



Promoting Green Strategies in Sport PROGRESS

Project Number: 101050250

Final Research Report

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Promoting Green Strategies in Sport – PROGRESS

Final Research Report

April 2023

By Ivana Parčina¹, Nemanja Čopić², Svetlana Petronijević³



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¹ Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Sport (FZS)

² Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Sport (FZS)

³ Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Sport (FZS)



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INTRODUCTION

The most recent Eurobarometer on Physical Activity (European Commission, 2022) provides compelling evidence of the need to promote health-promoting physical activity throughout Europe. Specifically, nearly half of European citizens (46%) never exercise or participate in sports. Unfortunately, the percentage of European citizens who never exercise or play sport has increased from 42% to 46%, and there is evidence that Europeans are now less likely to engage in other physical activities than they were a few years ago, in 2013; inactivity has increased from 30% to 35%.

Surprisingly, differences were discovered between countries. The study found that people in North Europe exercise or participate in sports more frequently or on a regular basis than those in the South, particularly in South-East Europe. More specifically, the percentage of people who exercise or participate in sports on a regular or semi-regular basis is higher in Finland (69%), Sweden (67%) and Denmark (63%), compared to Romania, Bulgaria, Italy, and Greece (where participation in exercise and systematic activity ranges from 32% to 38%) (Paár, cs, & Laczkó, 2020). This evidence indicates that a) physical activity participation remains low across Europe, b) the frequency of physical activity participation declines despite efforts to promote health-enhancing physical activity, and c) South-East Europe has lower levels of physical activity than North Europe. The interpretation of this data indicates that the healthy lifestyle is declining across Europe, particularly in the countries of South-East Europe, and that it is critical to identify the best possible solutions to overcome this problem and enhance an active lifestyle across Europe.

There are four major HEPA needs in Europe (Martin et al., 2006):

- a) stop the decline of physical activity participation,
- b) develop effective interventions including parents and outdoor physical activity in order to promote health enhancing physical activity,
- c) focus on countries with high physical inactivity rates, such as the South-East Europe countries and
- d) integrate new technologies into interventions aiming to promote health enhancing physical activities.

To meet existing requirements the PROGRESS project promotes parent-child outdoor physical activity in South-East Europe by utilizing new technologies and gamified activities. The project's specific goals are as follows:

- Developing a research study on best practices about educational activities promoting outdoor physical activity participation;
- Conducting a field investigation of physical educators', coaches' and trainers', and parents' beliefs about how to improve parent-child interactions and, ultimately, promote outdoor physical activity participation;



- Creating evidence-based educational tools, including training resources, for physical educators, trainers, coaches, and parents;
- Evaluating the usability and effectiveness of the educational resources in assisting physical educators, coaches, and trainers, and parents in promoting outdoor physical activity participation;
- Creating and promoting a European public policy that redefines and improves parent-child interactions and encourages outdoor physical activity participation;
- Designing and developing a specialized mobile app. The creation of a gamified model to encourage people to participate in physical activity by providing information and rewards for participation in outdoor physical activities is expected to boost the project's outputs' potential even further.

This report presents the findings of national research teams from six countries that focused on their respective sports ecosystems.

- Panos Papageorgiou, Irene Fichera, Savvina Tsiftsi - European Platform for Sports and Innovation – EPSI (Belgium)
- Lilia Topalova, freelancer expert for Sushal Hub Sdruzhenie (Bulgaria)
- Jana Turanska - ADEL Slovakia (Slovakia)
- Valerio Di Tomasso, Nazaremo Commisari, Fabrizio Di Tommaso, Vassilis Barkoukis - European Culture and Sport Organization (Italy)
- Stefanos Mamalis, Konstatina Mamalis - P.A.C. Olympiada (Greece)
- Mircea Andrei Cuciureanu - Asociatia Umanista Romana (Romania)
- Ivana Parčina, Nemanja Čopić, Svetlana Petronijević - Faculty of Sport UNT (Serbia)

The Research Committee (RC) was formed with the initial task to produce a research design. A mixed method and multi-stage approach were employed. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), document analysis enables a procedure for examining documents to understand their meaning within a particular context. Official documents such as strategies and laws served to outline political landmarks and policy and regulatory frameworks. The collection of documents followed preliminary reading and interpretation of the content (Bowen, 2009).

Since the beginning of the project, research has been carried out on the following stages:

- The Research Committee had three meetings between October and February in developing the research design.
- The national teams began collecting data during this phase. Following the data collection phase, desktop research and document analysis were carried out. Also, best practices were collected. Finally, teams administered questionnaires to participants.
- Randomly selected individuals were interviewed in all partners countries.
- Development of final report across all seven countries.



METHODOLOGY

The desk research was aimed at finding existing outdoor programs that have been successful in promoting outdoor physical activity, as well as the characteristics of these programs that contributed to their success. Furthermore, the desk research indicated the greatest strategies for facilitating physical exercise as well as the most acceptable parent-child relationship types. Each partner identified 15 good practices, for a total of 105 practices across Europe in the project's partner countries. We were influenced by the following aspects when selecting the best from this entire group: the number of participants, how many generations participate in the program, the length of the program, and sustainability (social and environmental) as demonstrated by the number of events held. Among these, we considered the involvement of decision-makers in sports and education, as well as the involvement of sports and health experts. A collection of 17 best practices was chosen to meet the demands of the PROGRESS project. (Appendix 1).

A survey with items measuring parents' physical activity, children's physical activity, and parental support for children's physical activity was created for the quantitative study. (Appendix 2).

An interview matrix was created for the qualitative study, which included questions about beliefs about health-enhancing physical activity, the need for, content, and mode of delivery of education for the promotion of physical activity. (Appendix 3).

At the conclusion of the research, national reports were produced. Each of them includes:

- A study of best practices in educational activities that promote outdoor physical activity participation
- Results of a structured questionnaires of physical educators, coaches and trainers, and parents
- Interview findings that were used to test the usability and effectiveness of educational material in the education of physical educators, trainers, coaches, and parents on how to promote outdoor physical activity participation.

FINDINGS IN BRIEF

The survey included participants from seven different nations. There were 698 total respondents, with 113 from Serbia, 102 from Bulgaria, 82 from Belgium, 101 from Slovakia, and 100 each from Romania, Italy, and Greece.

When we examine responses from all nations, mothers account for 38.8% of the total, followed by fathers at 28.5% and teachers at 17.5%. When it comes to age, 41.2% of those surveyed were between the ages of 40 and 49, followed by 33.4% of those between the ages of 20 and 29, and 23.4% of those between the ages of 30-39.





Explained by the respondents living in urban surroundings (mostly from the capital), the predominant share is the percentage of those employed with job conducted from a sitting posture (e.g. in an office) - (45.7%). Following that are those who work in jobs that need a lot of physical activity but don't require a lot of lifting (30.5%), those who work in jobs that involve a physical activity and sitting (19.8%), and those who don't work (10.9%).

According to the processed data, 64% of the whole sample's respondents participate in some activity or type of sports recreation. The highest percentage (42.6%) engages in physical exercise 2-4 times per month, 35% practice sports 1-2 times per week, and 35% many times per year.

According to 36% of respondents, they do not engage in physical activity. The majority, more than 50%, of those who do not engage in physical exercise stated that they do not have time for it, and almost 35% stated that they do not have the habit.

The next critical phase in the survey was to establish respondents' perceptions of the value and benefits of physical activity. Over 50% of common awareness is dominated by sources such as social media, television shows, and friends. The least important sources of awareness are sports publications, podcasts, daily or weekly newspapers, professional books, and YouTube videos.

The respondents' assessment of the benefits of sport and restorative exercise is strongly in favor of putting the greatest emphasis on the statement "Exercise is necessary for maintaining and improving health, learning new skills, and socializing" (with a share of around 80%), with a clear disagreement with the statements "Exercise is necessary only in case of certain diseases deformities" and "Sports and recreational activities are intended only for children and youth". These findings indicate a high level of understanding of the value of sports.

The presence of public parks and greenery (grass, trees, flowers, etc.) is estimated to be about 85% in the environment (at home, school, neighborhood), followed by playground equipment (swings, slides, swings, etc.) - about 80%, and over 60% also had access to surfaces suitable for bicycling or roller skating.

When it comes to safety, the majority of those polled felt that there are no substantial safety barriers that would interfere with children's physical activities. It's worth noting that the majority of those polled stated that they prioritize art and music over physical activity. The fact was somewhat and predictably verified that: obsession with games and phones; distance from sports facilities; and financial status are the primary reasons why youngsters are not active enough.

In the study, 50% of those surveyed disagree that children should not be supervised when participating in physical activities, and that having a physically active family will help the child. Similarly, 52% disagree that purchasing sports equipment and paying for extra sports schools is necessary for engaging in physical activity.

Based on the findings, we can conclude that half of those polled do not engage in physical activity, despite believing (70% of those polled) that their inactivity will have a negative impact on



encouraging children to exercise. Furthermore, we discovered that 90% of respondents take their children to public parks to get some exercise. This information may stimulate the creation of new playgrounds and the timely upkeep of existing ones. Similarly, in certain parks, parents must have particular activities-animations because 50% of them must be present while the children are playing outside. They may use this to extend the time youngsters and parents spend in parks.

As we all know, and as shown by this study, respondents believe that the excessive use of mobile phones is one of the primary causes of the decline in physical activity. We believe that through a specific form of communication, such as social networks, trusted individuals such as coaches, doctors (these are the most common forms of information), etc., the consequences of excessive phone use (primarily referring to deformities of the neck vertebrae, muscle imbalance, excessive obesity...), etc., could be indicated.

The interviews in each partner country were conducted with ten participants chosen at random. The interviews were directed by following instructions and asking pre-determined questions. The participants of the study comprised mostly of sports people working with children as a PE teacher or a coach. A parent also participated in the study. The purpose of the first question was to obtain a better understanding of the routines of the people who agreed to be interviewed and to figure out how best to approach them during this particular interview. Following each question that was asked, there was a follow-up question.

In the opening question, participants perceived outdoor activities as something important for children's development. The main benefits of outdoor physical activities were the establishment of a healthy lifestyle and the promotion of socialization, a sense of autonomy and contact with nature. Outdoor activities represent knowledge and interaction with the environment, light, socialization, discovery.

Importance of parent-child outdoor physical activity development for educators. In this matter, all participants agreed that the development of parent-child outdoor physical activity is important. The participants cited reasons that focused on a healthy lifestyle, outdoor physical activity and socializing. Every opportunity for children to be exposed to fresh air and sunlight is critical, especially when they are exercising. These activities, in their opinion, could include going for a walk outside, participating in a variety of sports, climbing, or simply spending time playing in parks. The participants pointed out that through this type of activity, parents and children communicate in a more relaxed environment that helps overcome the pressure of everyday life. It's a way to spend quality time together.

All coaches and teachers agree that indoor physical activity does not have the same effect as outdoor physical activity. When training or a school lesson is held outside, children always respond better. Moreover, some coaches believe that it is the right way to introduce children to sports. All



of this has a positive effect on the development of motor skills, which coaches greatly appreciate in the later training process.

Also, all participants proposed a holistic approach to the promotion of physical activity in schools through the integration of activities with parents. Several activities are suggested, such as extracurricular activities with parents during the school year, activities at the end of the year, etc. However, the main message that the participants wanted to convey is fostering cooperation between schools, parents and the local community in order to effectively integrate educational games into the school and promote physical activity of parents and children. Parents should be an example and role model for children, and promotion through social networks should be more active. In this way, children would get more information and motivation to exercise.

The training of teachers, teachers and trainers should be in the form of seminars and lectures with practical experience. Educators should not be shown the content (games), but the process of game creation. The content should include the methodology of the game, the importance of outdoor exercises, the methodology of working with children. Seminars should be led by people who are experts in the field, such as teachers or faculty members. Coaches or professional athletes should also be involved in the practical part.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Quantitative and qualitative studies provided valuable information for understanding physical activity habits in all partner countries. From there, recommendations for additional action emerge, which can be divided into three categories.

The first set would include recommendations for infrastructure suited for the implementation of this and similar projects. The information gathered can be used to support the creation of new children's parks and playgrounds, as well as the upkeep of existing ones. Creating infrastructure for parents in these spaces could also assist them boost their own physical activity. School facilities that are conducive to supporting and implementing educational sports games could also be modified.

The second set contains guidelines for improving parental education and emphasizing the value of combined family activity. The majority of respondents felt that excessive use of electronic media, such as video games and social media, is one of the primary reasons for decreased physical activity, according to the data. To further reduce the usage of screens at home, one alternative activity would be to educate parents on how to occupy their children's free time, particularly with physical activities at home. It has been proven that children who participate in physical activities with their parents are more likely to cooperate easily, be more responsible, and develop a variety of soft skills from a young age. This demonstrates the significance of cooperation between parent and physical educator in regard to a child's mental and physical development through sport. Specific exercises and lifestyle guidance are the greatest solutions. It is proposed that exercise and health instructional boards (exercise ranges) be placed in parks where children and parents can walk and play.



The third category involves issues on formal education reform. We can also find a solution to this problem in the requirement for teacher education. The general public perceives the problem with school PE to be the teachers' lack of innovation and effort, or their being locked in a routine. Experts should create and provide this education. To be effective, education should be relatively brief in duration and delivered through a variety of ways. Educational programs have the potential to address these difficulties and give kids with a better PE experience. Authorities should include physical activity's preventive power for children's mental health when creating preschool and school programs and implementing physical activity methods. Based on this, reformulating the school circular in order to improve general sports education for both teachers and children should be a focus in the next years.

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APPENDIX 1



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1) Who fills in the questionnaire?

€ Mother € Father € Grandparent € Guardian € Teacher € Coach

€ Other (please specify) _____

2) How old are you?

€ <20 € 20-29 € 30-39 € 40-49

€ 50-59 € 60-69 € >70

3) What type of work do you do? (Please tick one box)

- € Physically demanding work with lots of moving activities and carrying heavy objects
- € A job where there is a lot of moving activities without carrying heavy objects
- € A job where there are moving activities and sitting
- € A job where you mostly sit (office job)
- € I have no job

4) Do you do any sports or recreational sports?

Yes € No €

If YES, how often? (Please mark one answer.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Every day	<input type="checkbox"/> During the week 3-5 times
<input type="checkbox"/> During the week 1-2 times	<input type="checkbox"/> During the month 2-4 times
<input type="checkbox"/> Several times a year	

If the answer to the previous question is NO, please state the reason.

€ I am not in the habit of exercising.

€ I don't feel the need for it.

€ I don't have time.

€ I don't have a place in the area to practice.

€ The distance between the objects is long.

€ I have no financial resources for sports and recreation.

€ I am injured.

€ Other _____ (Please specify.)

5) How are you informed about the importance and effects of physical activity?

Daily or weekly newspapers	Yes	No
Sports newspapers	Yes	No
Podcasts	Yes	No
Shows on television	Yes	No
Social media	Yes	No
Youtube videos	Yes	No
Professional books	Yes	No
Friends	Yes	No
Sports coaches	Yes	No
Doctors	Yes	No
I have not been informed, but I want to	Yes	No
I do not care	Yes	No
Other _____		

6) What is your opinion about sports and recreational activities and their benefits? (Please mark one answer for each question.)

	I completely disagree	I do not agree	I do not know	I agree	I completely agree
The level of awareness of our society is not at such a level that it recognizes the positive aspects of sports and recreation.					
Exercise is necessary only in case of certain diseases and deformities.					
Sports and recreational activities are intended only for children and youth.					

Exercise is necessary for maintaining and improving health, learning new skills and socializing.					
I don't think about recreation.					

7) Rate the following statements with the answers provided (Please mark one answer for each question.)

	Never	Rarely	Periodically	Often	Always
I encourage children to play outside when the weather is suitable.					
I encourage children to be physically active.					
Children are in a good mood after physical activity.					
I am physically active with children.					
I limit what children can do because I'm worried that they won't get hurt.					
My schedule, work and other commitments limit me from playing with children.					

8) Do you have access to any of the following surfaces and objects in your surroundings (house, school, sports club)?

- Playground equipment (swings, slides, swings, etc.) Yes € No €
- Swimming pool (movable or fixed) Yes € No €
- Surface suitable for cycling, rollerblading, skateboarding... Yes € No €
- Greenery (grass, trees, flowers, etc.) Yes € No €
- Free areas such as beaches, rivers, and nature reserves. Yes € No €
- Public park Yes € No €

12) How do you agree with the following statements? (Please mark one box for each statement.)

	I completely disagree	I do not agree	I agree	I completely agree
Parents do not just supervise the child while he/she is being active.				
Being physically active as a family is important for future children's habits.				
Parents taking children to physical activities is important.				
Parents providing money for children's physical activities is necessary for being physically active.				
Parents buying sports equipment for children's physical activities is necessary for being physically active.				



APPENDIX 2



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Section	Script/Questions		
Introduction	In this interview, we are interested to understand your opinion about the development of educational games and related resources (app and videos) that would be more effective in promoting parent-child outdoor physical activity.		
Demographic	What is your position and expertise?		
Opening Question	What does outdoor physical activity mean to you?		
	<i>Questions</i>	<i>Follow-Up</i>	
Main Questions	1)	Is the development of parent-child outdoor physical activity important for educators?	Why?
	2)	What do you think are the core characteristics that would make the development of educational games for promoting parent-child outdoor physical activity successful?	Can you provide an example or a good practice?
	3)	How can be applied to a school setting?	Can you provide an example or a good practice?
	4)	Who should be engaged in its application?	What is the role of the teachers in it?
	5)	How can teachers contribute in order to make successful the development of educational games for promoting parent-child outdoor physical activity?	
	6)	How should the teachers be trained?	
	7)	What should be the content of the training?	Which key points do you think are of particular importance?
	8)	How long do you think the training should be in order of it to be efficient? (hour/session and number of sessions)	
	9)	How should the training be delivered (e.g. in a group, ppt presentation)?	
	10)	Who should deliver the training?	
Conclusion	Do you have any final questions or comments? Thank you for participating in this interview.		



ANNEX

Annex list

- [Belgium](#) - Research Report
- [Bulgaria](#) - Research Report
- [Greece](#) - Research Report
- [Italy](#) - Research Report
- [Romania](#) - Research Report
- [Serbia](#) - Research Report
- [Slovakia](#) – Research report



BELGIUM

EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR SPORT INNOVATION

OVERVIEW

The **Promoting Green Strategies in Sport (PROGRESS)** project focuses on the promotion of parent-child outdoor physical activity in South-East Europe through the use of new technologies and gamified activities. *The specific objectives* of the project include:

- Developing a research study on best practices for educational activities promoting outdoor physical activity participation.
- Conducting a field investigation of physical educators', coaches' and trainers', and parents' beliefs about how to improve parent-child interactions and eventually promote outdoor physical activity participation.
- Developing evidence-based educational tools including training resources for physical educators, trainers, coaches, and parents.
- Testing the usability and effectiveness of the educational resources in helping physical educators, coaches and trainers, and parents promote outdoor physical activity participation.
- Developing and proposing a European public policy to redefine and upgrade parent-child interactions and facilitate outdoor physical activity participation.
- Creating and developing a dedicated mobile app. The development of a gamified model to encourage people involved in physical activity through the provision of information and rewards for participation in outdoor physical activities is expected to further enhance the potential of the project's outputs.

The purpose of this report is to present findings from the perspectives of parents, teachers, coaches, trainers, and physical activity educators, regarding the importance of outdoor physical activity.

The report includes recommendations for both public and sports stakeholders. The data collection period lasted for 45 days and began in January 2023, during which primary and secondary information was gathered by three field researchers. Following this phase, the report was developed and is organized into four sections.

The introduction provides an overview of the project and the report's contents, while the second section goes into detail about *the methods used to collect and analyze the data*. The third section discusses *the policy and regulatory framework* in relation to the topic. Finally, the fourth section presents *the research outcomes and their implications*.

METHODOLOGY

The main researcher supervised the entire process for this study, whilst the other two oversaw the gathering of primary and secondary data. A mixed-method approach is employed in this report

using a multistage rationale. Analyzing documents gave a strong background for creating advanced surveys and interview questions for all kinds of main stakeholders such as parents, teachers, coaches, trainers, and physical education teachers.

Prior to gathering the documentation, there was an initial stage of reading and interpreting their content. The literature review reinforced the extent of research interest in outdoor physical exercise and opened up a route for more thorough investigations.

The researchers gathered the best practices of family sport activities and events in the country of Belgium. The research team chose 15 examples to present. Most of the activities and events are a local, municipal, or regional level. Most of the activities and events take place annually, and their duration is one to two days. The majority of the best practices gathered, are self-funded or funded by state and/or European Union funding mechanisms. Most of the activities and events are ran by local, national and international sport organizations and clubs, with the aid of volunteers.

As per the project's application and the following meetings of the Research Committee, a total of 100 questionnaires were sent out by each partner. The rationale for using questionnaires was rooted in the significance of comprehending the present dynamics within the sports sector from different stakeholders. The goal of the researchers was to establish the extent to which outdoor physical activity is integrated into the everyday routines of families, and its prospectus incorporation into the educational and sport ecosystems e.g. schools and sport clubs.

Taking this into account, the researchers used a random selection method to choose ten interviewees from the collected surveys.

With this in mind, we used random selection methods to select ten interviewees from the collected surveys. Throughout the interview process, the main objective of the researchers was to acquire insights into the advice and most effective approaches that parents, teachers, coaches, trainers, and physical education teachers possess.

The hereunder sections contain the context of the report, the findings of the research, but also the conclusions and recommendations for potential actions.

CONTEXT

The governmental structure of Belgium is composite. The leadership of the country is indeed redistributed at different levels among various partners, who independently exercise their authority within their domains. The first level relates to language and, in a broader sense, to everything related to culture, with three communities: the Flemish Community, the French Community and the German-speaking Community. Communities set cultural policies, administer the education and health (medical care and prevention) sectors, and promote welfare initiatives, including immigrant assistance and services, family aid, and youth protection.

The second level relates to economic interests, with the Flemish Region, the Brussels Capital Region and the Walloon Region. The regions have strong powers in economy, employment, agriculture, energy, transportation (except for state railways), environment, commerce, urban planning, supervision of provinces, municipalities and inter-municipal companies.

Finally, the Federal State which as well retains important powers, for instance in the area of foreign affairs, national defence, justice, finance, social security, important parts of national health and domestic affairs.

In these pages, we will focus on the role of the Belgian Communities.

French Community

The French speakers of Brussels and Wallonia are represented by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, an institution that exercise its competences in the fields of education, culture, sport, youth aid, scientific research and houses of justice. It has a Parliament, a Government and public services allowing it to carry out its missions. Among the others, its duties in the field of education, culture and sport are executed at the ministerial level, through the 3 general administrations, which work independently but with a transversal approach. Their missions are indeed interrelated. The General Administration of Culture aims to create the conditions for the development of access to the most diversified set of artistic, creative and cultural practices among the maximum number of citizens, by means of financial, promotional, material and training support for the people and organizations that contribute to them. The General Administration of Education and Training is in charge of managing the educational system at every stage, also promoting and financing all educational activities, such as arts, sports, research and other ministry initiatives.

The General Administration of Sport (Adeps) manages 18 sports centres and organizes training courses and various sports activities for all organization of sports, promotion campaigns and support for the various sports federations and associations through the granting of financial aid, the dissemination of information and the training of sports managers and support for high-level sports. Since its creation, Adeps has been a pioneer in the creation of events that combine sports discovery and social mixing, whether for the youngest, families or seniors. Along with the other General Administrations, Adeps has favoured partnerships with the municipalities because of the central role they play with the local population. More in general, Adeps wishes to encourage, on the territory of each municipality, a regular practice of sports, whose necessity and benefits have been highlighted by the health crisis. To encourage citizens in as many communes as possible to get moving, Adeps is supporting the local initiatives through 7 Sport Advice Centres spread throughout the territory of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation providing sports federations, sports clubs, local (integrated) sports centres and local authorities with information, support and advice in all matters relating to the practice of sport and sport-related policies.

Flemish Community

The governance of Flanders is in the hands of three main bodies: the Government of Flanders, the Flemish Parliament and the Flemish administration. The Flemish administration consists of various government services, which are subdivided into 10 policy areas. Each policy area is composed of a department and several agencies: Chancery, Administration, Foreign Affairs and Justice (KBBJ); Area Finance and Budget (FB); Economy, Science and Innovation (EEMCS); Education and Training (OV); Welfare, Public Health and Family (WVG); Culture, Youth, Sport and Media (CJSM); Work and Social Economy (WSE); Agriculture and Fisheries (LV); Mobility and Public Works (MOW); Environment (OMG).

Each policy area consists of a department and one or more independent agencies. The department oversees the policy preparation and policy support. It operates under the direct authority and under

the responsibility of the Minister, while the agencies are mainly responsible for policy-implementing tasks. Departments and agencies work closely together in both policy preparation and policy implementation and support the minister in designing his policies, which will then go to parliament and the government for approval. The department involves the agencies in the policy preparation and evaluation and assesses their policy intentions. The agencies provide policy-oriented input from their experience with policy implementation.

The two policy domains relevant for our research are related to Education and Training and Culture, and Youth, Sport and Media. In the scope of their competences, the work carried out by the department and the agency is interconnected.

The policy domain of Education and Training encompasses within it, in addition to the department, 4 autonomous agencies, each responsible for a number of educational-related matters (AgODi Agency for Educational Services: elementary, secondary, part-time artistic education, pupil guidance centres, inspectorate and guidance; AHOVOS, Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education and Study Allowances which looks after the staff, the institutions and the students and course participants following higher education or Adult Education; AOC, Agency for Communication on Education, in charge of external communication; AKOV, Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Training in charge of the quality-assurance system for pathways leading to certificates of recognised qualifications, in education, vocational training, non-formal education and EVC pathways; AGION, the Agency for School Infrastructure, an internal autonomous government agency with legal personality which subsidises and funds the purchase, construction and renovation of school buildings for compulsory education and university colleges). All together, they are responsible for the whole educational system, and they work at local and regional levels with public and private actors to ensure the quality of education. The services provided are not only concerned with school activities, but they also provide logistical and financial support for students of all ages and at all levels, families, educational entities etc. They promote of out-of-school training activities, and to do so, they make use of the collaboration of local authorities such as schools and universities.

Sport Flanders is the sports administration of the Flemish government. Its mission is to get as many people as possible to exercise permanently, by promoting, financing and support public and private sports initiatives. It is as well composed by a number of entities with different prerogatives (Services of the Administrator-General; General Department; Knowledge and Information Centre for Sport; Department of HR; Finance & Facility Policy; Sports Promotion Department; Sports Management Department; Subsidy Department, Sports Infrastructure Department; The thirteen centres; Topsports department, NADO Flanders).

Through its institutional bodies and its 13 centres, Sport Flanders acts locally in collaboration with local authorities, sports companies, sport event organisers, sports clubs, sports federations and educational institutions. It engages in promotional campaigns on health and the importance of physical activity for people of all ages and families. It finances virtuous initiatives and sports-related projects. Ultimately, every department, gaining experience in the implementation of policies and having the chance to assess their outcome, plays an important role in giving relevant input within the policy preparation phase.

German-speaking Community

The German-speaking Community exercises its powers in the communes of the province of Liège and the German-speaking area and it is represented by a Parliament and a Government. The Government consists of a Minister-President and three Ministries: The Ministry for Health and Social Affairs, Regional Planning and Housing, the Ministry for Culture and Sport, Employment and Media and the Ministry for Education, Research and Training. The ministries are divided into departments according to the domain of competence. We will look at the functioning of the ones of Sport and Education.

The Department of Education develops, tests and evaluates pedagogical measures for quality assurance and improvement of the education system in the German-speaking Community. The main tasks of the department include the development of core competencies and framework plans, the support of school development processes and the implementation of the regional development concept in the education sector. The Department of Education cooperates with colleges and universities from Germany and abroad, in particular with the Autonomous University (AHS).

The Department of Sport it is a legal entity that deals with a variety of topics concerning sport in the German-speaking Community, including the preparation and implementation of policies and decrees, and the promotion of top-class and popular sports, school sports with the development of sports framework plans and the awarding of coaching diplomas. The Department of Sport has a large network of other sports actors not just in the German-speaking Community, but also in Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, the Greater Region or the Euregio-Meuse-Rhine. The core of sport in the German-speaking Community is above all the approximately 230 clubs. The sports practiced in the clubs are diverse and wide-ranging. The clubs organise themselves at municipal level in the form of portraits, sports federations or sports associations or can join one of the 16 recognised sports associations on a sport-specific basis. The Department of Sport is a member of various committees and due to his versatile experience and competence, advises the government of the German-speaking Community on future strategies for sport in the German-speaking Community. Moreover, the Department of Sport provide financial support of sport in the areas of squad athletes, sports associations, top-level sports competitions, sports projects or the acquisition of sports material and the implementation of sports camps is also managed by the department.

Under the auspices of the respective ministries, the departments of education and sport collaborate for the launch and promotion of interdisciplinary events, activities and programmes. Every year the Ministry offers students in the German-speaking region a wide range of school sports activities and several attractive and landscape-related outdoor activities, so to promote the potential and the benefits of outdoor physical activity. This premise on the distribution of powers on several levels, to different bodies due to the cultural and regional affiliation, is indispensable to understand sport-related policies and regulations enacted in Belgium. The organisation of sports is indeed, influenced by the political structure of the Belgian state. Although, as aforementioned every community has its own policy-making process, hence there is no national sport policy in the country, national legislations influence sport policy.

According to the Physical Activity Factsheet of 2021 (WHO, 2021) the national recommendations on physical activity for health address people of all ages (from <5 years to ≥85 years), and other specific categories (pregnant and breastfeeding women, people with disabilities and people with chronic diseases). Given that local physical activity has been proven to be an important determinant of national physical activity, the national health policy promotes the monitoring of the

level of physical activity among the population. Belgium, being a member of HEPA (European network for the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity), funded and promoted several policies or action plan aimed at achieving the HEPA objectives. Among these:

- Organised Sports Sector: Guarantee of Sustainable Sport (Sectors involved: Health, Education, Sports);
- Strategy to Open School Sport Infrastructure after School Hours (Sectors involved: Education, Sports);
- Strategic Plan “De Vlaming Leeft Gezonder in 2025” (Sectors involved: Health, Education, Sports, Environment, Urban planning, Transport);
- Move Along: Physical Activity Policy in the Healthy Schools Framework (Sectors involved: Health, Education, Sports, Transport);
- Educational Goals for Health (Sectors involved: Health, Education, Sports, Transport).

These national policies/action plans aim to have an impact not only on individuals, no matter their age, but also transversally on families. Nevertheless, it is difficult to find specific policies which promote outdoor physical activity for the whole family. This can be explained mostly by the infrastructural gap between the Belgian regions/communities. For Belgian families (BMC Public Health, 2019) the concept of outdoor physical activity is closely, if not exclusively, associated with the existence of a playground or park in the neighbourhood. Indeed, the presence of neighbourhood playgrounds, parks or more in general sports infrastructures is positively linked to youth physical activity (Oliveira AF, Moreira C, Abreu S, Mota J, Santos R. 2014; Davison KK, Lawson CT. 2006).

This makes outdoor physical activity take on a social dimension influenced by several variables, such as the perceived security of the neighbourhood or the presence of other children with whom to play outside. The willingness of parents to let their children play outside is mainly determined by the safety factor, namely the quality of facilities or the road safety (traffic density, quality of public lighting, presence of bicycle lanes, etc.) and the lack of crime in the neighbourhood. Thus said, it clearly explains the correlation between the parental perception of the environment in which children live and the higher or lower levels of outdoor physical activity among youth, depending on the area. It is for this reason that it is important to pay attention to the government's efforts in terms of infrastructure, to ensure the quality of outdoor spaces in which children and families can engage in physical activity. For instance, the Global Sports Infrastructure Plan for Flanders offers a framework for targeted investment in sports infrastructure. One of the main aspects of the plan is a structural subsidy scheme for supralocal sports infrastructure. The Flemish Government launches a twice-yearly call for projects to local authorities, sports organizations, federations and clubs to submit applications for subsidies, which are screened in two phases. Sports infrastructure in Flanders is mainly under the authority of cities and municipalities. The Flemish Sports Administration (Sport Vlaanderen) gives financial support for construction and renovation of local and high-level sports infrastructure and facilities.

Hence, more investments translate into higher level of physical activity. In Belgium (Sciensano, 2018) more people met the WHO physical activity recommendations in Flanders (43% in men and 34% in women) than in Brussels (29% and 18% respectively) and Wallonia (27% and 15%, respectively).

RESULTS

This study began with a structured questionnaire as its basis, which was then followed by a number of semi-structured interview sessions.

More specifically, over a period of almost two weeks, a questionnaire was administered to parents, teachers, coaches and others relevant to our research, at the end of which 82 responses were collected. The respondents' profiles were diverse, with most responses being from mothers (N=24, 29.3%) and fathers (N=23, 28.0%).

Regarding age groups, age data revealed a young-populated sample. As many as 68,3% (N= 56) of respondents are between the ages of 20 and 29 years old. The age group of 30-39 years old follows (N=13, 15.9%), whilst 7,3% of the sample is between the ages of 50 and 59 years old (N=6).

When it comes to their profession, just 7,3% (N=6) do a physically demanding job with lots of moving activities and carrying heavy objects, while the majority 62.2%, have office jobs (N=51). Another relevant figure is the number of respondents who are in jobs where there are movement and sitting activities.

A very positive finding concerns the prevalence of sports and recreational practices among respondents. Indeed, 75,6% (N=62) of them affirm doing sports and recreational activities, of which 43,5%, do 2-4 times per week, 35,5% 1-2 per week, and 12,9% 3-5 times per week. Among those who said they do not play sports (24,4%, N=20), 45% do not have the habit of exercising, while 30% stated they do not have enough time to spare.

According to the analysis of the data, respondents were mostly informed about the importance of physical activity through social media (N=68), friends (N= 67), doctors (N= 55), and YouTube videos (N= 45).

When asked about sport and recreational activities and their benefits, respondents' opinions are evenly divided between those who believe that the level of awareness of our society is not at the required level to recognize the positive aspects of sports and recreational activities and those who claim otherwise. Additionally, the majority of the respondents (69%, N=57) agreed that exercise is necessary for maintaining and improving health, learning new skills and socializing, no matter the age or the health conditions of those who practice it. It should not, therefore, be limited based on age or to those who suffer from specific diseases.

As for the main topic of the questionnaire, namely the parent-child outdoor physical activity, it is inferred that on average for the 69% of the target audience it is important to encourage children to play outside when the weather is suitable, and in general to be physically active. 60 respondents out of 82 believe that physical activity contributes to improve the mood and general well-being of children. Although more than half of the respondents stated to be physically active with children (N=51), most (N=31) believe they are periodically restricted from playing with them because of work and other commitments.

In the scope of our research, it is important to emphasize the data on the perception of the level of safety of places available for children's physical activity. Even if most respondents stated to do not usually limit the activity of their children because of safety concerns, the answers provided regarding security are very mixed.

When asked to rate the importance of different sports and recreational activities, respondents agreed on putting language learning first, followed by physical, artistic and musical activities, environmental knowledge activities, and finally mathematical and logical activities.

Inquiring as to why respondents believe children are not physically active, as many as 59,8% of respondents believe that it is due to the lack of sports facilities, while the 58,5% believe it is due to being occupied with games and phone. Other important data to note: the 46.3% thinks children have a misconception whether they need physical or not and tied the 41,5% of respondents takes into account the distance from the sports facilities and possible financial issues.

50% of the respondents believe that it is important to join children while practising sport nor just supervise them. Being physically active as a family is indeed deemed necessary by the 57% of them. Similarly, they believe it is necessary to accompany their children and provide financially for the sports activities of younger children

Random selection from filled surveys, selected 10 people for the interview. There was a 40% dropout due to unforeseen circumstances and 6 interviews were conducted. Interviews were guided by the following instructions and pre-defined questions. Among the interviewees, there were 3 women and 3 men, of which 2 educators and 2 coaches. Other respondents are not from education or sports but are parents. The initial question aimed to gather information about the respondents' habits and help determine the appropriate approach for the interview. Each subsequent question was followed by a follow-up question to assess the extent to which the respondents recognized the significance of physical activity and whether it played a central role in their parenting or educational practices.

Physical activity means everything to some respondents as it is crucial for both mind and body well-being. For others, the value lies in connecting with the environment and experiencing different weather conditions, which makes physical activity interesting and requires more adaptability and flexibility. Many also acknowledge that physical activity is important for staying in shape and taking care of the body, and outdoor physical activity in nature is a preferred way of doing so as it combines both aspects. However, there are some respondents who prefer to train indoors and do not include outdoor physical activities in their routine. Regardless, outdoor physical activity, according to the interviewees is interconnected with parent-children communication. Such outdoor activities could be walking, hiking, various sport activities, climbing, but also swimming, gardening and others. Furthermore, physical activity provides opportunities for young children to link themselves with the physical environment, breathe the fresh oxygen, and improve their overall health status. As per the respondents' opinion, this time is a good way to strengthen and empower the parent-children relationship and understanding.

According to the respondents, the development of parent-child physical activity is important for educators. They believe that it can help children develop team spirit and prepare them for future community involvement, as well as improve their social and physical development. The respondents also noted that practicing sports with family can make children more proactive, and confident, and can teach them important communication and collaboration skills. Additionally, participating in outdoor activities can provide children with different experiences that they can bring back to the classroom and share with their peers, ultimately enhancing their learning. Also, some children may need their parents' guidance to behave and interact with others in a physical environment, which can strengthen the bond between parents and children. Finally, all respondents

believe that it is of core importance for children to spend as much time outdoors as possible, with no regard for the weather and other conditions.

As per the respondents' answers, the main characteristics to ensure the success of the development of educational games promoting parent-child outdoor physical activities are parent-child, child-educator and parent-educator good communication. So, if the communication between these groups is good, this way the promotion of these games will be a success.

Respondents suggested that parent-teacher interventions in schools be held outside on occasion. An idea was to organize extracurricular activities at school and invite parents to attend once a month. It is also critical to educate parents about the importance of physical activity for their children. The fruitful suggestion was to build different sports polygons in the schoolyard for children to use during recess, before and after school classes. Finally, pick a date and organize an event, such as a traditional sports day attended by both parents and children.

As per the participants, children, parents, teachers, physical educators, coaches, sport clubs, psychologists, social workers, and the school community in general have to be included in such endeavours. The physical educators and gym teachers are seen as more appropriate for organizing and creating a variety of physical educational games, while coaches and sport clubs can also be engaged. The teacher plays a key role in organizing and keeping the activity going towards the goal, while parents and the school community can provide support and permission. The involvement of psychologists and social workers may also be useful for addressing any obstacles or challenges that may arise during the activities.

All interviewees agreed that teachers and physical activity educators have to organize and supervise the initiatives. Whilst, to ensure the success of these initiatives, they can contribute by providing necessary pieces of information, motivating students, providing feedback, following progress, testing initiatives, and being included in the development phase. They can also add fun games and organize and supervise activities while building strong relationships with students and families. Teachers should also daily emphasize the importance of being active and close to nature while making sure that the activity aims at educational purposes. They can suggest more activities and encourage parents to repeat the activities at home.

Respondents suggest various ways in which teachers should be trained to effectively implement initiatives focused on promoting physical activity and nature play in schools. Some suggest seminars or workshops, while others propose more practical approaches such as organizing sport days for educators to teach and participate with their students. It is also important for educators to have a good understanding of the tools and goals of these initiatives, and to receive a well-rounded education during their bachelor studies that includes classes focused on the importance of play and nature. Additionally, respondents suggest that teachers should receive training from professionals to ensure that everything runs smoothly.

According to respondents, an ideal teacher training program should include both theoretical and practical aspects, with a focus on understanding the new tool, its purpose, and how it works. Additionally, teachers should have an understanding of the needs of children, which vary based on their age group. The program should emphasize the benefits of physical activity and its impact on social development and building a healthy lifestyle. Motivating children and offering a variety of options and activities should also be taught, with sessions on how to help children with difficulties. A whole-rounded education, including classes such as "The importance of play" and "Nature

play,” should be a leading role in teaching programs. Lastly, training should include educational games and engaging with stakeholders.

The key points of initiatives aimed at facilitating sports activities for children include the importance of team work, the impact of sports on the mind and body, and the need for motivating and engaging children through a variety of activities. Additionally, it was suggested that teachers should receive training from professionals in this field, both in theory and practice, and that they should be provided with creative opportunities to develop projects that combine play, fun, learning and physical activities. Finally, it was recommended that on duty seminars be offered by the government and other stakeholders to keep teachers updated on new practices.

Interviewees have different opinions on the duration of the training required for teachers to effectively incorporate physical activity in their classes. One respondent suggested one hour per week for each topic, while another suggested a few short sessions lasting one to two hours each. Another respondent suggested having a day or a weekend package for the training and organizing feedback sessions and events to get the teachers together to share their experiences. Some respondents believed that the training should last all year round, with one or two-hour sessions per week, or at least six months, including 2-4 three-hour sessions per month. One respondent suggested a total duration of 7 hours, with 2 hours of theory and 5 hours of practice.

Consistent with the respondents, the delivery of such initiatives should involve outdoor activities to promote outdoor activities and interactive group sessions that involve children. The training should also include group meetings, simulations of activities, presentations, bibliographic reading, and group projects. The key to effective learning is hands-on learning through group work, where participants can share their experiences and ideas. Some respondents also suggest using technological resources such as PowerPoint and face-to-face interactions during group sessions.

Finally, and regarding the delivery of the training, the interviewees had various opinions on who should deliver the trainings for such initiatives. Some suggested that former athletes or parents could be expressive enough to teach, while others suggested trainers, experts in the field of sports, and sports psychologists due to their deeper knowledge on the impact of sports on the mind and body. One respondent believed that the best people to teach it would be those heavily involved in the organization of the app, who have the motivation to bring it to the world. Another suggested that teachers should be trained by psychologists and social workers to understand and set boundaries in these activities. Others believed that the ministry of education, in cooperation with universities and school units, should provide on duty training delivered by experienced teachers who have developed successful practices over the years. Another suggestion was to involve outdoor physical activity and non-formal education professionals in the delivery of the training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the aforementioned results of the survey, but also the context and the rationale provided here follow a number of recommendations on how to enhance parent-child outdoor activities in the Belgian context:

- ***Encourage outdoor physical activity:*** Since most respondents agree that outdoor physical activity is important for children's well-being, it is recommended to encourage parents and

children to play outside when the weather is suitable. This can be done by organizing outdoor activities such as hiking, cycling, and sports events.

- **Create safe spaces:** While most respondents did not limit the activity of their children due to safety concerns, it is important to create safe spaces for children's physical activity. This can be done by providing secure and well-maintained playgrounds, parks, and sports facilities.
- **Offer diverse activities:** Respondents rated language learning, physical, artistic and musical activities, environmental knowledge activities, and mathematical and logical activities as important. Hence, it is recommended to offer a diverse range of activities that cater to different interests and preferences.
- **Involve parents:** As 50% of respondents believe it is important to join children while practising sports, involving parents in outdoor activities can be beneficial. This can be done by organizing family-friendly events where parents and children can participate together.
- **Address barriers:** Respondents identified lack of sports facilities, being occupied with games and phone, distance from sports facilities, and financial issues as barriers to children's physical activity. Addressing these barriers by providing affordable sports facilities and encouraging children to participate in outdoor activities can be beneficial.

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BULGARIA SOCIAL HUB

OVERVIEW

The national report on Bulgaria has been prepared on the basis of the implementation of the research tasks of WP2: Best Practices - Study of Outdoor Activities and Parent-Child Interaction Programs.

General objective and aims of the Report

The main objective of the report is to determine the basic needs for outdoor sports activities for families together with children - a trend that is imposed by lifestyle, on the basis of development of project educational resources based on new technologies. Physical educators, coaches and parents are expected to be engaged for motivating and encouraging families to practice outdoor sports activities together with children.

The presentation of the current overall picture in Bulgaria on the practice of outdoor physical activities on the model "parent-child" will outline the possible paths for the delivery of educational and training resources for the gradual inclusion of children in active physical mode. Educating habits from early childhood, forming a positive attitude towards physical activity and practicing in sports for a healthy lifestyle is a major component of the effectiveness of the implemented policies. Building a stimulating educational environment for the implementation of motor activity is one of the main tasks of educational work on physical culture in children and preschool age. One of the main challenges in the promotion of physical activity is to convey the message of importance of action now, as a prerequisite for benefits in the future.

The research phase identifies country-specific policies to promote physical outdoor activities (strategies, programs) through parent-child interaction and their applicability as existing practices, registers leading attitudes and expectations, and validates knowledge and skills among those representatives of the target group.

The report sets itself the following specific tasks:

- Analysis of the identified best practices in Bulgaria;
- Quantitative and qualitative assessment of existing attitudes and needs.

METHODOLOGY

The research tasks have been carried out according to the practical guidelines for the preparation of the national reports.

One researcher was responsible for desk research and collecting data.

- **Environment and content analysis – research of best practices**

Only online accessible sources are used – government policy tools in the target area, strategies, programs, standards, events, as well as tools of alternative policies in the field of non-governmental sector and civic activity within different communities, incl. the specific for Bulgaria “Chitalishte” (community centers) activities as well as more significant research and theoretical developments.

- **Pilot /non-representative/ field survey to establish the attitudes of the representatives of the target group**

An online form has been selected for the survey prepared and distributed using Google tools. Its own contact network and a survey of the information available on the Internet was used to provide a database for potential participants. A quantitative analysis of the results has been prepared.

- **Semi-structured interview with active representatives of the target group**

The model for conducting qualitative research was followed. The tool is in an accessible and understandable form for the general respondent and allows flexibility regarding the time and place of conduct. Greater experience is a criterion for more involved inclusion.

The research tasks were completed on time, according to the project's plan-schedule. One researcher was responsible for collecting data throughout of many sport events in this regard.

In fulfillment of the tasks and in accordance with the requirements for conducting the research phase of the project, the national report for Bulgaria contains the following results:

1. Summary of the identified best practices in the country from the conducted survey of online accessible sources in the context of the legal and regulatory framework and the policies / strategies, programs, activities and projects / at state, municipal and NGO level;
2. Quantitative analysis of the results of the conducted online survey with 102 representatives of the target group and
3. Qualitative analysis of the results of the interviews with 10 active representatives of the target group. For the purposes of the survey, 3 men and 7 women were interviewed, including 5 parents, 3 coaches and 2 teachers.
4. Context of the legal and regulatory framework and the policies / strategies, programs, activities and projects / at state and municipal level in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as at NGO level;

Analysis of the identified best practices – conclusions and recommendations for the project in Bulgaria

The analysis requires to be indentified the main regulatory framework and applicable policies in the target project area as well as the main stakeholders and actors (non-exhaustive mapping).

The state policy in the Republic of Bulgaria in the field of sport is implemented at national, regional and local level.

The main legal framework is provided by Physical Education and Sports Act.

Among the main objectives of the law are to ensure the organization of the system of physical activity, physical education and sports and tourist activity, to create conditions for their development, to provide an opportunity to develop the sports potential of the nation by creating conditions for practicing sports for high achievements; and encouraging investment in the construction and management of sports facilities and their use in the public interest.

The Council of Ministers determines the main directions for the development of the state policy in the system of physical activity, physical education, sports and tourist activities. Its prerogatives include the preparation of a National Strategy, the adoption of a National Program for the Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sport and Sports and Tourism Activities and Measures to Promote Priority Sports Activities.

The supreme central executive body in the field of sport with the right of legislative initiative is the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS).

The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS) develops policies and programming documents, which set out basic objectives and guidelines tailored to the problems that hinder the development of sport for all.

The Minister of Youth and Sports is a central sole body of the executive power, which develops, organizes, coordinates and controls the implementation of the state policy in the field of youth and sports.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports implements the unified state policy in the field of youth, sports and social tourism.

The sports policy of the Republic of Bulgaria includes the following main priorities and accents:

- providing opportunities for practicing physical activity and social tourism;
- development of student sports, sports for all and sport for high achievements as a means of increasing the prestige of the nation;
- reconstruction and modernization of the sports facilities and their alignment with the international standards of the European Union

Currently, the Program for the Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Tourist Activities for 2021 – 2022 is being implemented in Bulgaria, as no new has yet been adopted. Physical activity and sport in pre-school and school education are defined as Priority 2, for the implementation of which the following measures are envisaged:

- creating optimal conditions for encouraging children, pupils and children at risk to physical activity;
- systematic practice of sports and
- sports expression as a means of healthy lifestyle, physical and spiritual development and social inclusion in society.

Subject of financing at the expense of the national budget are the following specific activities:

- development, updating, financing and coordination of programs and campaigns to promote physical activity, creating conditions for systematic practice of sport and opportunities for expression of children, students and children at risk (from the budget of Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS));
- expanding the scope of children, pupils, students and children at risk involved in sports activities through the implementation of the targeted programs (from the budget of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and Ministry of Education and Science) and
- supporting the activities of sports clubs and multi-sport organizations for the realization of sustainable physical activity by providing conditions for systematic practice of sport and opportunities for sports expression of children, pupils, students and children at risk (from

the budget of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education and Science, Municipalities, Sports Organizations).

Since 2014, MYS has been working on an established standard – Concept for promoting the development of sport for all, which takes into account the existing problems that hinder the development of sport for all (lack of established and operational structures for the management of sport on a national scale, insufficient and poorly developed sports infrastructure, limited scope of programs for the development of sport for all and lack of regulation for the provision of sports services for citizens) sets the following goals:

1) development and implementation of targeted programs and documents to promote the development of sport for all with a focus on main target groups: children and young people – up to 18 years old; young people of working age from 18 to 29 years – young people, students, workers and employees; people of working age from 30 to 65 years - workers and employees; people after working age (pension) age - over 65 years; people with disabilities.

2) regulating the terms and conditions for the provision of sports services to citizens.

MYS takes into account the main fact that the development of sport during leisure time requires serious resources and coordinated efforts, the desired effects are long-term and the real results are difficult to measure. The programs and activities of MYS for the development of sport for all are aimed at the gradual inclusion of different groups of the population in an active regime and a healthy lifestyle, priority given to children and young people, irrelevant if the aim is to promote health and leisure time or to improve their personal sporting performance.

State programs to promote physical activity and sport for all:

“**Sport in leisure**” program includes activities for mass movement and sport and is implemented in sub-programs:

Sub-program „**Do sport actively**“ is implementing through the following Directions:

· Direction "Sport for children in leisure" - to support the participation of children in sports events:

- Program Sport for children in leisure
- Program "Children and the Sports Club"
- Program "Sport for children at risk" for organizing and conducting sports activities during the 2023

· Direction „**Learn how to swim**” – First steps in sports for activities and training in swimming for children:

- Program “Learn how to swim! “

The sub-program "**Sport for All and Social Tourism**" provides for the organization and conduct of mass sports and sports tourist events, national campaigns, initiatives and other events of the state and international sports calendar of licensed sports organizations. Leading institutions and partners: Ministry of Youth and Sports with the assistance of the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defense, National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria, municipalities. Beneficiaries are licensed sports organizations and sports clubs; sports clubs built on a territorial, departmental and sectoral principle with the subject of

their main activity development of mass sport, etc.; sports clubs in partnership with the municipalities.

Program to improve the awareness of the population about the benefits of healthy physical activity and sport includes measures to raise awareness of the importance of physical activity and sport for health and the higher quality of life. The main measures should focus on:

- use of modern means of communication;
- conducting information and advertising campaigns;
- thematic information events, sport initiatives, events, etc. mass events;
- studies, research, development of information materials, guidelines, etc.;
- collecting, providing and exchanging information and data for evaluation at VFA level, taking into account the EU Physical Activity Guidelines;
- nomination and promotion of the activities of municipalities, organizations, employers and sports specialists for contribution to the development of sport for all.

Leading institutions and partners: Ministry of Youth and Sports with the assistance of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defense, the National Sports Academy "Vasil Levski", universities, municipalities, licensed sports organizations and sports clubs.

Other regulatory options for financing sports activities are provided for in the Gambling Act, as the receipts, after deduction of the amounts for taxation, for the expenses of the enterprise and for the paid profits, are received as revenue to the budget of the Ministry of Youth and Sports are spent on the activity.

The financial support of the activities in the field of construction and renovation of sports facilities - state and municipal property and the maintenance and development of the sports and material and technical base of the state sports schools is carried out according to established rules.

At the local level, sports policy is implemented by municipalities as local government bodies. Municipalities prepare annual plans and delegate budgets for the implementation of sports activities, which support the mass practice of sport by all. Part of the funds are directed to the implementation of municipal programs for the development of physical education and sport, another part - for the realization of traditional sports events included in municipal sports calendars.

Annually the municipalities organize and conduct mass sports and tourist events, campaigns, initiatives and other events for different age groups. In recent years, municipalities have also taken active actions to build and equip multifunctional sports facilities.

According to the methodological standards of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Municipal programs for healthy physical activity and for sport for all solve significant problems related to sport at the local level. They are complex in the scope of objectives, subjects and objects of management and resource provision and are aimed at providing opportunities for physical activity of different groups of the population.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

Minimum differentiated amounts of funds for physical activity, physical education, sports and sports-tourism activities for children and students in the institutions of the preschool and school education system and in higher schools are regulated.

The Minister of MCI approves a procedure for financial support of activities in the field of physical activity, physical education, sports and tourist activities - programs for application, financing and accountability of the Minister of Youth and Sports.

In accordance with the requirement of the Child Protection Act A National Program for the Prevention of Violence and Abuse of Children (2023 – 2026) has been adopted, but the draft National Strategy for the Children 2019-2030 "All rights for all children" has not yet been adopted due to the ambiguous interpretation and non-acceptance of the majority of the Bulgarian society of the so-called Istanbul Convention. Undeniably „every child in Bulgaria at every stage of the childhood should live and develop his potential in an integrated healthy, safe and developmentally encouraging environment that guarantees his rights and well-being, with the support provided by parents and professionals who care for children “.

According to the Strategy, “The promotion and creation of conditions for physical activity and recreation of the child" imply the full exercise of the child's right to rest and relaxation, to games appropriate to his age.

The strategic objective of Thematic Area 5 of the programming document is "Providing opportunities for the child's participation in decision-making on issues that affect him, as well as access to playing, sports, cultural and other activities that support his development and form civic competences".

In the operational objectives, key measures and expected results in our project target area envisage:

- Preventing social exclusion by improving access to an age-appropriate environment for games, sports and leisure activities;
- Creating conditions and opportunities for practicing sport and participating in sports activities and organized sports events for children in free time and
- Providing an appropriate and accessible physical environment and facilities in the settlements for sports, recreation, play and leisure.

For children in early childhood (0-6/7 y.o.) it is envisaged to improve access to various forms of cultural, sports and leisure activities and to stimulate playing as the main way to learn, participate and interact with children at an early age.

For the period of childhood and adolescence (7-18 y.o.) (taking into account the specifics of the periods 7-13/14 and 14/15-18) The strategy outlines the need to encourage the participation of children and students in extracurricular and extracurricular activities in the field of sport and to develop forms of work with parents and children at an early age to promote early learning in a family environment and the development of parenting skills.

The expected results are improved children's access to playing, sports, cultural and other activities and improved architectural and physical environment for sport, playing, recreation and leisure for all children.

Physical activity and games are a daily and natural activity in the development of children throughout childhood and are an important prerequisite for the development of the child's psyche and skills, assessing the possibilities of taking risks and building a self-assessment of safety.

Stimulating active participation in games and sports activities by providing an appropriate environment tailored to the skills of different age groups during childhood is an activity to which local authorities, the management of childcare facilities and schools, civil society, parents, sports federations and sports clubs are relevant. The main factor in this process should be the children themselves, with their preferences and ideas about the created environment.

The Strategy envisages key reforms, including:

- Promote the cooperation of educational institutions with cultural institutions, sports, public and business organizations and other
- Changes in state educational standards and medical standards aimed at promoting children's physical activity and involving them in play, sports, cultural and other activities.

In turn, the Health Act obliges the Ministry of Health to promote the organization of sports events; public events organized for children and students; to take care of the medical provision of such events, etc. The health sector must play a leading role in preparing policy decisions regarding increased physical activity for:

- Provide national support based on evidence on the health, social and economic benefits of physical activity;
- Development of action-oriented networks with other sectors and persons involved in physical activity;
- Promotion of an integrated multisectoral public policy.

THE GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR MEDICAL SPECIALISTS FOR INCREASING THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OF THE POPULATION - assists medical professionals (doctors and nurses) in the process of counseling and providing support to children and adults who wish to engage in physical exercise, sports and tourism - consultations on physical fitness, degree of load, safety in practicing physical exercises and sports; preparation of appropriate individual programs for patients with health problems

Sports organizations and non-governmental sector - sports NGOs

Sports organizations under the Youth and Sports Act develop and promote sport by carrying out training, competitive and organizational and administrative activities in sports. Sports organizations are sports clubs and sports federations. Sports organizations assist in the implementation of state and municipal policy in the system of physical activity, physical education and sport and participate in the implementation of the National Strategy and National Program. The status of institutions and sports organizations that create conditions for training and competition activities, the requirements that pedagogical specialists must meet, as well as the main goals of training and competition activities related to encouraging children and students to a healthy lifestyle and systematic sports is strictly regulated.

“Chitalishte” (type of community center) is a typical Bulgarian public institution that performs educational functions and amateur activities. In the community center as a center libraries and interest clubs are based, where are developed a variety of activities from amateur schools - music and dance, sports, foreign languages, theatre, literary readings, commemoration of holidays and socially significant events for the city, organization of conferences and other city events.

Chitalishte are community-based and self-governing local organizations, independent non-profit legal entities, acc. the People's Community Centers. The funding mechanisms envisaged are predominantly from the budget, through the delegated by the State of the Communities activities. According to the Public Register , on the territory of the country operate 3728 community centers and 20 community center associations.

On the other hand, sports organizations registered under the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act are independent non-governmental organizations that operate for private or public benefit.

In the field of sport, in the country of Bulgaria is predominantly represented public - state and municipal budget funding, but Bulgaria actively participates as a partner under external targeted European funding or project-based funding from other donor organisations or direct support from various legal or natural persons.

CONCLUSIONS

According to the current legislation, an intersectoral approach is applied in Bulgaria (sport, health, education, the environment, transport and other sectors) to promote health-enhancing physical activity taking into account the EU Physical Activity Guidelines, the EU Council Recommendation on the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity across sectors, the Physical Activity Strategy for the WHO European Region 2016-2025, The Global Action Plan to Increase Physical Activity 2018-2030.

The programs developed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports are in accordance with the objectives and measures set out in Priority 12 "Health and Sport" of the National Development Program - Bulgaria 2030, the National Strategy for the Development of Physical Education and Sport in the Republic of Bulgaria 2012-2022, the National Program for the Development of Physical Activity, Physical Education, Sports and Sports and Tourist Activity 2021-2022 and with the current regulations in the field of sport, with national traditions and existing socio-economic conditions.

The policies and program documents developed by MYS are in line with the EU Guidelines on Physical Activity endorsed by the EU Working Group on Sport and Health and the EU Council Recommendation on promoting health-enhancing physical activity, as well as as a result of monitoring against the indicators specified in the Recommendation.

The new parent-child model described in the one cited above National Strategy for the Children 2019-2030 is based on the philosophy that development and support for children should be aimed at developing competences necessary for life in the 21st century. The achievement of these competences in children requires the development of the competences of adults – parents and relatives, as well as professionals working with children within the relevant systems, sectoral and cross-sectoral policies responsible for their effective and efficient implementation.

Outmost importance for building key competences in children is the creation and development of knowledge, skills and attitudes in adults (parents, professionals and systems of education, healthcare, social system, etc.) for developing and preparing children for their future life and for their successful socialization.

According to the Strategy, the existing information sources and the information collected in different ways and occasions in different public institutions related to the development of the child and the guarantee of his rights should be placed at the heart of the developed and implemented public policies. The aim is to create a reliable model for effective management of information resources in view of the best interests of the child. All policies and programs for children and for support of parents must be based on specific data and evidence.

According to the Strategy, every child in Bulgaria at every stage of the childhood should live and develop his potential in an integrated healthy, safe and developmentally encouraging environment that guarantees his rights and well-being, with the support provided by parents and professionals who care for children.

Physical culture is part of the general culture of society, along with material and spiritual. Physical culture arose as a historical necessity and is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. „As a sphere of social activity, it is an objective need in people's lives, a set of values, a process for physical education, physical development and structural-functional improvement of man.“ (Rachev, 2002, p. 17) [1] “Physical education is one of the main forms of purposeful functioning of physical culture in social practice”. (Rachev, 2002, p. p. 24)

The tendency for sedentary lifestyles is to increase with age. This also determines the need for measures to be implemented in childhood. There is a need to improve the awareness for the health risks and create conditions for preventive health and sedentary lifestyles. (Mincheva_Bolgurova, 2022)

Available studies, theoretical developments, survey and performed research report the tendency for sedentary lifestyles is to increase with age. This also determines the need for measures to be implemented in childhood. There is a need to improve the awareness for the health risks and create conditions for preventive health and sedentary lifestyles. The modern methodology for developing the physical fitness of adolescents should contain a maximally effective compilation of new technological and scientific achievements and those applied in previous years as sports activities contribute to the development of personal and social qualities and improve the health of children. (Boeva, 2018)

In today's emotionally stressful everyday life and computer addiction, it is necessary to look for various possibilities to reduce the negative consequences of immobility. One such opportunity is provided by physical education and sports, as the only healthy alternative to hypodynamia, which covers more and more modern children. The World Health Organization recommends that children and adolescents aged 5-17 years should accumulate a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to high intensity daily physical activity. However, this cannot be done in physical education classes. Undoubtedly, the only alternative in this case is purposeful, organized extracurricular/extracurricular forms of physical exercise and sports. Opportunities for active recreation during vacations, especially during the summer, could be expanded through extracurricular sports activities held in resorts where students usually go on vacation with their parents. This kind of extracurricular work gives versatility in children's development. (Kinov, 2011)

Forming healthy lifestyle habits starts from an early age. At each educational stage, the interest in motor activity needs to be maintained and updated. Competition is one of the possibilities to test

the acquired technical skills. It is at the heart of sporting events, in the form of holidays and sports weeks. Parents and teachers are the main motivators for practicing physical activity and sports for adolescents (Survey of parents' attitudes towards physical activity and to what extent they would motivate children to regularly practice physical exercises and sports activities). (Stoyanova, D., V. Vasileva, I. Ilieva 2019)

Children's communication with adults is shaped by their relationships with parents and teachers. The family environment, school and society are the factors that accidentally or purposefully influence the construction of the child's personality. Preschool age is characterized by direct perception of behavior and interpersonal relations and, accordingly, imitation of the model that has caused a special interest in the child. The support and trust of adults towards the child increases his self-esteem and stimulates him to greater physical activity. Physical activity has a constructive effect on the child's organism not only through the complex development of qualities, but also through the development of the ability for self-improvement and self-control of motor skills and habits. (A survey of parents' attitudes towards physical activity and to what extent they would motivate children to regularly practice physical exercises and sports activities). (Georgieva, Ilieva 2019)

At the age 10 pupils begin building active position for their own choices, for quality and energetic involvement in various activities. The united efforts of parents and teachers can successfully cultivate the personal strength each adolescent possesses, by helping him/her develop the capabilities to achieve success, to be able to overcome impediments, accept defeat with dignity, and try again, remembering not to repeat the same mistakes. The support and trust received the part of the adults raise the child's self-esteem and motivates him for more active involvement in the studying process. The study investigate how strong the personal interest and supportiveness of the coaches and parents are toward the successes and failures of each pupil, and to assess to what extent they motivate the small sportsmen to pursue physical and personal development. (Ilieva I., I. Ilchev, K. Simeonov, P. Peneva, M. Krumov 2006)

Children with good concentration of attention are distinguished by good physical performance and vice versa. Children with a poor general physical condition have a less developed ability to concentrate, as a result of which they have reduced resistance to attention, i.e. they are distracted and imprecise. (Research that tracks the degree of complex development of motor skills, the ability to act and the coordination of movements of preschool children - motor qualities such as speed, strength of lower limbs, strength endurance and the development of coordination in relation to the resistance of attention). (Ignatova, 2020)

Overview of extracurricular physical activity in Bulgaria as part of the European educational space against the background of its organization on a global scale, in particular in Europe. Analysis of the reasons for the current state and effectiveness of modern forms of extracurricular activities in our country. The author's ideas for improving its organization are presented in order to provoke motivation and involve adolescents in sports-oriented activities. (Zheleva-Terzieva, 2020)

Education through interactive motor games is particularly useful. Lack of activity has a negative impact not only on health, but also on mental achievements, on the overall sustainable development of adolescents. Health and environmental education introduce the concept of "physical recreation", which has the meaning of reproducing, renewing the functional capabilities of adolescents. Different types of physical means are used as means of restoring active attention and concentration: forms of active recreation, walks in nature, recreational and motor games, etc.

Thus, it can be summarized that especially in childhood, when play is the main and additional form of organization of interaction, physical recreation through motor games is the most widespread and widespread meaning of motor activity. The perspective is to motivate children to engage in motor games and do more sports. When they enjoy adult- and peer-accompanied play, they associate their positive emotions with it. As a result, they develop a positive attitude towards motor activity. The earlier they are encouraged to actively participate through motor games in preparatory and sports children's games, the greater the positive effect of game interaction for education in sustainable development. (Stoyanova, 2021)

Various ideas have been developed for presenting exercises and rolling games to be applied at home for the whole family and creatively adapting exercises and exercises to the active participation of family members through retrospective analysis, presenting the benefits of this type of physical activity at home and drawing the necessary conclusions for practice. The application of various mobile games, physical exercises with the participation of all family members will improve the social environment, relationships, new interesting activities for joint participation will be discovered, which will help to successfully overcome the impact of a prolonged absence of real social contacts in the conditions of social distancing. The support and trust of adults towards the child increases his self-esteem and stimulates him to greater physical activity. The free personal time of adolescents is important to be organized and utilized both for intellectual self-training and for the formation of a healthy lifestyle. Physical activity has a constructive effect on the child's organism, in addition to the complex development of qualities and by developing the ability for self-improvement and self-control of motor skills and habits. Parents and teachers are the main motivators for practicing physical activity and sports for adolescents. The support and trust received the part of the adults raise the child's self –esteem and motivates him for more active involvement. (Akaeva, 2020)

New physical activity systems for the promotion of different training options with medium, moderate and high intensity - Cango Jumps, Zorbing, Water Aerobics, Bosball, Tabata (various models and games in response to new requirements and diverse preferences). The training options are tailored to the sports-pedagogical methodology; thus, the Physical Activity systems can be accessible to everyone. Permanent adaptation will support the improvement of motor skills and habits and their application in variants with a greater load. (Dineva, Ilieva, 2020)

Organizing and conducting an initiative to increase children's motor activity with the main goal of strengthening and tempering children, developing physical capacity and building personal qualities and social skills through active motor activity in nature. The results of the satisfaction survey and especially of the recommendations show that there is an increased interest and desire for active participation in future joint sports activities of children, parents and teachers. (Andreva, 2020)

Mobile applications and digital platforms for some types of sports.

In Bulgaria, the existing external experience of the applicability of mobile applications as a unique medium for the distribution of various means, forms and impacts for increasing levels of physical activity and improving healthy behavior is being studied. The main advantage is that whether users are looking for the best workouts at home or enjoy working out outdoors, workout apps can provide a suitable fitness solution that is convenient and affordable to suit personal free time.

The research was involved through public information on internet about existing best practices in Bulgaria in regards of the promotion of outdoor activities and parent-child interaction, and investigation of coaches', physical educators' and parents' beliefs and needs about the promotion of the parent-child outdoor physical activity. The desk research was focused on identifying existing outdoor programs conducted in Bulgaria that have been successful in promoting outdoor physical activity and identified why they have been considered successful. In addition, the desk research identified the most appropriate parent-child interaction styles and the best practices that would facilitate the physical activity. (Ilieva, 2022)

Applicable curriculum

METHODS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS - curriculum

The studied discipline (MFVS) is mandatory and aims to acquaint the students of the specialty "ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PEDAGOGY AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE" with the specific application of general didactic concepts, principles, methods of training and education and organizational and methodological forms of work on physical education in the kindergarten and primary school. These knowledge and skills are the basis for further improvement in their profession as elementary teachers of bachelor students for the implementation of educational activities related to the physical education of young students. (Curriculum, 2018)

The chosen set of best practices from Bulgaria consists of 15 examples of the family sport activities that are the focus of the PROGRESS project. One researcher was responsible for collecting data through out of many sport events in this regard.

In general, the events are organized locally, throughout different regions of the country. Organizers are municipalities, NGOs, sport clubs, private corporations or mutual cooperation of different entities.

The majority of the financing is made by the municipalities that are hosting the events or private organizers (NGOs, sport clubs or private corporations) who use its own budgets. Most usually, the municipalities use municipal budgets, allocated specifically for those events, pre-planned in their municipal sports or social annual programmes. In most cases, NGOs use delegated budgets from concrete projects and financial mechanisms. Private corporations use own finances, planned for social, sports or other activities or corporate profits.

The logistics, preparation and implementation is done by the organizers, in many cases the staff is supported by volunteers on a voluntary basis.

A trend for sustainability is observed. Some of the family sport activities, such as "Ala-bala-nica", after being conducted successfully for several following years, have become sustainable and have been set out in the yearly calendar and approved in the municipal plan for sports activities of the particular municipality. The mentioned initiative is ongoing and has been organized for the 8th following year since its creation.

Another trend was noticed, some attractive and successful sport family events, when repeatedly performed during the years, each following year involve more sponsors and increases not only popularity but increases sponsorship. Example for that is the family sports event "Familiathlon" which has been financed from 20 companies and NGOs during its last edition. Another positive

trend is observed when organization and financing of such events is done in cooperation between municipalities and sports clubs or NGOs.

Traditionally, some commercial companies have good practices in the financing of sports activities, such as:

- "Asarel Medet" AD, Panagyurishte successfully finances the development of sport in the municipality of Panagyurishte. It is a sponsor of the basketball club, where different age groups of children and young people train and compete. As a result of the good partnership of the Company and the Municipality of Panagyurishte, a multifunctional sports hall was built in the city.

- "Dundee Precious Metals" AD, sponsors the Rhythmic Gymnastics Federation etc.

The best practices for physical activities will help the Bulgarian children to develop positive attitudes towards physical activity participation.

Teachers and sports specialists will be supported in their daily strive to contribute to the we In addition, sports specialists in Bulgaria, teaching in the National sport academy have a strong interest in obtaining resources that would assist them in better educating their students how to promote physical activity participation. They support all activities that are related to the promotion of physical activity.

It is of great interest also to the sport clubs and organizations to be involved in the project which will help them develop resources that they will further use in their daily activities related to their focus which includes physical activity promotion. The sport clubs have a strong interest in obtaining educational materials that would allow them to approach and inspire more children to become athletes. PROGRESS will give the Bulgarian teachers, coaches and parents the opportunity to test new methodologies for education and training.

The implementation of the PROGRESS Project in Bulgaria will help physical activities for families with children to be promoted in an innovative way.

Quantitative analysis of the attitudes and expectations of respondents, representatives of the target group – conclusions and recommendations

The distribution of respondents by age is uneven and presents generational differences as a priority for the following age groups:

- 40-49 y.o. – 33,7 %
- 50-59 y.o. – 23,8 %
- 30 - 39 y.o. - 23,7 %

The distribution of social roles is as follows:

- Mother - 34,7 %
- Father - 23,8 %
- Teacher - 15,8 %
- Coach - 14,9 %

Explained by the urban environment inhabited by the respondents (mainly from the capital), the predominant share is the share of those employed with work performed from a sitting position (e.g. in an office) - (44.6%). Next are those employed in work involving high physical activity without

carrying heavy loads (21.8%), those engaged in work combining physical activity and sitting position (19.8%) and those who are not working (10.9%).

With a narrow margin of 53.5%, those who do sports or restorative activities predominate, with the largest share of those who do sports only a few times a year – 35.2%. It was followed by those who do sports 1-2 times a week (25.9%) and 2-4 times a month (22.2%).

Lack of habits (46.8%) and lack of time (40.4%) are the two reasons that respondents cite as the main reasons for not exercising.

The next important step in the survey is the establishment of the assessment of respondents on the importance and beneficial impact of physical activity. The questions are combined and require them to range the answers.

The level of general awareness is dominated by sources such as social media (with more than 80% weighting), Shows on television (over 75%) and Friends (over 60%). Sports newspapers, Podcasts, Daily or weekly newspapers, Professional books, YouTube videos have the least importance for awareness.

The respondents' assessment of the benefits of sport and restorative exercise is strongly in favour of attributing the greatest importance to the statement that "Exercise is necessary for maintaining and improving health, learning new skills and socializing" (with a share of about 60%), along with a clear disagreement with the statements "Exercise is necessary only in case of certain diseases deformities" and "Sports and recreational activities are intended only for children and youth" (with shares of more than 80%). These results show a high level of awareness of the importance of sport.

At the same time, the answers to the combined question of assessing motivation as an active component of physical activity with children show a very large difference. An exception is the conviction of the benefit because of the positive effects on children, expressed with the prevailing agreement with the statement that "Children are in a good mood after physical activity" (the majority of the respondents have arranged the answer with "always" and "often").

As the most accessible facilities in the environment (at home, school, neighborhood) are estimated the presence of Public Park and Greenery (grass, trees, flowers, etc.) – with about 90% each, followed by Playground equipment (swings, slides, swings, etc.) – about 85%, Swimming pool (movable or fixed) and Free areas such as beaches, rivers, and nature reserves – with about 80% each and Surface suitable for cycling, rollerblading, skateboarding is the least... (65 %).

According to most of the respondents, the environment is accessible for physical activity with children, which is expressed in strong disagreement with the statement that "There are huge obstacles and hazards in the environment for walking with a child (eg, heavy traffic, main roads, railways, rivers, etc.)" (almost 100 %) if at all the question was understood correctly in terms of "Walking" and not "Playing", as well as with the statement "There is danger (eg dogs, unwanted people) in the local park or playground" (about 75 %). Respondents rated urban infrastructure as accessible (about 90% agreement with the statement "There are enough traffic lights and pedestrian crossings to safely walk with a child". However, infrastructure is assessed as an obstacle (over 70% disagree with the statement "Most streets have usable sidewalks"). Over 75% fully agree with the statement that "It is safe for children to play outside".

The answers to the question of ranking socially significant activities - Art activities, Musical activities, Mathematical and logical activities, Activities to get to know the environment, Physical activities, Language and speaking activities lead to high distraction and drastic difference of the results, therefore no trend can be deduced.

Respondents categorically differentiate the preoccupation with games and smart devices as the main reason that negatively affects children's physical activity – 95%, followed by the due to the financial situation – with almost 41%.

The respondents' position on relationships in the parent-child model is clear and clear. 80% confirmed that they fully agreed with the statement that "Parents taking children to physical activities is important".

Qualitative analysis of what was shared by active representatives of the target group

In continuation of the survey, common response patterns were observed.

What does outdoor physical activity mean to you?

Participants in the survey believe that these are planned and organized physical activities at the initiative of the family or educational institutions for children.

Respondents reckon that outdoor physical activities are of utmost importance for children's wellbeing. Physical activities are perceived as basic and inalienable in the development of children's health, psyche and as an important tool for entertainment and socialization.

All respondents, without exception, pointed out that this should be an obligatory part of all types of organized training – in kindergartens, in school, as well as part of family plans for raising and educating children. They pointed out that in their childhood, this was a more serious planned activity of educational institutions, as well as a much more common practice of families to engage in joint outdoor physical activities for the whole family. The negative difference at the moment is attributed to the widespread penetration of information technologies and electronic devices, the busy and hectic modern lifestyle and the increased traffic in the urban environment and, due to excessive construction in cities, the lack of accessible nearby free areas in the neighborhood of residence.

All interviewees replied that active outdoor activities for children should be state policy and strictly planned by the relevant institutions – the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and implemented by the educational institutions for children.

In addition, they shared that it is a matter of intelligence - the commitment of families themselves to plan and carry out outdoor physical activities with the participation of the whole family. According to them, exposing children outside to the fresh air and providing them with games and physical activities is very important for the proper upbringing of modern children, especially with the emerging negative tendency for immobilization, obesity and excessive use of electronic devices.

Also, most respond that outdoor activities are closely related to the beneficial impact on the whole family, to unite and build trust and closeness of parents with children and enrich and diversify their free time. Parents themselves should initiate and generate more ideas for going out and actively spending valuable time in nature.

The respondents listed exemplary physical activities that they believe should be covered: walking outside, hitchhiking in the mountains, cycling in the park, sports activities, mobile games, walking and playing in parks, going on the beach, but with active games and swimming, etc.

Is the development of parent-child outdoor physical activity important for educators?

All interviewees, without exception, consider of high importance for children to spend time for outdoors as much as possible, despite the challenges of the weather. Coaches say that physical exercises done outdoors have a higher impact and, accordingly, a greater positive effect on children. When children play and engage outside, they have more fun and better learning process.

Thus, they believe that if such activities are held more often, children may accustom and need for outdoor physical activities, and when being taught this way, they themselves to demand and seek for such opportunities. Getting acquainted with a game or sport, they would like to continue some sport with a coach and a team. In general, respondents are convinced that the development of children's physical qualities in outdoor games and sports will lead to quality changes and positive effects in children. For those of them who would continue to actively train with trainers in sports clubs, these habits from the family would be a fruitful contribution to their healthy lifestyles, to their general wellbeing and possible subsequent success in sports.

What do you think are the core characteristics that would make the development of educational games for promoting parent-child outdoor physical activity successful?

Respondents believe that the good example of the family is crucial for building habits and need for physical activities and outdoor sports in children. The outdoor activities together with the whole family, the experience and pleasant emotions that accompany the activities would stimulate the need for regular activities and the search for new opportunities, places and sports.

The planned organization and implementation of joint outdoor physical activities for the whole family, organized by kindergartens and schools, would encourage the desire of the children themselves for regular and even more diverse activities, turning it to their daily need.

Active promotion of such activities in social networks by engaged families would encourage other families to organize and undertake similar activities. In this way, the exchange of information and ideas about different exercises and games to be enjoyed by other interested families can be increased.

How can be applied to a school setting?

The respondents were active in providing creative ideas and made appropriate proposals such as:

- To organize more and varied joint physical activities in nature, which are attended by parents and other family members, to be engaged in active participation. This type of activities should become an obligatory part of the programs of educational institutions for children. Thus, the exchange of various experiences for families would be increased. At the events, the schools could provide awards for families with most creative and attractive activities;
- In kindergartens and schools, if possible, some of the classes and especially those in physical education and sports should be held outdoor;
- The schools and kindergartens to provide trainings for parents, offering ideas, materials, videos and information on good practices for joint outdoor physical activities;
- At parents' meetings, in addition to current issues and information, explanatory modules on parents' awareness of how important physical activity is for children to be delivered to the parents;

- To allow the use of sports facilities and playgrounds in the schoolyard and playgrounds in the kindergartens for families, to be used in their free time.

Who should be engaged in its application?

Everyone expressed the opinion that outdoor physical activities have an important role for proper upbringing and growth of children. This should be emphasized and fighting the tendency to belittle the physical activities when prioritizing other intellectual pursuits for children such as math, foreign languages etc. In addition, respondents were of the opinion that it would be good if the role of the teacher was required not only to educate children, but also to educate parents about the importance of these activities.

It was mentioned that it would be of benefit to include modules in the curriculum for students from different pedagogical profiles of higher institutions and universities for raising awareness of the importance and contribution of outdoor physical activities, where examples and good practices to be provided, so that future educators could teach such modules.

How can teachers contribute in order to make successful the development of educational games for promoting parent-child outdoor physical activity?

Respondents offered interesting ideas to educators. Educators should inform parents about the benefits of these activities to provide them with examples and good practices. In particular, to encourage families to engage in outdoor physical activity, educators can organize competitions through videos for free time of families which to be an incentive for others to pursue those active and creative activities.

All respondents believe that the best example comes from the family and that children who are brought up in these habits will expect and require such activities in school as well. Children who are accustomed to playing outside would offer more fun and attractive models, so to engage their peers.

How should the teachers be trained?

Respondents state that it would be good to be organized trainings for teachers that include different methods – lectures, videos and others with practical application. At the trainings, in addition to ready-made models of activities and games, to encourage the creativity of educators who, according to the specific needs and interests of their children, to create games and physical activities by indicating their goals, logic, desired effect, methodology, their application and ways of multiplication and dissemination of results.

What should be the content of the training?

First of all, the need for these activities and the positive effect on children and families should be emphasized. The importance of the application of the exercises outdoors should be pointed, as well as the specific methodology for working with children.

The trainings should present good practices and examples of different games and activities, including theoretical and practical modules.

How long do you think the training should be in order of it to be efficient? (hour/session and number of sessions)

Each respondent suggested a different duration and frequency, but the most important thing was that everyone took into account the need for such trainings. After hearing about one of the products of the *PROGRESS* project, the interviewees were unanimous that this application should be

promoted to educators and teachers, and not only to those responsible for physical education and sports. Despite the differences in the duration of the trainings, it was unanimously believed that they should be not less than 2 times in the year, and besides theory, they also should include practical part with children.

How should the training be delivered (e.g. in a group, ppt presentation)?

Most of the answers were that the training should include a variety of information modules – lectures, video and PPP, but with compulsory practical classes involving children's groups.

Who should deliver the training?

The respondents gave different answers – specialists from the National Sports Academy, teachers of physical education, multipliers, parents with such experience, famous athletes, etc. There was unanimous opinion that the trainings should be attractive, modern and intriguing, providing truly useful information.

Do you have any other questions or comments?

All of them expressed concern about the excessive use of electronic devices from an early age and due to this, the negligence of the motor activity of children and families.

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GREECE

P.A.C. OLYMPIADA

OVERVIEW

The aim of this paperwork was to identify parents', Physical Education teachers' and coaches' opinions regarding to parents and children participation outdoor physical activities.

The research started in September 2022 by 2 field researchers and ended by November 2022. The data collected throughout the process are based on a selection of outdoor physical activities and on qualitative data regarding to the aforementioned target group's opinion on outdoor physical activities through questionnaires and interviews.

CONTEXT

According to the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS) conducted in 2019, approximately 54.4% of the Greek population aged 15 years and older reported engaging in physical activity for at least 150 minutes per week, meeting the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommended levels of physical activity. However, there were some disparities in physical activity levels by age and gender. Men were more likely to meet the recommended levels of physical activity than women (61.5% vs. 47.5%), and younger age groups were more active than older age groups. Additionally, urban residents were less likely to meet the recommended levels of physical activity compared to those living in rural areas. It's worth noting that these statistics were collected before the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have impacted physical activity levels in Greece and around the world.

According to the latest available data from the 2018 Health Behavior in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey, which is a collaborative study conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO), children and adolescents in Greece reported relatively low levels of physical activity. The survey found that only 21.3% of Greek boys and 18.3% of Greek girls aged 11, 13, and 15 years reported engaging in physical activity for at least 60 minutes per day on at least five days per week, as recommended by the WHO. This means that a large proportion of Greek children and adolescents are not meeting the minimum levels of physical activity needed for good health. The survey also found that boys reported higher levels of physical activity than girls, and younger children (11 years old) were more active than older children (15 years old). In terms of types of physical activity, the most commonly reported activities by Greek children and adolescents were walking, cycling, and playing sports. There were also some notable disparities in physical activity levels by socioeconomic status. Children and adolescents from families with higher levels of education and income were more likely to engage in regular physical activity than those from less privileged backgrounds. Low levels of physical activity among children and adolescents can have negative health consequences, such as obesity, poor cardiovascular health, and mental health problems. Therefore, promoting physical activity among young people is an important public health priority in Greece and other countries.

Parental support can play a significant role in children's exercise habits. Here are some ways in which parental support can impact children's exercise:

Modeling behavior: Children learn a lot by observing their parents' behaviors. If parents engage in regular exercise, it is more likely that their children will follow suit. Parents who prioritize their own exercise and make it a regular part of their routine can inspire their children to do the same.

Encouragement and motivation: Parents can encourage and motivate their children to exercise by praising their efforts, setting achievable goals, and celebrating their successes. Positive reinforcement can help children build self-confidence and increase their motivation to continue exercising.

Providing resources: Parents can help their children exercise by providing resources such as equipment, transportation to and from activities, and access to safe and appropriate exercise environments. For example, parents can enroll their children in organized sports or activities, or provide them with equipment like bikes, balls, or jump ropes to encourage outdoor play.

Setting rules and boundaries: Parents can set rules and boundaries around exercise to ensure their children are engaging in safe and healthy behaviors. For example, parents can limit screen time and encourage outdoor play or set a limit on the amount of time their children spend engaging in sedentary activities.

Role modeling healthy lifestyle choices: Parents can also model healthy lifestyle choices beyond exercise, such as eating a balanced diet, getting enough sleep, and managing stress. Children who see their parents prioritizing their health are more likely to adopt healthy habits themselves. Overall, parental support can have a significant impact on children's exercise habits. By modeling healthy behaviors, providing resources and encouragement, setting rules and boundaries, and role modeling healthy lifestyle choices, parents can help their children establish lifelong healthy habits.

Research has shown that parents play an important role in shaping children's exercise behavior and attitudes towards physical activity. In Greece, a study conducted among school-aged children found that parental encouragement and support were positively associated with children's participation in physical activity. Additionally, a survey conducted in Greece among parents of preschool children found that parental beliefs and attitudes towards physical activity were associated with the amount of physical activity their children engaged in. Parents who viewed physical activity as important were more likely to have children who engaged in regular physical activity. However, there are also some challenges and barriers to children's physical activity in Greece, including limited opportunities for organized physical activity in schools and communities, lack of facilities, and sedentary lifestyles. Overall, parental influence on children's exercise in Greece appears to be a significant factor, but more research is needed to fully understand the extent of this influence and how it can be leveraged to promote physical activity among children.

METHODOLOGY

One of the objectives of the research was to find popular outdoor activities that take place in Greece. Thus, 15 were selected from those that allow people of all ages to participate. Indicatively, some of them are Beach Athletics, canoeing, hiking and team sports tournaments.

The second part of the research was to collect qualitative data from parents, coaches and Physical Educators in order to determine the value they attribute to outdoor physical activity. Therefore, the research coordinator and the other members of the research team distributed specially designed questionnaires to the target group. Particularly, the questionnaires aimed to obtain information about whether outdoor exercise has a place in the daily life of modern-day families and the factors that influence their participation in it.

In the final phase of the research, using a random allocation system, 10 people were selected to get interviewed and answer questions about the role of the education system in enhancing outdoor physical activity among parents and children. Before each interview, every interviewee was fully informed about the aims of the research and participated voluntarily.

RESULTS

Quantitative data

Out of 100 participants, 35% stated they were fathers and 28% mothers aged 40-49 years (38%) and 50-59 (29%). Most of the participants (32%) stated that they are employed in a profession that requires physical exercise and 27% work in a job that involves both physical activity and a sedentary lifestyle. 76% of the participants are systematically doing physical exercise, more precisely, 34% of them work out 3-5 times per week. Only 24% of the participants are not involved in physical activities because of lack of time.

Regarding to getting informed about the positive effects that physical activity has on participants' lifestyle, sports coaches were found to be the most popular source of information (59%) followed by social media (54%).

Almost half of the participants (51%) agreed to the statement that the society they live in is not completely informed about the benefits of physical activity. Moreover, 65% of them completely disagreed to the statement that sports and physical activities are essential only for health issues and for youngsters (75%).

Most of the participants (82%) motivate children to be physically active and do outdoor physical activities (73%).

In terms of accessibility to sports facilities or areas where someone can be physically active, most participants stated that they have easy access to public parks (82%) and playgrounds (72%). Regarding security, half of the participants (51%) reported that children are safe to play outdoors, but a percentage of 54% reported that there are not enough safe and large pavements on the streets and that there might occur dangers while walking outside with children (56%).

When asked to prioritize a series of different activities for children, 38% of the participants rated physical activities as the most important ones followed by linguistic activities (34%).

Online gaming was found to be the number one reason as to why children avoid being physically active (85%), followed by distance issues between their residence and sports facilities (60%) and parents' financial status (50%).

Regarding to parents encouraging children to be physically active and exercise with them, participants strongly agreed (57% and 46% respectively).

Qualitative data

All of the participants of the study were either parents or sports coaches that work with children. They were randomly chosen to participate in the qualitative research, as mentioned above.

The opening question aimed in identifying the value each participant attributes to physical activity. Nine out of ten participants would describe physical activity as something important an essential as mental health is. Precisely, an interviewee stated “Physical activity should be a cornerstone of every society and culture”. Only one of them reported that they are not interested in physical activities.

In the first question, participants were asked to clarify the importance of parent-child outdoor physical activity and everyone agreed that it is a really important. Followed up by the reasons they believe that, they justified their response by arguing that physical activity can strengthen the bonds between family members and that it is as important as mental health. They stated that while families are being physically active outdoors they have the chance not to only contact with nature, but also gain some more efficient time together. One participant emphasized the fact that by doing physical activities with their parents, children have the chance to experience things they usually do not in the school complex. Some participants agreed to the statement that a healthy lifestyle is promoted to children when parents are physically active with them and they can also learn about the benefits physical activities have on health.

The next question was about the core characteristics that would make the development of educational games for promoting parent-child outdoor physical activity successful. Some of the participants reported that an efficient development of such games could be achieved by organizing something that is interesting for both parents and children depending on their age. Some others focused on external factors, such as weather conditions and the facilities these games are organized. When asked to give an example of an educational game or activity that could possibly promote parent-child outdoor physical activity, four participants suggested running and walking outdoors, two participants suggested hiking, one of them suggesting riding bicycles and the last participant proposed the “Kids’ Athletics” games.

Afterwards, participants were asked to express their opinion on whether or not such educational games could implement on a school setting. In this question the responses of the participants were mixed. Six of them had a positive response, while three of the participants disagreed and only one participant clarified that it depends on each school setting, since in Greece most school yards are made of concrete which automatically make some games inappropriate, unsafe and sometimes dangerous. This question was followed up by another one that required participants to give an example of a good practice that could implement in a school complex. All of the participants chose volleyball, basketball, football and handball tournaments.

In the fourth question, participants were asked to express their opinions on who should be engaged in the application of these games. All of the participants agreed that teachers, physical educators, the State, the national Ministry of Education and other official bodies should be engaged in

applying these activities in schools. They were also asked to report the teachers' role in this implementation and half of them stated that such activities depends on the teachers' will to organize them and also transfer their knowledge to kids and the other participants stated that the most important thing about teachers is that children can trust them, so this automatically makes them responsible for organizing school tournaments and educational games.

The fifth question involved how can teachers contribute in order to make successful the development of educational games for promoting parent-child outdoor physical activity. Most participants stated that teachers should organize school tournaments and after school physical activities in the school complex. One participant emphasized that Physical Education teachers are trying their best to make kids participate in outdoor athletic activities, but they do not get the support needed from the Ministry of Education.

In the sixth question participants were asked how teachers should be trained in order to effectively deliver the educational games. Participants proposed that teachers should attend seminars, update on new surveys regarding to the benefits of physical activity on health and lifestyle and lastly, exercise outdoors themselves.

In the following question about what the content of the training should be, participants proposed that it should be knowledge of the subject, learning rules and regulations of different sports and inventing smart ways to make kids interested in sports. The key-points of the teachers' training, as reported by the interviewees, were the benefits physical activity has on health and lifestyle, the importance of "fair-play" and the values that sports can offer to a person's mindset, application of many physical activities and ways for passing knowledge to the new generation.

Participants were asked to specify the duration of this training. Nine out of ten participants reported that this training should last several months and one of them stated that it should last several years. One participant reported that this training should take place two weeks per year and some days throughout the week. In the next question about the means and ways to deliver the training, nine participants agreed on organizing group training sessions additional to seminars, personal education and online education by watching videos about the topic and one participant proposed personal education.

The last question, was about who should deliver the training for teachers. Most participants agreed on Physical Educators, some of them proposed that coaches and, specifically, kids' coaches should be the ones who transfer this knowledge to teachers and one participant said "a committee should be appointed consisted of a sports book author, a Physical Educator, a coach and a sports professor".

Lastly, each participant was asked to make some additional comments. One of them stated "If lifelong learning and lifelong sports are promoted and enter the mentality of every people, I believe that we can only reap benefits". Another interviewee said "If all these things are implemented, people's lifestyle will improve" and another participant said "I hope all these things are implemented some day".

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report yielded important data regarding the perceptions about sports that prevail in Greek society and the way of life of the citizens. According to the report's results, it becomes clear that the local society is not completely aware of the influence physical activity has on the improvement of health and lifestyle. On the other hand, according to the report's findings, the majority of people motivate kids to play outside and be physically active and also believe that physical activities are as important as other important educational activities. These results could be a springboard for citizens to gain easier access to information about the benefits of physical activity. Moreover, most of the respondents believe that the main reason why children are not physically active enough is the huge amount of time spent on electronic games. This situation could be solved by children participating in after school physical activities, so that they spend more time exercising than playing online games.

The interview's findings show that there are no school infrastructures suitable for supporting and implementing educational sports games. A solution to this problem could be the organization of physical activities under the auspices of the Ministry of Education in specially designed areas with safety specifications. Additionally, another possible solution could be the reformulation of the school circular with the aim of developing general sports education for both teachers and students.

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ITALY ECOS

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the parents' and teachers' understanding of the value of physical activity that takes place outside.

This report includes a number of recommendations that are geared toward the general public as well as those involved in the sports industry. In September of 2022 data collection started including both quantitative and qualitative information gathered by three field researchers. Following data collection the analysis of the information took place. This report is broken down into four different parts. The objective of the introduction is to familiarize the reader with both the scope of the project and the information contained in the report. Following this, there is a section that goes into greater detail about the methods that were used to collect data as well as analyze it. The context is extremely dependent on the policies and regulations that are in place. The results of the research are presented as well as discussed in the final section.

CONTEXT

The 2018 Eurobarometer on Physical Activity presents persuasive evidence for the necessity of promoting health-enhancing physical exercise throughout Europe. Specifically, over half of Europeans (46%) never exercise or participate in sports. Regrettably, the percentage of Europeans who never exercise or play sports has climbed from 42% to 46%, and there is evidence that Europeans are now less inclined to participate in other physical activities than they were in 2013; the percentage of inactivity has increased from 30% to 35%. Curiously, there were disparities between countries. The survey revealed that persons in Northern Europe exercise or participate in sports more frequently or with some regularity than those in Southern and South-Eastern Europe. Specifically, Finland (69%), Sweden (67%), and Denmark (63%) have a greater proportion of persons who exercise or play sports regularly or with some regularity compared to Romania, Bulgaria, Italy, and Greece (32% to 38%).

The 2022 Eurobarometer indicated a further decline in the levels of physical activity among European citizens. This information indicates that a) physical activity participation is low across Europe, b) the frequency of physical activity involvement declines despite attempts to encourage health-enhancing physical activity, and c) South-East Europe has lower physical activity levels than North Europe. This data suggests that the healthy lifestyle is diminishing across Europe, particularly in the nations of South-East Europe, and that it is essential to identify the most effective solutions to this problem and promote an active lifestyle across Europe.

The existing evidence clearly reveals that the amount of physical activity in Europe is decreasing. The COVID-19 epidemic, along with the imposed restrictions on social distancing and the closure of recreational events and exercise facilities, exacerbated the decline in physical activity among European residents. Thus, it is essential to take action and discover novel approaches to promote

physical activity. Interpreting the current situation and the existing evidence on the physical activity levels in Europe, the need to promote health-enhancing physical activity has been revealed. In this respect Project PROGRESS has been particularly created to satisfy them. Specifically: a) the need to encourage health-improving physical activity.

The Eurobarometer on Physical Activity (2018) revealed that younger individuals are more physically active than elderly individuals. Intriguingly, Barkoukis et al. (2010) and Ntoumanis et al. (2009) found that the decline in physical activity participation begins during adolescence, when adolescents lose interest in participating in physical activities, such as the physical education class, and the positive aspects of participation begin to decline (e.g., enjoyment for participation, intrinsic motivation to participate etc). Consequently, it appears necessary to intervene at this age group or even earlier in late infancy to build favorable attitudes about physical activity involvement in order to halt the decline. Psychological evidence demonstrates unequivocally that attitudes are closely linked to stronger intentions to exhibit a behavior and, ultimately, actual behavior (Ajzen, 2011; Fishbein, 2009). Also, acquiring good attitudes toward a behavior, physical activity participation in this case, from late childhood and adolescence is associated with keeping this attitude during adulthood and exhibiting the behavior in question for longer durations (Kremers & Brug, 2008). If this is the case, it is necessary to develop treatments that target this age range and try to promote physical activity that is beneficial to health.

Consistent with the preceding, physical activity promotion strategies currently exist (Nwimo & Orji, 2015). In addition, the Erasmus+ sport call has already funded numerous interventions and teaching materials. Unfortunately, these interventions have not been demonstrated to be beneficial in the long term for improving physical activity participation. A probable explanation for this is that they exclude the parent, a key agent in the formation of children's attitudes, intentions, and behaviors. Extensive research indicates that parents have the most impact on their children's motivation, conduct, and psychological development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). During early adolescence, when parental influence typically fades as children mature, parents play crucial roles in encouraging their children's participation in competitive sport (Côté, 1999; Holt et al., 2009). Moreover, early studies revealed that parental support and encouragement are related to children's initial participation in extracurricular activities (Anderson et al., 2003). Particularly, parental effect on socialization in sports has garnered much study. Two of the earliest investigations employed retrospective approaches. The survey conducted by Spreitzer and Snyder (1976) of 264 individuals indicated that parental support was connected with youth sports engagement for both men and women. Also, it was discovered that women value encouragement more than males. Prior to age 13, the majority of 587 elite adult female athletes said that their parents were the primary influence on their sports activity (Higginson, 1985). This research indicates that parents have a crucial role in the formation of good attitudes, intentions, and actual physical activity behavior in children. Unfortunately, not all parental practices are appropriate for encouraging physical exercise engagement. Trost et al. (2003) provide a summary of prior research indicating that parents can impact their children's health behaviors through a variety of mechanisms. These include genetics, direct modeling, rewarding desirable behaviors and punishing or ignoring undesirable behaviors, establishing or removing barriers, providing resources to perform the behavior, and employing authoritative parenting techniques to assist the child in developing self-control skills. On the other hand, they reported that children with authoritarian moms were the least active, and that the less logistic assistance they had for activity

was connected with less activity (Hennessy et al., 2010). Moreover, the creation of effective family-based physical activity treatments requires a comprehensive understanding of how parents impact the physical activity behavior of their children.

The manner in which physical activity was defined and pursued is a second probable explanation for the ineffectiveness of present interventions un promoting long-term participation in physical activity. Many treatments were performed in a school setting (in order to gain access to the target population), but the impacts on physical activity outside of school were not examined or were not sustainable. Nonetheless, time spent outside is a reliable predictor of children's physical activity (Sallis et al., 2000), and children's physical activity levels are higher outside of school than during school hours (Gidlow et al., 2008). Weekday evenings and weekend days are leisure time. Youth have greater freedom of choice for physical exercise during leisure moments than during the structured school day, when it is easier to promote organized physical activity (Cardon et al., 2009; Loucaides et al., 2009). Active play, or unstructured outdoor physical activity in children's spare time, could be a big contributor to their total physical activity levels (Brockman et al., 2010; Veitch et al., 2008). In addition, there is accumulating evidence of the benefits of being in nature or having interaction with the natural environment for humans. Hence, outdoor physical activity is proposed as a means of combining these favorable effects and even producing synergistic effects. In this context, specialists from a variety of professions have highlighted the benefits of outdoor activities that frequently extend beyond being physically active in an urban setting (Eigenschenk et al., 2019). Morris (2003) examined research and concluded that outdoor physical activity offers significant health, social and communication, mental and spiritual, and personal benefits. Importantly, in addition to the health-enhancing effects of physical activity and nature, outdoor sports are also associated with social benefits, such as intra- and inter-personal development for youth, crime reduction, and active citizenship, as they provide unique opportunities within natural and social environments. They connect people to nature, to other people, and to themselves, achieving multiple positive impacts simultaneously. In the context of urbanization, insufficient activity levels, sedentary behavior, and a growing disconnect between people and the natural environment, Eigenschenk et al. (2019) believe that outdoor sports can be part of the answer and further promote health-promoting physical activity.

In conclusion, there is a need for programs that effectively promote health-enhancing physical exercise. In this regard, treatments that take parents and outdoor physical activity into account may have the ability to foster positive attitudes, intentions, and actual physical activity behaviors in children and adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

The principal researcher from ECOS supervised the entire procedure for this study, while the other researchers were responsible for collecting primary and secondary data, analyzing the data and preparing the national report. A mixed-method methodology utilized in this WP including a quantitative and a qualitative study.

For the quantitative study a survey was developed including items measuring parents physical activity, children's physical activity and parental support of children's physical activity (See Appendix 1).

For the qualitative study an interview matrix was developed including questions on sport people beliefs about health enhancing physical activity, the need for, content and delivery mode of education for the promotion of physical activity (See Appendix 2).

Participants in both studies were randomly selected from a larger pool of people being involved in sport in the wider area of Rome. All participants provided consent to participate in the studies, quantitative or qualitative.

RESULTS

Quantitative study

In the study took part 100 participants. The most responses were from mothers (40%) and fathers (23%). When it comes to age, those between the ages of 40 and 49 had the most respondents (53%), followed by those between the ages of 30 and 39 (16%). With respect to employment the majority of the sample was occupied in an office job (39%) followed by those who are employed on a job that combines both active and sedentary lifestyle (29%). The majority of the participants were involved in physical activities (68%) and the majority of those participated in sports recreation at least two times per week (80%).

The main deterrent for participation in physical activity was lack of time (46.7%) followed by the lack of habit for physical activity (26.7%). With respect to information about the benefits of physical activity, social media and friends were the most commonly reported sources of information.

Interestingly a large number of participants reported that exercise is essential for the maintenance of health and the development of skills and abilities (69%) whereas the majority of the participants disagreed with the notion that exercise is useful only to recover from illness (72%), exercise is suitable only for children (70%).

With respect to the value of exercise participants responded that children have better mood when participate in physical activities (57%), encourage children to be physically active (43% and 54%).

The majority of the participants responded that they have access to playgrounds (91%) and public parks (91%), as well as green areas (85%). Less participants had access to specific areas for biking etc (54%), pools (65%) or next to water such as lakes and rivers (48%).

With respect to safety, the majority of the participants reported low perceptions of safety in the several options provided in the survey and included playing in open spaces (10%), on the roads (3%) walking with children (18%), and risks in the open spaces (8%).

With respect to the prioritization of physical activity, physical activity was considered among the most important activities for children (26%) followed by artistic activities (21%).

Use of electronic games was suggested as the most important factor preventing children from participating in physical activities (47%) followed by the lack of infrastructures for physical activity (33%). Also, an important preventive factor was the long distance from existing infrastructures (29%).

Lastly, with respect to parental support the majority of the participants agreed that parent child physical activity is important for the development of physical activity habits in children (59%) and that parents should support children's physical activity (52%).

Qualitative study

The interview was conducted with ten participants chosen at random. The interviews were directed by following instructions and asking pre-determined questions. The participants of the study comprised mostly of sports people working with children as a PE teacher or a coach. A parent also participated in the study. The purpose of the first question was to obtain a better understanding of the routines of the people who agreed to be interviewed and to figure out how best to approach them during this particular interview. Following each question that was asked, there was a follow-up question.

In the opening question participants perceived outdoor activities as something important for the development of the children. The main benefits from outdoor physical activities were the establishment of a healthy lifestyle and the promotion socialization and sense of autonomy. Indicatively a participant reported 'For me, it means adding value to the physical activities of kids who are already learning to do well for their bodies. Outdoor activities stand for knowledge and interaction with the surroundings, light, socialization, discovery.'

The first question involved the importance of the development of parent-child outdoor physical activity for educators. In this question, all participants agreed that the development of parent-child outdoor physical activity important. Two main reasons were reported by the participants. The first one focused on the establishment of a healthy lifestyle. It was considered that outdoor physical activities help young children develop their physical competencies and endorse a healthy and active lifestyle. Indicatively, one participant reported 'Instead of playing computer games they are able to have a better perception of themselves, and the educator's task is easier as he or she will surely have an easier time approaching them.'

The second important reason was the strengthening of the parent-child relationship. Participants contended that through this type of activities parents and children interact in a more relaxed environment that helps overcome the pressure of everyday life. On the participants specifically commented on this by saying 'Exercise also develops the relationship between child and parent by creating a calm and pressure-free space for sharing by stimulating self-esteem and independence. It is crucial in trying to curb the intrusiveness and apprehension of parental figures learning more about their child.' While this participant focused on the benefits for the parent, there seems to be benefits for the children as well. A participant reported about this 'It's a way to spend quality time together' whether another one noted '...it fosters contact and relationship between parents and children, both involved in the same activity, at the same time, on an equal level'.

The second question 2 involved the core characteristics that would make the development of educational games for promoting parent-child outdoor physical activity successful. In this question, the majority of the participants noted that the key characteristic of the educational games would be to promote the parent-child interaction in an relaxed environment. Specifically one participant noted 'the essentials are an appropriate learning environment and structured play-like activities that allow children to express themselves freely'. The quality of an environment promoting cooperation, mutual support and education was perceived as the most important aspect of the educational games. Echoing this, another participant reported 'Any promotional activity for

educational games between parents and children should necessarily emphasize the educational aspect through games with cooperation and mutual aid between parents and children; which also confront parents with the complexity that children encounter in playing the game'. With respect to the activities that should be included in the educational games all participants contented that competitive and collaborative activities should be included. Several participants also suggested popular sports as part of the educational games. Nevertheless, the essence of the games is to promote education, collaboration and cooperation through fun and competitive activities.

The third question the application of educational games to a school setting. In this question, all participants suggested for a holistic approach in the promotion of physical activity in schools by integrating activities with parents. Several activities have been proposed, such as extracurricular activities with parents during the school year, end of the year activities etc. Still, the main message that participants wanted to convey was to foster collaboration between the schools, the parents and the local community in order to effectively integrate educational games in school and promote parent-child physical activity.

The fourth question involved who should be engaged in the application of educational games. In this question, the holistic approach in the integration of educational games and the promotion of parent-child physical activity was echoed again. Participants suggested that school teachers, parents and external agents linked to the community and the industry should be involved in the application of the educational games. Especially for the teachers, participants suggested that they play a focal role in this effort and requested a better education on the promotion of physical activity both within and outside the school setting. As an example one participant stated 'Teachers could increase their knowledge through training with experts and come up with classroom activities to replicate at home with parents and moreover encourage extracurricular practices.'

In the fifth question, how can teachers contribute in order to make successful the development of educational games for promoting parent-child outdoor physical activity was asked. In this question, the establishment of an enjoyable lesson was the key contribution of teachers for the promotion of parent-child physical activity. Several ideas were offered in order to achieve this. For instance, participants proposed that teachers should use enjoyable activities that students could replicate with their parents outside school ('Teachers could increase their knowledge through training with technicians and come up with classroom activities to replicate at home with parents and moreover encourage extracurricular practices.'). or integration of physical activity into other school disciplines in order to create a mentality of physical activity in the school (a participant noted 'Development of motor skills in geometry, math, science, in the garden through gymnastic trails'). Again it is assumed by the participants that a holistic approach of the school involving all school teachers and parents will result in an enjoyable environment that can promote physical activity.

The sixth question involved how should the teachers be trained in order to effectively deliver the educational games. All participants suggested that specified training should be provided to teachers about the promotion of physical activity and parent-child interactions. This training should be multifaceted and involve several experts and teaching approaches. One participant specifically focused on the teaching approach that should be used to enhance teachers' competencies by saying 'In my opinion, teacher training should start from living concrete experiences by beginning to try things out in the field and interacting with all the elements involved'.

In the seventh question what should be the content of the training was asked. The vast majority of the participants noted that pedagogy should be the focus of such training. For instance a participant noted 'parent-child relationship. Play as a means of learning, Sport and motor activities as a means of relating to and learning about oneself and others'. Even participants who suggested more training-like topics noted that the pedagogical implementation of the training is important in order to have high quality training and achieve this purpose. This was clearly reflected in a participant saying 'basic aspects of motor skills but mainly related to the specific pedagogical field'.

The eight question involved how long do you think the training should be in order of it to be efficient. The majority of the participants suggested that a relatively short training would be more appropriate for this purpose. Although the length and duration of the training varied there was a large consensus that the training should be concise, flexible, easy to attend and relatively short. A participant summarized these proposals by saying 'A structured program of 1/2 weekly meetings not excessively long depending on age from a minimum of 1 hour to a maximum of 2. Training should include a theoretical part, offered in a light manner. Interactive forms of training that are very effective, symbolic, but at the same time very concrete.'

In the ninth question how should the training be delivered was asked. Group teaching was the preferred way of the training delivery. All participants suggested this as the most appropriate way for education. Also, several participants prompt for powerpoint presentations and practical exercises that are expected to facilitate learning.

In the tenth question, who should deliver the training was asked. All participants suggested that experienced experts should deliver the training. Although there were some differences in the type experts (i.e., coaches or psychologists) it was evident in all participants that skilled and experienced staff should be responsible for the delivery of the training.

Furthermore, a few participants offered additional comments. Still their comments are of importance as they highlight significant aspects of the promotion of physical activity. For instance one participants suggested 'Our educational vision is inclined more toward a theoretical side and leaves the practical side to after-school sports activities. This I think is bad, school should involve and get kids excited about sports as well as educate them about healthy behaviors.' This comment highlights the importance of moving our education forward in integrating the promotion of physical activity into school curricula and not only in physical education lessons.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The quantitative and qualitative studies provided valuable information for the understanding of physical activity habits in Italy. According to the findings of the survey, we may draw the conclusion that a large percentage of those polled do not participate in any form of physical activity. Nevertheless a large percentage of participants believe that their inactivity will hinder efforts to encourage children to exercise. In addition, we found that the vast majority of those who responded take their children to public parks so that they can get some exercise. This information may serve to encourage the establishment of new children's parks and playgrounds as well as the maintenance of those that already exist. The development of infrastructures in these parks for parents might also help them improve their own physical activity. IN addition, the development of

infrastructures that facilitate parent-child interactions would also be a means to improve this interaction.

According to the findings of this research, the majority of respondents feel that excessive use of electronic means, such as video games and social media is one of the fundamental reasons for the decline in physical activity. A possible solution to this might be to develop communities of parents and children who organize physical activities and decrease the time of screen use in their children. Also, a possible activity would be to educate parents on how to fill in the free time of their children, especially with physical activities in home, in order to further decrease the use of screens at home.

From the interview also emerged the role of physical activity for the improvement of parent-child interactions. IN this respect the need to educate teachers and sport people was emerged. This education should be developed and delivered by experts. The duration of the education should be relatively short and several means of delivery should be used in order to be effective.

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ROMANIA

THE ROMANIAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

OVERVIEW

This paper offers an insight into the perspective of parents, PE teachers and trainers with regards to the role and importance of participation in physical activities between parents and children.

In this paper there have been gathered policies from public authorities on sports, data from the European Commission and information from parents, physical educators and trainers. The data collection began on the 1st of November 2022 and took place throughout the duration of the month. In this timeframe the information was gathered through the means of a standardised (at the level of the partners' consortium) questionnaire and interview.

METHODOLOGY

For the gathering of good practices we have selected 15 events that encourage the participation of people of all ages, mostly crosses, running events and mini-leagues of popular sports. These events are mostly privately funded, with only one being public funded. The best practices that have been found take place mostly in Bucharest, as well as in Cluj, Timișoara, Oradea, Iași and Brăila.

The data collection from questionnaire and interviews, as well as from papers and official documents, has been overseen by the research coordinator and proofread by the other members of the research team. The literature review includes studies conducted on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's involvement in physical activities (Simion, Andrei & Croitoru, Doina, 2021); possible policy recommendations to involve more Romanians in physical activities (Alina, Badiu, 2020); how EU values and guidelines are applied in Romanian PE classes (Mihaela, Iconomescu & Olaru, Bogdan Sorin & Talaghir, Laurentiu-Gabriel & Berdila, Anamaria & Rus, Cristian, 2022); how physical activities can be used as a tool for social innovation in Romania (Stanescu, Monica & Bota, Aura & Roxana, Bejan & Corlaci, Ionuț, 2020).

On top of the mentioned studies, the latest Eurobarometer on sports (September 2022) has been consulted, as well as the Romanian Constitution (especially the Law on Physical Education and Sport – law 69/2000) and the Romanian Ministry for Sports Official Monitor.

CONTEXT

Only 29.5% of kids aged 3 to 17 participate in sports, according to a 2018 National Institute of Statistics survey.

This drop in involvement is caused by a number of variables. The absence of financing and resources for sports activities in schools and communities is one of the key causes. There are few possibilities for kids to participate in organized sports outside of school, and many schools lack the necessary facilities or equipment.

The preference for academic success over athletic accomplishments is another issue. Many parents and educators discourage children from participating in sports because they think that it will distract them from their academic work. The prevalence of digital devices and sedentary lifestyles have also contributed to a decline in children's physical activity.

In Romania, initiatives are being taken to boost kids' participation in sports. In addition to attempts to stimulate private investment in sports infrastructure, the government has launched programs to increase access to sports equipment and facilities in schools. Sports groups and organizations are also attempting to encourage kids to participate in sports and physical activity.

The Law on Physical Education and Sport (Law No. 69/2000) is the main piece of legislation related to sport in Romania. Romanian physical education and sporting events are intended to be regulated and promoted by this law. The legislation specifies the fundamental ideas and goals of physical education and sport, such as the promotion of an active, healthy lifestyle, the encouragement of sporting excellence, and the defence of athletes' rights and interests.

The National Sports Council is made the primary coordinating body for sports in Romania by the law. This council is in charge of creating national sports strategies and policies as well as managing the planning of both domestic and international sporting events. Athletes, coaches, and sports organizations all have rights and responsibilities that are outlined in the law. It establishes guidelines for the administration of sporting events and contests as well as a system for the recognition and accreditation of sports organizations. The law's requirement that schools offer physical education lessons to pupils at all academic levels is one of its key provisions. For physical education classes, schools must also provide sports facilities and equipment.

Recent attempts at modernising the law and raising the level of participation from children include the availability at all times of schools' yards and sport fields, the organisation of interschool sporting competition and the introduction of the Play and Movement class in primary school.

63% of Romanians, according to the Eurobarometer poll, don't regularly partake in any physical activity, including sports, fitness, or leisure pursuits. Lack of time (37%) and lack of interest (33%), respectively, were given as the most frequent excuses for not exercising. On the other hand, 44% of Romanians said they exercise at least once a week. Football (soccer) and swimming are the most played sports among Romanians in terms of participation. 11% of Romanians said they go swimming, while 23% said they play football at least once a week. Jogging or running (7%), cycling (6%), and fitness or gym activities (5%) are some other common sports. The poll also revealed that different Romanian demographic groups participate in sports to varying degrees. Males were more likely than women to play sports; 50% of men said they played regularly, compared to 36% of women. Sports participation also fell off as people got older, from 53% of 15- to 24-year-olds to 25% out of people over 55. Overall, the results of the Eurobarometer study indicate that while there are some physically active people in Romania, a sizable percentage of the population does not partake in regular physical exercise or sports. This demonstrates the necessity of ongoing campaigns to encourage sports and physical exercise in Romania, especially among populations that are less inclined to participate.

These statistics are important and relevant to our research as they expose a pattern of growing sedentarism. The family is the environment in which habits are being formed and in which a child starts to develop both mentally and physically. For children with access to education, the school and their home are the places they spend most time in, thus signalling the importance of building

healthy habits in both those environments. Some of the identified benefits of practicing physical activities between parent and child are: bonding, role modelling, skill development, strong communication and setting a good standard for mental and physical health.

RESULTS

Questionnaire

A structured and standardised questionnaire was applied as a part of this study. The respondents all predominantly work and live in Bucharest/the outskirts of Bucharest.

In the research carried out among 100 parents, coaches, teachers and legal guardians, people aged between the most represented age group was between 40 and 49 (37%), then between 50 and 59 (30%). The rest of the age categories are divided as follows: 60 – 69 years 14%, 20 – 29 years 8%, 30 – 39 years 7% and over 70 years 3%.

45% of the answers come from fathers, 26% from mothers, 14% from grandparents, 5% guardians, 4% coaches and 3% sports teachers.

46% of respondents stated that their job involves both sitting at a desk and physical work, and 37% indicated that their job only involves sitting at a desk. 6% of participants have a job that involves physically demanding work that does not involve carrying heavy objects, while 2% indicate that their job involves physically demanding work and carrying heavy objects. 6% of participants do not have a job.

Among the participants who stated that they exercise, 24% exercise daily, 23% exercise almost every day, 36% exercise between 2 and 4 times a week, and 17% exercise every other week.

Of the participants who said they did not exercise, 64% said they did not feel the need to exercise, and 36% said they were not in the habit of exercising.

50% of participants indicated that their preferred source of information related to sports activities is social media, followed by TV shows, information from doctors, information from coaches and information from specialist books. 6% stated that they do not inform themselves but wish to do so, while 10% indicated that they are not interested.

When asked if it was safe for children to play outside, 70% of participants said they strongly agreed, 28% agreed, and 2% disagreed.

In relation to the assumption that most streets have usable sidewalks, 18% stated strong agreement and 36% agreed, while 30% disagreed and 16% strongly disagreed.

When asked if there are huge obstacles and dangers in the environment for walking with a child 20% said they strongly agreed, 37% agreed, 34% disagreed and 9% strongly disagreed .

Regarding the existence of enough traffic lights and pedestrian crossings to walk safely with a child, 21% said they strongly agreed, 45% agreed, 21% disagreed and 13% strongly disagreed.

Regarding the level of crime that makes walking with a child less safe, 11% said they strongly agreed, 23% agreed, 30% disagreed and 36% strongly disagreed.

When asked if there are dangers (eg dogs, street people) in the local park or playground, 12% strongly agreed, 31% agreed, 25% disagreed and 32% strongly disagreed.

For the next section of the research, participants were asked to rank the following activities in which children participate in order of importance: arts, music, math and logic, environmental awareness activities, physical activities, and literature and languages. Each activity was voted separately, the percentages being calculated according to the importance chosen by the participants for each activity individually.

Literature and foreign languages were chosen as the most important activity, mathematics and logic ranked second, followed by physical activities, arts, music and environmental awareness activities.

It is important to note that 32% of the participants consider sport as an important or very important activity, while 27% consider it unimportant or very unimportant.

When asked the reasons why children are not physically active enough, the participants answered in the following order: preoccupation with games and smart devices, lack of sports facilities, distance to facilities, poor financial situation, for health reasons and because the children don't think they need physical activity.

When it was suggested that the parent should not only supervise the child while doing physical activity 32% indicated strong agreement, 41% agreed, 14% disagreed and 13% strongly disagreed.

When asked if family physical activity is important for children's future habits 71% strongly agreed, 25% agreed and 4% disagreed.

With the idea that it is important for parents to take their children to physical activities, 77% totally agreed, 20% agreed, and 3% disagreed.

With the hypothesis that it is important for parents to allocate money for children's physical activities if they want them to be active, 66% strongly agreed, 25% agreed, 5% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed.

When asked if it is necessary for parents to buy sports equipment for children's activities in order for them to be physically active, 55% of participants strongly agreed, 28% agreed, 13% expressed disagreement, and 4% total disagreement.

Interview

From the perspective of the interview, 10 physical educators, trainers and parents have been selected in order for them to respond to a set of questions related to the role of the parent-teacher-trainer in a child's development and in the development of helping framework and activities. The 10 interviewees work and live in Bucharest.

1. Is the development of parent-child outdoor physical activity important for educators?

All of the interviewees have indicated that the development of such activities can be seen as a helping hand for educators. The key elements that have been highlighted are the development of self-trust, discipline, outdoor special awareness and proneness to participate willingly in physical activities. PE teachers have highlighted that the development of such activities can have positive impacts on the children's perspectives on sport and on both their physical and mental health.

Furthermore, both the teachers and the coaches have promoted the idea that such activities make more children participate in extracurricular physical activities, while also being more receptive and willing to take part in a diverse array of activities during classes.

2. What do you think are the core characteristics that would make the development of educational games for promoting parent-child outdoor physical activity successful?

The core characteristics that have been highlighted by most of the interviewees are interaction, dynamism, involvement and competition. Both coaches and parents have emphasised the idea that interactions between children and parents and the active involvement of the parents, are the focal points of these activities. From the perspective of the PE teachers and the trainers, competition is an aspect that both highlights and amplifies the importance of such activities. Competition is seen as an important factor in attracting the children in physical activities and also keeping them active. Competition between children and between children and parent makes physical activities more attractive and engaging for kids.

3. How can be applied to a school setting?

The activities can be applied during PE classes, in order to diversify the curricula and make these more attractive for the students. At the same time, in Romania a class has been introduced, Play and Movement class. Those educational games can be easily applied during this class. However, PE teachers have highlighted the fact that this class is coordinated by the headteacher of the class, and not the physical education teacher. Their worry is that the headteacher will not be actively and physically involved in the games, thus not achieving the objectives of the games. An important point that has been highlighted by the interviewees is that these games are not effective if the parent/educator is not actively physically involved alongside the children.

4. Who should be engaged in its application?

The main response was that the children should be involved in its application, as they are the main actor and driving force of these games. Following up, the parents should be closely involved, as their active involvement is mandatory for the existence and effectiveness of the games. Then, most of the interviewees have spotlighted the importance of a recurring engagement of the PE teachers and coaches, by applying said games during classes or trainings.

5. How can teachers contribute in order to make successful the development of educational games for promoting parent-child outdoor physical activity?

Regarding this question, the PE teachers have underlined the importance of the participation of parents within PE classes. This has been presented as a once a module, or few times a module, when parents take a free day from work and participate alongside children in the PE classes. This implies the preparation of a special class by the educators that will involve the parents in equal part as the children. Another idea was the organization of sport days, or outdoor games day, organized by the educators at the schools. These events would popularize sports such as cross or track and field, or games in which parents and children could team up. This, again, would help with the relationship and cooperation between children-parents-educators. It would be a context that would crate both competition and cooperation, thus stimulating and challenging the children both physically and mentally. From the parents' perspective, they have shown willingness to participate in such events, even though their response was more conservative towards participation

in PE classes. The common element between all perspective was that the successful development of such games in reliant on coordination between both parents and educators.

6. How should the teachers be trained?

Regarding this question, two main perspectives can be drawn out from the educators' responses. Firstly, they need more instructions on other games and activities, aside from volleyball, football, basketball or other conventional sports. They have shown willingness to be exposed to new methods and to apply those within the classes. Secondly, some of the PE teachers have stated that they have the necessary training from their studies and preparation. This perspective supported the idea that new methods and activities will naturally come to the teacher from experience and their personal abilities to adapt and develop as professionals.

7. What should be the content of the training?

The common points for this question were that the training should focus on understanding the relations between child-parent-educator and how the adults can cooperate in order to facilitate the development of the child. The content of the training should focus on the activities themselves that can be applied and their possible outcome/effect, thus helping both the parent and the educator understand its importance. Regarding this question, some of the educators and of the parents have shown uncertainty, not knowing exactly what the content should be, but citing the importance of parent involvement in outdoor activities with the child and the importance of the educator's ability to adapt and learn from experience.

8. How long do you think the training should be in order of it to be efficient? (hour/session and number of sessions)

This question has also highlighted couple of perspectives. The first one, that the training should be concentrated, one month period and the educators should take what they have learned and adapt/develop the ideas through implementing them during classes. The other one, that the training should be thought out as a long period process, throughout at least half an academic year.

9. How should the training be delivered (e.g. in a group, ppt presentation)?

The method that was mentioned the most was revolving around the idea of group of educators that are attending classes held by specialists or by other educators with experience related tot his topic. The classes should revolve around presentations which are supported through digital means, such as PowerPoint presentations and digital handbooks.

10. Who should deliver the training?

The emphasis for this question was that the person who holds the training has to either be an expert on this field or to have significant experience in outdoor activities and gamification. This was a particularly important element, as most of the PE teachers have mentioned that they mostly undergo the classes indoor. Thus, they have expressed the need to learn new methods to adapt their methods to outdoor games.

RECOMMENDATION

Given the results of the questionnaire and the findings of the desk research, Romanians do recognise the importance of physical activity, even though they may not practice it personally. This is down to multiple reasons, the main ones being the lack of easily accessible safe infrastructure and the lack of sporting culture. We have to recognise the need for public awareness programmes and educative initiatives with regards to the benefits of physical activity on the mind and body, regardless of age. At the same time, most respondents have declared their interest in finding out more about physical activities and how to practice the, alongside their children. This shows an openness to trial and a lack of information about events that take place near them or easy to practice intergenerational outdoor activities. The recommendation is to put up signs and poster of easy outdoor activities that a legal guardian can engage in with their child.

The PE teachers and trainers have stressed how important a sporting culture is inside a family. They have highlighted how children who engage in physical activities with their parents are more likely to cooperate more easily, be more responsible and develop an array of soft skills early. This has shown the importance of cooperation between parent and physical educator in relation to the mental and physical development of a child through sport. The recommendation is to propose a public initiative that would call for 2 PE classes per semester in which the parent will also participate. These classes will be scheduled at the level of each institution and the parent will be able to get a free work day for this reason.

As stated in the previous point, in order to create sporting habits for a child there needs to be coordination at both home and school levels. Both the educators and parents have to be aware of the benefits of different sports. The recommendation is for schools to organise sporting events in which teachers can exercise outdoors training/teaching methods, children participate in a friendly and competitive environment, while parents can join to either participate or encourage. This would help develop a sporting culture, help children discover less popular sports and help physical educators transition the PE class from inside to outside.

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SERBIA

FACULTY OF SPORT

OVERVIEW

This report provides an overview of parents' and teachers' understanding of the value of the outdoor physical activity.

This report encompasses a series of recommendations both for public and sports stakeholders. The 30-day period for data collection began in September 2022, with two field researchers gathering both primary and secondary information. Having followed this phase, the research work started with the development of a report.

This report is divided into four sections. The purpose of the introduction is to provide an overview of the project and the content of the report. The section that follows goes into greater detail about the methods used to collect and analyze data. The policy and regulatory framework are crucial to the context. The final section presents the research outcome and discusses them.

METHODOLOGY

The primary researcher oversaw the entire process for this study, while the others oversaw gathering primary and secondary data. A multistage approach is used for this report's mixed-method approach. The document analysis provided a solid context for developing state-of-the-art questionnaires and interview questions for stakeholders (parents, teachers, coaches, and PE teachers).

The collection of documents was preceded by preliminary reading and interpretation of the content, and the literature review confirmed the level of research interest in outdoor physical exercise and provided a pathway for more in-depth studies.

The information we gathered was for the Faculty of Sport and University Union - Nikola Tesla research personnel.

We gathered the best practices from Serbia and chose 16 examples of family sports activities or events. Most of the events are at the municipal or city level. The competitions are mostly competitive and last 1-2 days. Municipalities and city-funded projects, with a smaller contribution from sponsors or club resources. It was primarily based on the volunteer efforts of young people and sports clubs, who had a great time promoting their clubs and sport.

According to project deliverables and subsequent Research Committee meetings, a total of 100 questionnaires were sent to each partner. The rationale for developing questionnaires was based on the importance of obtaining an understanding of current dynamics within the sports movement from various actors. We attempted to determine how much outdoor physical activity is present in the daily lives of families, as well as whether it is represented in schools and sports clubs. With this in mind, we used random selection methods to select ten interviewees from the collected surveys. During the interview, we attempted to learn about the recommendations and best practices that parents, physical education teachers, and coaches have.

The following text contains the findings of our research, as well as conclusions and recommendations for future action.

CONTEXT

The family is a multifaceted system with its structure and dynamics. It is the source and starting point for everyone's personal development in all ways. The child learns about a variety of emotions as well as how and when to express them. The first exchange of emotional signals occurs in the family; it is also a source of love, but it is also the foundation and school for developing the ability to love others and form close relationships with them, develop a positive self-image, and get along well with others in everyday life. The family is present to encourage the child's complete cognitive development. With the fact that "standards" change over time - the stages of development, "growing up" of the child and the family - the primary parental roles are supervision and care. Our sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and security will be heavily influenced by the quality of our family experiences and how parents "fulfill" their parental roles.

Technologies have changed in modern society, and there is widespread concern about protecting the natural environment from the harm caused by new technologies. The same is true for the social environment. Although the economy has shifted from an industrial to a technological model, workplace patterns have remained realistically based on the factory work ethic. Modern times bring urbanization and the consequent difficulties in engaging in physical activity, the development and use of means of transportation on a daily and increasing scale; the advancement of high technologies - TV, computers; and the presence of new modes of communication - social networks. Parents expect their children to work outside of the factory bell because they work in a high-tech office, to have rest during working hours, and to have annual leave - but in practice, this is not the case; more and more work is done from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. (in the morning the children sleep, in the evening both parents and children are too tired, and the time together "runs out"). In the modern world, family life takes a back seat to the needs of the workplace. Contemporary economic trends and a new (consumer) value system necessitate a new family structure, with both parents working. Physical activity is hampered by urbanization, which reduces areas designated for children's play. Going to school is mostly done by bus, which raises concerns about the safety of children. The advancement of high technologies - TV (how many hours a day are "in front" of the TV in the bedroom), computers, and their video games and social networks. As a result of technological advancement, there is less physical activity and a more sedentary lifestyle.

And the parental role of control - monitoring of children's activities and their quality - is jeopardized. (Lekić, 2011).

A series of studies conducted in many Western countries show that children's experiences at home and in their immediate environment significantly influence them to adopt certain ways of thinking, speaking, and behaving, influencing their later development and learning at school. Even when discussing the influence of a stimulating environment, whose role in a child's life is undeniably confirmed by numerous facts, it is emphasized that the most important aspect is not the contents of such an environment per se, but the person who serves as an intermediary between it and the child, influencing in various ways his attitude toward the stimuli to which it is exposed, encouraging or limiting it. Modern preschool pedagogy, on the other hand, is increasingly focusing its research on physical education and physical activity of the child, because physical education in the preschool period is most closely related to overall personality development.

A child's movements serve multiple purposes in addition to motor skills. Movement is another way to gain immediate experience. Physical activities in kindergarten and school are mostly done in groups or collectively, which gives children valuable social experiences such as balancing individual and group interests, delaying immediate satisfaction of individual desires, respecting the rights and needs of others, active cooperation, joint planning, and team problem-solving. Children also observe the regulatory function of rules through games, which is critical not only for successful later integration into society, but also for developing self-control, discipline, and voluntary qualities.

When we consider the apostrophized importance of the family for the development of the child on the one hand and the apostrophized importance of physical activity for the general development of the child on the other, we conclude that the family's relationship with physical education and physical activity is of exceptional importance for the further development of personality and the formation of a child (Čokorilo, Grk, 2011).

According to Ismail and Gruber (1971), quality and well-organized sports activities with parental participation will benefit preschool-aged children in a variety of ways. They believe that educators' unique role is reflected in assisting parents and children in selecting the sport in which the child will be most easily involved. Developing motor skills and abilities will significantly help children of this age's cognitive, social, and emotional development.

There is little information on family outdoor physical activity research, and the topic has sadly received little academic attention in Serbia.

Parents and children, on average, do not fulfill the minimal health requirements for physical activity, according to research done in Serbia in 2006 on parents and the physical activity of preschool and younger school-age children (Đorđić & Sad, 2006). Parents are incredibly supportive of their children's physical activity. Findings include that there are some distinctions between parents of boys and girls, favoring boys. Parental encouragement for physical activity does not translate into genuine physical activity.

The responses of the surveyed educators in Stankov and Jovanović (2016) study on the role of educators in developing the habit of engaging in sports activities in preschool children indicate that the conditions for the realization of physical activities in kindergartens are not always favorable. Spatial constraints - insufficient space in study rooms, the number of children in educational groups, and the lack of a hall - make it difficult for workers to take advantage of other opportunities in the immediate environment (kindergarten yard, halls and sports fields, picnic areas, meadows, and mountains), indicating that educators recognize the importance of physical activity at a young age. To promote the positive impact of physical activities more intensively on the development of preschool children, it is necessary to focus special attention on developing the teamwork of educators, professional associates for physical education, parents, and the local community.

Malović (2022) concludes that the design solutions of playgrounds in Belgrade, as socially and culturally constructed spaces that shape the conditions and characteristics of children growing up, their identities and ways of participation, are more conditioned by commercial and urban norms than pedagogical standards and that they do not meet the criteria relevant from a pedagogical standpoint.

When it comes to the sports context and regulations in effect in Serbia, it is important to note that the Ministry of Sports of the Republic of Serbia is the highest authority for sports. The Government has created the legal framework, and the Ministry creates additional regulations. The Law on Sports was adopted on February 4, 2016 (Official Gazette 10/2016) and is based on Article 112, paragraph 1, point 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia.

This law governs the rights and obligations of athletes and other natural persons in the sports system, issues concerning the legal position, organization, and registration of entrepreneurs and legal entities in the sports system, the general interest and needs and interests of citizens in the field of sports, financing, categorizations in the field of sports, the national strategy for the development of sports in the Republic of Serbia, school and university sports, and the national strategy for the development of sports in the Republic of Serbia.

The Ministry of Sports is responsible for promoting physical activity and sports in the media to people of all ages. One of the Ministry's strategies is to increase citizen participation in sports through the development and improvement of sports recreation, to involve parts of the population that do not normally participate in sports activities (groups of 40-70 years) in some form of recreation.

The ministry's work aims to ensure that sports are humane, free and voluntary, healthy and safe, respecting the natural and social environments, fair, tolerant, ethically acceptable, responsible, free of abuses and goals contrary to the spirit of sportsmanship, and accessible to all citizens under equal conditions, regardless of age, level of physical abilities, degree of possible disability, gender, or other personal characteristics.

The strategy establishes four priority areas, and the action plan establishes both broad and specific objectives (Official Gazette 1/2015):

- the development of sports for children and youth, including school sports;
- the expansion of citizens participating in sports through the development and improvement of sports recreation;
- the development and improvement of top sports; and
- the development and improvement of sports infrastructure.

In addition, the Ministry has annual projects (programs) in the field of sports, such as the construction, equipping, and maintenance of sports facilities on the Republic of Serbia's territory.

RESULTS

A structured questionnaire served as the foundation for this study, which was followed by a semi-structured interview.

The survey had 113 respondents. The most responses were from mothers (N=75, 66.4%) and fathers (N=18, 15.9%). When it comes to age, those between the ages of 40 and 49 had the most respondents (N=50, or 44.2%), followed by those between the ages of 30 and 39 (N=41, or 36.3%).

Based on the processed data, it was determined that 55 respondents, or 48.7%, participate in some sport or form of sports recreation at least three times per week. The other 58 respondents, or 51.3%, state that they do not have time for it (N=31, or 27.4%), and that they do not have the habit of exercising (N=17, or 15%).

We discovered that respondents were mostly informed about the importance of physical activity through TV shows (67.3%), social networks (76.1%), YouTube (62.8%), friends (80.5%), sports coaches (70.8%), and doctors (70.8%).

More than 90% of respondents believe that exercise should not be limited to specific diseases and that it is essential for maintaining and improving health, learning new skills, and socializing. However, they believe that society is not sufficiently aware of the positive effects of sports and recreation (30%).

What is very useful is that we conclude from the survey that most respondents (over 70%) agree that physical activity is very important for a child and that parents encourage and remind them of it. Physical activity is mostly carried out in public parks equipped with children's playgrounds (90%).

When it comes to safety, the majority of those polled believe that there are no significant safety obstacles that would interfere with children's physical activities. Surprisingly, roughly half of those polled stated that they value both physical activity and language skills.

The fact that being occupied with games and the phone, as well as the distance from sports facilities, are the main reasons why children are not active enough was confirmed, which was somewhat expected.

50% of those polled disagree that children should not be supervised while participating in physical activities and that having a physically active family will benefit the child. Similarly, respondents disagree that purchasing sports equipment and paying for supplementary sports schools is necessary for engaging in physical activity.

Ten people were randomly selected from completed surveys for the interview. Following instructions and pre-defined questions guided the interviews. There were eight women and two men among the interviewees, including one teacher and three coaches. Other respondents are parents rather than educators or athletes.

With the opening question, the idea was to gain a better picture of the habits of respondents and to determine how we will approach them during this interview. Every next question also had a follow-up question. In what way, we could determine whether respondents' experience acknowledges the importance of physical exercise and whether is it an integral part of their parenting or education.

Respondents believe that this is a fundamental physical activity that must be carefully planned. Every opportunity for children to be exposed to fresh air and sunlight is critical, especially when they are exercising. According to interviewees, this activity is closely related to parents' cooperation with their children, and the idea of spending time in nature should come from parents.

These activities, in their opinion, could include going for a walk outside, participating in a variety of sports, climbing, or simply spending time playing in parks. Respondents believe that spending time active in nature with children is a good way to spend time with them and can help them build or strengthen good relationships.

All respondents believe that children must spend as much time as possible outside, regardless of the weather. All coaches and teachers agree that indoor physical activity does not have the same effect as outdoor physical activity. When training or a school class is held outside, children always respond better. Furthermore, some coaches believe that this is the proper way to introduce children to sports. The time that children with parents spend outside with their parents has a positive effect on the development of motor skills, which coaches value greatly in the later training process.

Asked about the core characteristics that would make the development of educational games for promoting parent-child outdoor physical activity successful, respondents believe that the two main things are parent's activity and good promotion of sports. Parents should be an example and role model for children, and the promotion through social networks should be more active. In that way, the children would get more information and exercise motives.

Respondents suggested that parent-teacher conferences in schools be held outside on occasion. An excellent idea was to organize extracurricular activities at school and invite parents to attend once a month. It is also critical to educate parents about the importance of physical activity for their children. The fruitful suggestion was to build different sports polygons in the schoolyard for children to use during recess, before and after school classes. Finally, pick a date and organize an event, such as a traditional sports day attended by both parents and children.

All respondents agreed that the activity should involve parents, children, teachers, and physical education teachers. Teachers' roles would be to educate children and instruct parents on how to engage in physical activities outdoors with their children during their free time.

All respondents agreed that the activity should involve parents, children, teachers, and physical education teachers. Everyone agrees that the best contribution a teacher can make at school is to use activities while playing with children. The child who learns to play outside will inspire other children and their parents to spend time in nature and play similar games. Educators provided more valuable responses than parents. The conclusion is that training should take the form of seminars and lectures with hands-on experience. Educators should not be shown content (games), but rather the process of creating a game.

The content should include game methodology, the importance of outdoor exercises, and methodology for working with children. Furthermore, everyone agrees that both theories and practice are important, but that practice should take precedence. The weekend was the shortest proposed period, and the year was the longest. Most proposals suggested that training should last 3 to 6 months and take no more than 4 hours on weekends. Most people agreed that the seminars should be held more frequently but for a shorter period.

The most frequently given response was that training should be based on a practical demonstration. The theory presented via PowerPoint Presentation is useful, but without practical classes, they are unable to repeat and present the content. All respondents agree that seminars should be led by people who are experts in the field, such as teachers or faculty members. Coaches or professional athletes should also be involved in the practical part.

RECOMMENDATIONS

First and foremost, we should be aware that this is a public health issue, and as such, preventive programs must be organized at all levels, structures, and layers. Education at all levels of society, including families, schools, and the media. It should be noted that this is a problem that necessitates systemic solutions as well as adequate economic resources.

Based on the survey results, we can conclude that half of those polled do not engage in physical activity, despite believing (70% of those polled) that their inactivity will hurt encouraging children to exercise. Furthermore, we discovered that 90% of respondents take their children to public parks to get some exercise. This information may encourage the construction of new children's parks and playgrounds as well as the maintenance of existing ones. Similarly, in those parks, parents must have certain activities and animations because 50% of them must be present while the children play outside. They could use this to extend the time children and parents spend in parks. The recommendation is to put up educational signs about exercise and health (exercise ranges) in parks where kids and parents can go for a walk. Specific exercises and advice on living a healthy lifestyle could be included on the boards.

As we all know, and as confirmed by this study, respondents believe that excessive use of mobile phones is one of the primary reasons for the decline in physical activity. We believe that a specific mode of communication, such as social networks, trusted individuals such as coaches or doctors (these are the most common forms of information), and so on, could indicate the consequences of excessive phone use (primarily referring to deformities of the neck vertebrae, muscle imbalance, excessive obesity...). The recommendation is to send physical activity challenges through school groups, which parents and children would have to complete twice a week and document on social media.

By reviewing previous research on the relationship between the family context and the child's physical activity, it is possible to conclude that the family context proved to be a significant variable for the child's physical activity. Given the importance of physical activity for the general development of children, the fact that the social-status characteristics of the family significantly influence the majority of children's physical activity modalities suggests that responsible institutions at the state level are expected to provide equal opportunities for organized physical activity to all children, regardless of status. The findings in Serbia regarding physical activity's preventive power for children's mental health should then be considered when designing preschool and school programs and developing physical activity strategies. Because neither parents nor children meet the minimum health recommendations for physical activity, society's response must be swift and effective. Also, strategies must include encouraging parents, because it appears that their example, whether positive or negative, is the most effective.

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SLOVAKIA

ADEL

OVERVIEW

In Europe four major needs exist with respect to HEPA:

- stop the decline of physical activity participation,
- develop effective interventions including parents and outdoor physical activity in order to promote health-enhancing physical activity,
- focus on countries with high physical inactivity rates, such as the South-East Europe countries and
- integrate new technologies into interventions aiming to promote health-enhancing physical activities.

To address the existing needs the PROGRESS project focuses on the promotion of parent-child outdoor physical activity in South-East Europe through the use of new technologies and gamified activities. The specific objectives of the project include:

- Developing a research study on best practices about educational activities promoting outdoor physical activity participation;
- Conducting a field investigation of physical educators', coaches' and trainers', and parents' beliefs about how to improve parent-child interactions and eventually promote outdoor physical activity participation;
- Developing evidence-based educational tools including training resources for physical educators, trainers and coaches and parents;
- Testing the usability and effectiveness of the educational resources in helping physical educators, coaches and trainers, and parents promote outdoor physical activity participation;
- Developing and proposing a European public policy to redefine and upgrade parent-child interactions and facilitate outdoor physical activity participation.
- Creating and developing of a dedicated mobile app. The development of a gamified model to encourage people involved in physical activity through the provision of information and rewards for participation in outdoor physical activities is expected to further enhance the potential of the project's outputs.

The best practices from Slovakia collected 15 examples of family sports activities/events that are also the focus of the Progress project. One researcher had been responsible for collecting data, with the support of the organisation team. The majority of these events are local, similar in type in several regions of the country.

Usually, the financing is done by the local municipality and/or private sponsors who contribute a little sum. A considerable volume of the organisational work is done on a voluntary basis. One of the sports events: The mile for Mom is an original Slovak concept, which has been exported also abroad.

CONTEXT

What is the highest Member State Authority with responsibility for sports?

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. This means that sports and education are under the same institutional umbrella. The legal framework is created by the government and further regulations are created by the Ministry. The Ministry deals with the issues of leisure-time physical education and school sports for children and young people in the Regional Education Section, the State Care for Sport Section, the Youth Department and the Further Education Section. The State uses several channels of financial support in the agenda of physical activities of children and youth. Support for physical and sport education as a compulsory subject at all levels and types of schools is implemented in a normative manner. The physical activity of each pupil is financially ensured through the state budget - founder - school channel by an amount determined by the Ministry (Act No 597/2003 Coll.), of which a certain proportion is allocated to the implementation of school physical education lessons. The identification of these funds is mainly in the salary costs of teachers and the costs of running the physical education facilities. School leisure activity centres, including physical education activities, which are carried out in school conditions, are also supported by means of the normative.

What are the main current national laws governing sports in Slovakia?

The main legal framework is provided by:

Act on Sports and on Amendments to Certain Acts 117/2015 Coll.

This Act took effect on January 1, 2016, except for Article XIII, which shall take effect on January 1, 2019.

A further legal framework is provided by the following acts:

Act No. 228/2019 Coll. on contribution for merit in the field of sports and on the amendment of some laws

Act No. 310/2019 Coll. on the Sports Support Fund and on amendments to certain laws

Act No. 1/2014 Coll. on organizing public sports events and amending some laws

Act No. 440/2015 Coll. on sports and on the amendment of some laws

Act No. 173/1990 Coll. which repeals Act no. 68/1956 Coll. on the organization of physical education, and which regulates some other relations regarding voluntary physical education organizations

Act No. 112/2015 Coll. on the contribution to the sports representative and on the amendment of Act no. 461/2003 Coll. on social insurance as amended

Act No. 553/2001 Coll. on the abolition of some state funds, on some measures related to their abolition and on the amendment of some laws as amended

Promotion of participation in sports and health-enhancing physical activity, including for older citizens

It is a part of the tasks of the Ministry of Healthcare to promote also within media physical activity and sports for all age groups. The MH aims to target the parts of the population, which is not

usually engaged in sports activities. These aims were among others stated in the Concept of sports 2022-2026, which guides the state policies regarding sports of the current government. One of the governmental campaigns: The Sports Heart of Slovakia (Športové srdce Slovenska) financed the construction and reparation of the children's playgrounds and helped with the purchase of the equipment.

There is also the Slovak School Sports Association, which is focused on supporting the sports activities of the youth and receives financial support from the Ministry of Education.

Slovakia also has a Sports support fund that also participates in the promotion of the sports. As the research conducted in Slovakia has shown, more and more people, including young families and youth are choosing spending their free time in shopping malls instead of participation in sports or any other active form of spending their leisure time.

Does Slovakia publish guidelines on sports policy for all levels of sports organizations at the National Sports Federation, Regional Sports Federations, and Grassroot Sports levels?

National sports organisations are the Slovak Olympic and Sports Committee, the Slovak Paralympic Committee and any other sports organisation recognised by the Ministry of Education which has been a member of an international sports organisation with a worldwide scope of activity for at least two years and which exercises exclusive competence in the territory of the Slovak Republic for Deaflympic sport, Special Olympics sport, university sport, school sport, sport for all or any other area of sport.

Every sport has its own association (e.g. Slovak Football Association, Slovak Swimming Federation, Slovak Tennis Association, Slovak Cycling Association, etc.) Each association regulates and publishes guidelines for its own sport.

Slovakia also has the Sports support fund it is an institution providing support and development of sports, and its main mission is to create favourable conditions for the development of sports in the Slovak Republic. The Fund provides financial resources in the form of contributions to sport support projects, monitors support projects, participates in the promotion of sport in the Slovak Republic, carries out educational activities and methodological and advisory activities in the field of sport and, last but not least, cooperates with international organizations and foreign institutions active in the field of sport.

Therefore it is recognised in Slovakia that the family and the environment of the pre-school child are crucial for the development of the child in all areas, including motor development. Several studies point to the need to support the child in the family environment, on the other hand on the other hand, the formal school environment is proving to play an increasingly important role. It is only in kindergarten that children are introduced to different motor skills and subsequently acquire them. It has been shown that children in spontaneous activities achieve higher levels of physical activity conducive to the development of physical fitness and functional physiological mechanisms, but learning new skills, on the contrary, takes place predominantly in controlled activities. Both of these components, spontaneous and directed learning, can therefore be considered equally important for motor development.

Therefore, creating a platform for physical education for children in their free time under the guidance of their parents contributes meaningfully to their motor development.

METHODOLOGY

For Slovakia, one researcher has been responsible for collecting the data. The data were collected through questionnaires and through interviews.

The primary researcher oversaw the entire process for this study, while the others oversaw gathering primary and secondary data. A multistage approach is used for this report's mixed-method approach. The document analysis provided a solid context for developing state-of-the-art questionnaires and interview questions for stakeholders (parents, teachers, coaches, and PE teachers).

The collection of documents was preceded by preliminary reading and interpretation of the content, and the literature review confirmed the level of research interest in outdoor physical exercise and provided a pathway for more in-depth studies.

We gathered the best practices from Slovakia and chose 14 examples of family sports activities or events. Most of the events are at the municipal or city level. The events are most competitive and last 1-2 days. Municipalities and city-funded projects, with a smaller contribution from sponsors or club resources. It was primarily based on the volunteer efforts of young people and sports clubs, who had a great time promoting their clubs and sport.

According to project deliverables and subsequent Research Committee meetings, a total of 100 questionnaires were sent to each partner. The rationale for developing questionnaires was based on the importance of obtaining an understanding of current dynamics within the sports movement from various actors. We attempted to determine how much outdoor physical activity is present in the daily lives of families, as well as whether it is represented in schools and sports clubs. With this in mind, we used random selection methods to select ten interviewees from the collected surveys. During the interview, we attempted to learn about the recommendations and best practices that parents, physical education teachers, and coaches have.

The following text contains the findings of our research, as well as conclusions and recommendations for future action.

Interviews

The interviews were conducted with a diverse group of teachers, sports trainers and parents, each of them coming from different backgrounds and offering their own unique perspectives.

People selected for the interviews were selected based on their qualifications. The sample required to have at least 3 parents 3 teachers and 3 sports trainers. Therefore, we decided to contact the trainers that have been working with our organisation and we know about their extensive experiences with children. We decided to involve teachers on the elementary school level and we

decided to involve Sports trainers working with mainly younger kids, not adults or young adults because we consider younger kids on the elementary school level as a target is the best target group for parent-teacher sports activities promoted by the Project.

Questionnaires

The questionnaires were distributed online and more than 100 answers have been collected. A variety of people have been participating in the questionnaires. The sample contains parents, grandparents, legal guardians siblings and other people involved in the education and upbringing of children with a qualified opinion on the outdoor activities of the children.

The questionnaire concerns:

- healthy lifestyle habits
- conditions for engaging in outdoor physical activities
- support for engaging in outdoor physical activities

The research was done in Slovak language but all the data have been translated into English.

RESULTS

Questionnaires

The survey had 101 respondents. The most responses were from mothers (N=48, 47.5%) and teachers (N=21, 20.8%). When it comes to age, those between the ages of 30 and 39 had the most respondents (N=42, or 41.6%), followed by those between the ages of 20 and 29 (N=24, or 23.8%).

Based on the processed data, it was determined that 67 respondents, or 66.3%, participate in some sport or form of sports recreation. 32,8% (N=22) responded that they practice sports 1 to 2 times per week and 29,9% (N=20) 2 to 3 times per week. The other 34 respondents, or 33.7%, state that they do not have time for it (N=15, or 44.1%), and that they do not have the habit of exercising (N=7, or 20.6%).

We discovered that respondents were mostly informed about the importance of physical activity through social media (57.4%), friends (46.5%), literature (36.6%), YouTube (39.6%), TV (30.7%), podcasts (25.7%) and sports coaches (24.8%).

More than 93% of respondents believe that exercise should not be limited to specific diseases and that it is essential for maintaining and improving health, learning new skills, and socializing. However, they believe that society is not sufficiently aware of the positive effects of sports and recreation (57%).

81% of the respondents encourage children to play outside when the weather is nice and also encourage children in physical activity (83%). 59% stated that they are physically active with children. However, 83,2% of the respondents somehow limit the physical activity of the children in order to protect them.

Most of the respondents had the access to playgrounds (88.1%) and green areas (82.2%) in their surroundings and over 70% also had access to surfaces suitable for bicycling or roller skating and public parks.

When it comes to safety, the majority of those polled believe that there are no significant safety obstacles that would interfere with children's physical activities. Majority of the pooled values significantly language skills and mathematical and logical activities together with the physical activities as important for the children.

The fact that being occupied with games and the phone (68.7%), as well as financial limitations (57.6%), were seen as the main obstacle to sufficient physical activity for the children. Further reasons were seen in the distance from the sports facilities (50.5%) and the understanding that they don't need such activities (54.5%).

The majority of the respondents think that parents should be also involved in physical activities with the children (82%) and over 90% see physical activities in the childhood as important for the future habits of the children. Over 75% of the respondents did not see the necessity of financial resources for engaging in physical activity.

Interviews

Nine people were interviewed for the research, selected by their profession and background further explained in the Methodology section.

Opening question: **What does outdoor physical activity mean to you?** was by all of the interviewees seen as any activity done outside, including going for walks, playing and drawing outdoors, variety of outdoor sports but also activities on the school playground.

All of the respondents have also seen physical activity outdoors as an important aspect of children's (but also parent's) life. Among the benefits mentioned was an improvement in the mental well-being, improvement in sleep, better focus and work in school, and benefits for the child-parent relationship. Further benefits mentioned were an improvement in the immunity of the children, prevention of obesity and practical learning outside of the class.

When asked **“What do you think are the core characteristics that would make the development of educational games for promoting parent-child outdoor physical activity successful?”** the following features were generally agreed upon: the aspect of competition and reward for the participants is very attractive for children of all ages. It is also very important to involve fun aspects in the activity, instead of making it another obligation for children. The motivation could come from teamwork (which also helps the development of an important skill for children). Coaches and teachers see it important to have age-appropriate activities and also fairly simple activities so children won't get lost in the explanation. A friendly atmosphere definitely helps to keep children engaged as well.

Among the good practices or examples of such games were various treasure hunts, chasing games, ball games, red-light-green-light game or geocaching modified for this purpose.

When asked, how these ideas of games could be applied in a school setting generally agreed on making such games part of the physical education class. Respondents also agreed that school trips and school sports days provide a good opportunity to include fun sports games in school activities. Among teachers, there were opinions that it is possible to include fun sports games in almost every type of class. It is definitely possible in one teacher-respondent's opinion to include at least some physical activity outdoors, mainly in classes such as biology and regional geography (but also others)

The main role of teacher was seen mainly as a supervisor of the safety and well-being of the children and as a moderator of the activities. Teachers could also provide a supportive role by motivating kids who struggle and also by helping those who did not understand the explanation at first or struggled in any other way. Another important role which respondents agreed on was providing children with the motivation to do the activity. Valuable input was also done by the teacher who suggested that teachers should keep learning and bringing new ideas for outdoor activities to keep children engaged.

When asked **“How can teachers contribute in order to make successful the development of educational games for promoting parent-child outdoor physical activity?”** most of the respondents struggled since they work with children mainly and not with adults. One of the possibilities is to add their expertise based on their pedagogical experiences, to the developers of such a game. Another practical and applicable activity was to create homework for children, which could be done within the family and outdoors. A useful suggestion for such an activity was to include everyday activities of the family members who will take children along when outside to explain to them particular things from homework etc. Respondents struggle to which extent it is realistic to burden the parents with such tasks and what the response will be. A very practical idea was to create and involve kids in outdoor activities which they would enjoy and would want to do with their family during their free time. This could be the way how to engage both, children and parents, in outdoor activities they might enjoy. The children will in this case serve as those bringing the idea into the family.

Regarding the teachers' training regarding the facilitation and creation of the interesting outdoor activities for children, respondents agreed on the importance to provide further education for the teachers - workshops and seminars, stressing the importance of practical experience. Therefore online teaching methods are not seen as ideal. Teachers should be able to try the games and also brainstorm with their colleagues. The educational activities for the teachers were seen as a source of inspiration for teachers, which is much needed. Some of the respondents see them as stuck in routine and passive when it comes to the development of new activities for children. The frequency of such training should be according to the respondents once in a half of the year and a 2-day workshop was suggested as ideal.

Respondents have seen people working practically with children as the best people to deliver such a workshop. Also, the lectures of the experts would be welcomed, according to their opinion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the questionnaire and the interviews we can provide several recommendations for the future in order to enhance the children's involvement in sports and outdoor activities and also support further parents-children physical activities:

- Providing the access to sports facilities: It is important to ensure that children have access to safe and well-equipped sports facilities. This could be done by building new sports facilities or renovating existing ones.
- Safety of the sports facilities (e.g. playgrounds) should be a priority, in order to make parents comfortable with encouraging children to play outdoors
- Train coaches and sports instructors: Coaches and sports instructors need to be properly trained to ensure that they can provide quality sports training to children. This could be done through certification programs and training workshops. The general public sees the problem with school PE in the lack of creativity of the teachers and their lack of effort or them being stuck in a routine. Educational programmes have the potential to address these issues and provide a better experience from the PE lessons for the students.
- The problem which had not been addressed in this research but could make a sports environment more inclusive is to support sports for children with disabilities: The government could provide support for sports programs that are specifically designed for children with disabilities. This could include funding for specialized equipment and facilities.

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