active in outdoor sports/physical activity? Please keep in mind an average week of the last twelve months before entering the project.

- No, never/hardly
- Yes, 1 to 3 times a month
- Yes, 1 to 2 times a week
- Yes, 3 times a week or more
- Yes, every day

1.8 How did you find about the SW-UP project?

- Communication and awareness raising events (tear-off cards, etc)
- Project materials (e.g. brochures, booklets, etc)
- Word of mouth
- Other (specify)

1.9 What motivated you to participate in the activities of the SW-UP project?

- Personal interest in outdoor sports
- Having the possibility to practice outdoor sports/physical activity
- Having the possibility to practice free sport/physical activity
- Having the possibility to practice sport/physical activity near home
- Having the possibility to conciliate sport/physical activity with work and family care or other personal duties

- The type of activities proposed
- Having the possibility to practice sport/physical activity targeted specifically to women
- Having the possibility to practice outdoor sports/physical activity with other people
- Having the possibility to try something new
- Another one brought me here
- Feeling safe in outdoor spaces
- Other (please specify)

1.10 In your opinion, to what extent did the project contribute to bringing you the following benefits?

Benefits	A lot	Enough	Little	Not at all
Getting to know better/getting close to outdoor sports/physical activities				
Practicing regularly an outdoor sport/physical activity				
Increasing awareness on the benefits of sport/physical activity for mental and physical health				
Increasing knowledge on how to practice correctly outdoor sport/physical activity				
Conciliating sport/physical activity with work/study				
Conciliating sport/physical activity with family care				
Taking better care of oneself (of my body, etc)				
Feeling confident in practicing outdoor sport/physical activity				
Strengthening/increasing the motivation to reach new objectives in sport/physical activity				

Benefits	A lot	Enough	Little	Not at all
Improving one's body				
Improving one's health form				
Managing better/reducing stress				
Improving one's perception about his/her body				
Increasing trust in oneself and in his/her capacities				
Making new friendships				
Improving networking with people from your community				
Feeling to belong to a group/community				
Spending more time outdoor				

1.11 Besides the above mentioned benefits, did you obtain others from participating in the SW-UP activities?
.....

1.12 During the project, on average how often did you practice outdoor sport/physical activity?

- One-three times a months
- One-two times a week
- Three times a week or more
- Every day

1.13 Besides the activities proposed by the project, how often did you practice other outdoor sport/physical activities

- Never
- Sometimes
- Regularly enough
- Always

Can you explain us why?
.....

1.14 After the end of the project, do you intend to practice outdoor sports/physical activity with the same/higher regularity?

- Definitely
- Maybe
- Not at all

If you have selected maybe or not at all, can you please briefly explain why?
.....

1.15 After the end of the project, how much would you like to continue the SW-UP activities, even upon payment?

Activity offered	A lot	Enough	Little	Not at all

If you have selected little or not at all, can you please briefly explain why?
.....

1.16 Overall, how satisfied are you with the SW-UP activities?

Activity offered	A lot	Enough	Little	Not at all

If you have selected little or not at all, can you please briefly explain why?
.....

1.17 What did you like in the SW-UP activities in which you participated?

.....
1.18 What did you not like in the project activities in which you participated?
.....

1.19 Would you recommend to a friend/colleague to participate in the SW-UP activities?

Definitely

Maybe

Not at all

If you have selected maybe or not at all, can you please briefly explain why?
.....

1.20 Do you have any suggestion for improving the activities in which you participated? What would you change and/or add to SW-UP activities in which you participated?
.....