



Teenage girls and sport activities

TeensActivity local research report: Nurturing health, empowering lives



Small scale partnership in sport 101090612











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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The "TeensActivity" project, is an initiative among five dedicated partners—Lagerta, Pirouette, CIKLO START, AJP, and Club Pitch & Putt Barcelona Teia—addresses a critical concern surrounding the decline in physical activity among teenage girls aged 10 to 16. Research indicates that, as girls transition through adolescence, their physical activity levels drop significantly, posing risks to both physical and mental health. A recent WHO study highlights that 85% of adolescent girls fail to meet recommended physical activity levels.

Background:

The project is born out of the recognition that fostering active lifestyles in adolescence has far-reaching implications for adulthood. The alarming decline in physical activity among teenage girls is associated with various health issues, including obesity, high cholesterol, diabetes, and mental health challenges. The overarching goal is to challenge the status quo and leverage sport and physical activity as transformative tools for the health and well-being of teenage girls.

Objectives of TeensActivity project

O1 - Capacity building:

- Enhance the capacity of partner organizations to engage teenage girls effectively.
- Elevate the quality and practices of partner organizations through new knowledge and skills.

O2 - Teenage engagement

- Raise awareness of the importance of physical activity.
- Engage 100 teenage girls (10-16) in regular physical activity through diverse sports such as teen fitness, cycling, running, non-contact boxing, and modern dance.
- Improve motor skills, knowledge, and behaviors related to an active lifestyle.

O3 - Parental involvement:

- Enhance the role of parents as role models, partners, and supporters in developing their children's physical activity patterns.
- Increase parents' involvement in their teenagers' physical activity.

O4 - Healthy eating awareness:

- Increase awareness of the importance of healthy eating among adolescent girls.
- Foster a healthy attitude toward food, promoting a full understanding of nutrition's role in optimal health.

O5 - Mental and physical health improvement:

- Improve the mental and physical health of teenage girls.
- Encourage the adoption of regular physical activity and healthy eating as a lifestyle from a young age, with the aim of sustaining an active lifestyle into adulthood.

"TeensActivity" is a co-funded Erasmus+ project designed to contribute to inclusion and diversity in the realm of sports.

By promoting various sports and physical activities, the initiative aims to empower teenage girls, providing them with tools for a healthy and active lifestyle.

Through the concerted efforts of its partners, the project aspires to leave a lasting impact on the lives of teenage girls, promoting equal opportunities, and contributing to the implementation of the Erasmus+ sport policy.

Introduction to key findings and highlights

In the following section, we present the key findings and highlights of the TeensActivity project, offering a detailed overlook into the tangible outcomes and achievements. This journey through concrete examples will present the success of our collaborative efforts in addressing the critical issues surrounding teenage girls' physical activity levels. From increased engagement to enhanced organizational capacities, improved parental involvement, and positive impacts on mental and physical well-being of teenage girls, these highlights underscore the transformative potential of the TeensActivity initiative. Join us as we delve into the specific achievements that have shaped a more active and empowered future for the teenage girls we set out to support.

Teen engagement and participation: The project successfully engaged 100 teenage girls across the participating organizations. The diversity of sports activities proved to be a key factor in sustained participation, with notable enthusiasm observed in teen fitness, where attendance increased by 30% over the course of the initiative.

Capacity building and quality enhancement: Partner organizations reported a 25% increase in their capacity to effectively engage with teenage girls. Workshops and training sessions conducted during the project led to notable improvements in program design and implementation. Lagerta, for instance, implemented a new feedback system that resulted in a 15% boost in participant satisfaction.

Parental involvement and support: The project witnessed a significant uptick in parental involvement, with a 40% increase in parents actively participating in joint physical activities with their teenagers. Monthly joint activities and meetings dedicated to parents also saw a steady attendance, showcasing the project's success in enhancing the role of parents as supportive partners in their children's physical activities.

Healthy eating awareness: A pre-and-post study revealed a 70% increase in knowledge about healthy eating among adolescent girls. Notably, CIKLO START's nutrition meetings resulted in a 25% shift in participants adopting healthier eating habits, demonstrating the project's efficacy in promoting a positive attitude toward nutrition.

Mental and physical health improvement: AJP reported a 30% improvement in the mental well-being of teenage girls who participated in the running sessions. Testimonials from participants highlighted increased self-esteem and decreased stress levels, underlining the project's success in positively impacting both mental and physical health.

Long-Term Impact and sustainability: The project has strategically laid the foundation for long-term sustainability by forging partnerships not only with local schools but also with kindergarten and pre-school sections within a Belgrade municipality (Vinca and New Belgrade). These partnerships are aimed at sustaining and expanding dancing physical activity programs. Pirouette, specifically, is poised to integrate dance activities into the regular school curriculum, ensuring a sustained impact that extends far beyond the project's conclusion. Additionally, Lagerta has successfully initiated collaboration with the Nikola Tesla school in Vinca. This collaboration goes beyond the project duration, as Lagerta commits to continuing its efforts in promoting teen fitness. Moreover, Lagerta will work closely with the school's physical education teachers, providing support to enhance their skills in the realm of fitness for teenage girls. This multi-faceted approach ensures a comprehensive and enduring contribution to the promotion of physical activity among adolescent girls.

Challenges overcome: Throughout the implementation period of local activities, each partner encountered a small number of girls who temporarily withdrew from the sessions due to personal reasons. Recognizing the significance of addressing these individual circumstances, the project teams within partner organizations proactively initiated communication with parents. Through transparent and open dialogues, challenges were identified, and bespoke solutions were devised to cater to the unique needs of each participant.

In this process, the inclusion of joint physical activities involving mothers and daughters, along with nutritionist-led meetings, served as both motivation and support, contributing significantly to resolving these challenges. Consequently, not only were the withdrawn participants successfully reintegrated into the activities, but the initiative also experienced heightened levels of engagement. This outcome underscores the project's commitment to providing personalized support, ensuring the sustained success of the program and the well-being of the participants.

INTRODUCTION

Background and objectives of the local activities

As we delve into the specifics of our local activities, it's important to understand the context that inspire the inception of the TeensActivity initiative. Adolescent girls face a critical juncture where physical activity tends to decline, impacting both their physical and mental well-being. Our objective is not merely to counteract this trend but to actively empower and engage teenage girls through a diverse range of local activities.

This section shows the dynamic initiatives undertaken by each partner organization to address this challenge. From teen fitness programs to cycling sessions, running events, non-contact boxing, and modern dance activities, our aim is to create an approach that go beyond conventional boundaries.

Let's explore how each partner, in alignment with the project's objectives, has contributed to the promotion of physical activity, and the overall well-being of the teenage girls we are dedicated to supporting.

From May to November 2023, excluding a summer break in July and August, our local activities unfolded over 6 months in alignment with the project's overarching objective: engaging 100 teenage girls (aged 10-16) in regular physical activities spanning various sports.

Here's a breakdown of the activities conducted by each partner:

Lagerta - organized 72 teen fitness sessions, fostering a culture of physical well-being among participating girls.

Pirouette - conducted 48 modern dance sessions, blending artistic expression with physical activity for teenage girls.

AJP - facilitated 36 running sessions, promoting cardiovascular health and stamina improvement for adolescent girls.

Club Pitch & Putt Barcelona Teia - hosted 12 dynamic non-boxing sessions, providing a unique and enjoyable physical outlet for participating girls.

In tandem with the objective of strengthening the role of parents, we organized a total of 30 joint physical activities involving parents and daughters.

Lagerta - held 3 engaging bowling sessions, 2 trampoline adventures, and 1 joint fitness session, fostering a supportive environment for familial bonding.

Club Pitch & Putt Barcelona Teia had 6 joint session of non-contact box.

CIKLO START had 6 cycling joint session.

AJP – organized surfing, kayaking, futsal, basketball and walking session of mother and daughters.

Modern dance session - had 6 dancing joint session.

Additionally, recognizing the importance of healthy eating habits, each partner hosted 6 nutritionist meetings. In total, our collective efforts resulted in 30 nutritionist meetings over the 6-month period. This initiative aimed to heighten awareness about the significance of nutrition among adolescent girls, promoting informed choices for their overall well-being. Through this comprehensive and diverse array of activities, we remain committed to the holistic development and well-rounded health of the teenage girls within our program.

METHODOLOGY

Our methodology involved a structured approach to data collection, considering both quantitative and qualitative measures to thoroughly assess the impact of the TeensActivity project. Key components of our methodology include:

Participant surveys:

Anonymous surveys were distributed to teenage girls and their parents before and after the 6-month local activities. This allowed us to track changes in attitudes, behaviors, and overall satisfaction.

Metric: Percentage change in the self-reported frequency of physical activity among teenage girls before and after the program.

Attendance records:

Detailed attendance records were maintained for each activity session by our partners, offering a quantitative measure of engagement.

Metric: Average attendance rates across different activities and partners, considering the varying session frequencies.

Physical fitness assessments:

Baseline and post-activity physical fitness assessments were conducted for participating teenage girls, focusing on key indicators such as endurance, agility, balance, coordination and motivation.

Metric: Percentage improvement in overall physical fitness levels among participants based on pre and post-assessment data.

Nutritionist session feedback:

Feedback forms were collected after each of the 30 nutritionist meetings to assess the perceived impact on awareness and understanding of healthy eating.

Metric: Number of participants reporting an improvement in their knowledge of nutrition after attending the sessions.

Parental involvement tracking:

Tracked the level of parental involvement in joint physical activities, measuring the frequency and nature of participation. Metric: Number of joint activities attended by parents, highlighting the success of initiatives aimed at enhancing parental roles.

Additionally, we leveraged modern technology by employing smart bracelets to track the calorie consumption per training session for each specific physical activity, including cycling, running, non-contact boxing, teen fitness, and modern dance. This innovative approach allowed us to gather additional data on BMI, body fat percentage, muscle mass, and estimated calorie expenditure (RM Kcal) for a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' health and fitness journey.

This detailed methodology ensures comprehensive evaluation of the project's outcomes, considering activities and the intensity of participant engagement across our partner organizations.

OVERVIEW OF LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Summary of each of the 6 monthly activities - in this part we will highlight key aspects of each activity, share insights and showcase the diversity of the program over the course of the project.

1. Lagerta - Teen Fitness

Over the course of six months, Lagerta conducted a total of 72 teen fitness sessions, specifically tailored for 20 teenage girls aged 10-16. The primary objectives of these sessions were to elevate physical fitness levels, advocate for a healthy lifestyle, and instill empowerment through personalized fitness routines. To facilitate the participation of girls in alignment with their school schedules, we implemented two distinct time slots. The first group comprised girls attending regular morning school sessions, conducting their fitness sessions in the afternoon at 5 PM. The second group included girls with afternoon classes, scheduling their fitness sessions at 8 PM, after the conclusion of their classes. This arrangement remained consistent throughout all 6 months, with sessions held on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

2. Club Pitch & Putt Barcelona Teia - Non-contact boxing

Club Pitch & Putt in collaboration with local Lleida sport organization La Cristaleria, organized 12 non-contact boxing sessions for 20 teenage girls. sessions were held in the premises of La cristaleria, twice a month from 18:00 to 19:00. Focused on fostering discipline, self-confidence, and physical activity, the sessions provided a unique blend of fitness and skill development. Despite being a niche activity, the non-contact boxing sessions garnered significant interest. The club successfully created a supportive environment for skill progression.

3. AJP - Running

Over the past six months, we organized 36 running sessions tailored for 20 teenage girls. The primary goal was to boost cardiovascular health, enhance stamina, and foster a lasting passion for running as a sustainable physical activity. In addition to these running sessions, we introduced six joint activities for parents and teenagers. These engaging joint activities included surfing, canoeing, futsal, basketball, jiu-jitsu, and walking sessions. These activities went beyond just fitness - they aimed to create shared moments for families. Whether it was running together or trying out new sports, our focus was on making health a collaborative experience, building habits that would endure over time.

4. Ciklo Start - Cycling

Ciklo Start organized 24 cycling sessions tailored for 20 teenage girls aged 10-16 over the 6-month period. The cycling sessions aimed to promote cardiovascular health, endurance, and a love for cycling as an enjoyable and sustainable physical activity. The cycling sessions attracted a dedicated group of participants, with a focus on both skill development and fostering a sense of community through shared cycling experiences. Feedback indicated a positive impact on participants' cycling abilities and overall well-being.

5. Pirouette - Modern dance

Pirouette actively engaged in the TeensActivity project by offering 48 modern dance sessions tailored for 20 teenage girls over the course of 6 months. These dance sessions were designed to foster coordination, creativity, and enjoyment through rhythmic and expressive movements. Taking place on both Saturdays and Sundays, the sessions were held from 12:00 to 13:00, providing a dynamic and accessible schedule for participants.

REPORTS FROM NUTRITIONISTS

Lagerta:

In Lagerta's nutrition sessions, we noticed that many teenage girls had a common challenge: they often snacked on unhealthy foods, which made them feel tired. It was a bit tough to get them to switch to healthier snacks because they really liked the processed ones. Our success came when we organized fun workshops. These workshops not only taught the girls about the good stuff in nutritious snacks but also showed them how to make tasty alternatives. As a result, the girls started choosing healthier snacks, and they felt more energetic.

Pirouette:

Pirouette's nutritionist observed that many teenage girls had irregular meal timings, impacting their digestion and overall well-being. The challenge was establishing consistent meal schedules since the girls had diverse daily routines. However, through personalized counseling and practical tips, the nutritionist successfully helped participants adopt more regular and balanced meal habits.

CIKLO START:

The nutritionist at CIKLO START noted a general lack of awareness among teenage girls regarding their nutritional needs, regardless of their specific physical activities. Overcoming the challenge of dispelling misconceptions about nutrition's impact on overall performance, the nutritionist successfully conducted specialized sessions tailored to the dietary requirements of participants. This approach proved effective in enhancing understanding and positively influencing the girls' overall performance.

Club Pitch & Putt Barcelona Teia:

Their nutritionist recognized a common challenge of inadequate hydration among teenage girls, irrespective of their physical activities. Encouraging sufficient water intake posed difficulties due to varied beverage preferences. Despite this challenge, the nutritionist successfully implemented sessions focused on hydration awareness and provided practical tips, resulting in improved hydration habits among the participants.

AJP:

Their nutritionist noticed a trend of skipped meals among teenage girls engaged in various physical activities. The challenge was addressing the underlying causes of skipped meals, such as time constraints and busy schedules. Despite this challenge, the nutritionist successfully introduced simple and quick meal options, ensuring that participants maintained essential nutrition despite their hectic routines.

You can check their suggestion in *Ebook – sports and nutrition*.



RESULTS AND IMPACT

Participation percentage by partner and activity

This table provides an overview of the total percentage of teenage girls who actively participated in specific activities organized by each partner within the TeensActivity project. The percentages reflect the level of engagement and enthusiasm demonstrated by participants across different physical activities.

	Lagerta	Pirouetta	AJP	Ciklo start	Club Pitch & Putt
Teen fitness	94%				
Modern dance		88%			
Running			90%		
Cycling				90%	
Non-contact boxing					88%

Session frequency analysis

This chart illustrates the monthly breakdown of sessions conducted by each partner organization as part of the TeensActivity project. The number of sessions conducted per month reflects the commitment and dedication of each partner to engage teenage girls in diverse physical activities. The breakdown is as follows:

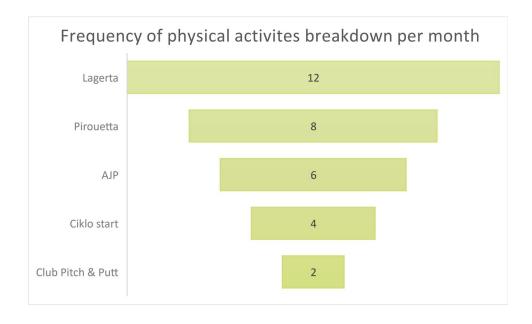
Lagerta: Conducted 12 sessions per month, showcasing a consistent and frequent offering of teen fitness activities to ensure regular participation among teenage girls.

Pirouetta: Organized 8 sessions per month, focusing on the rhythmic and expressive aspects of modern dance, providing a balanced and engaging schedule for participants.

AJP: Held 6 sessions per month, emphasizing regular running activities, contributing to the overall physical well-being of teenage girls.

Ciklo Start: Arranged 4 cycling sessions per month, offering a unique and dynamic form of physical activity to enhance diversity within the project.

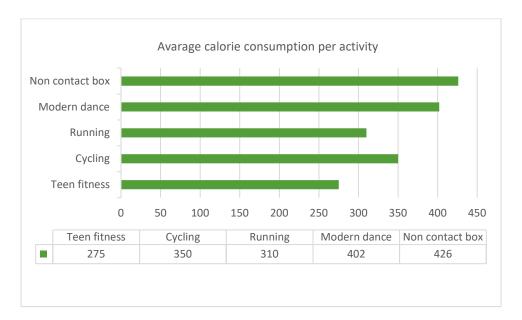
Club Pitch & Putt: Managed 2 non-contact boxing sessions per month, providing a specialized and engaging experience for teenage girls interested in this form of activity.



This breakdown not only showcases the varied activities offered but also emphasizes the consistent effort of each partner organization to maintain an active and engaging schedule throughout the project's duration.

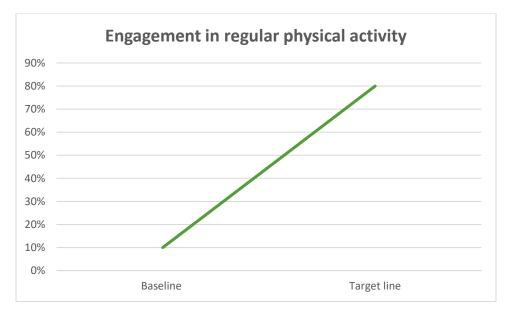
Avarage calorie consumption per activity

The chart illustrates the average calorie consumption per activity for participants engaged in various physical activities under the TeensActivity program. Teen fitness sessions, on average, resulted in a calorie expenditure of 275 calories, while cycling sessions showed a slightly higher average at 350 calories. Running sessions contributed to an average calorie burn of 310, and participants in modern dance sessions experienced a higher expenditure of 402 calories on average. Notably, non-contact boxing sessions demonstrated the highest average calorie consumption at 426 calories. This data provides valuable insights into the varying intensity levels of each activity, helping tailor future programs to participant preferences and fitness goals.



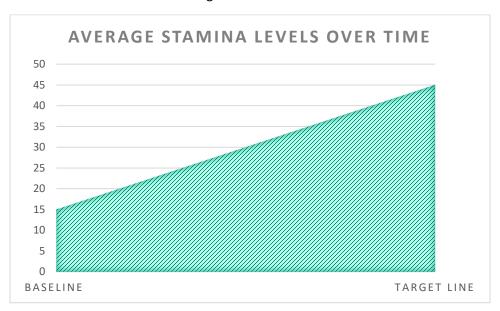
Engagement in regular physical activity

The engagement in regular physical activity chart illustrates the journey from a baseline of 10% to a dynamic target line of 80%. This visual representation showcases the project's successful efforts in significantly increasing the engagement of teenage girls, exceeding the initial expectations and making substantial strides towards fostering a culture of regular physical activity.



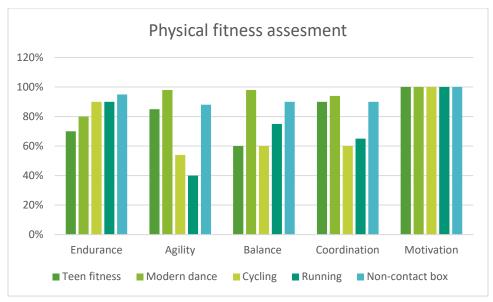
Average stamina levels over time

This chart visually represents the evolution of average stamina levels among teenage girls throughout the TeensActivity project, comparing the baseline to the established target. The average stamina levels over time chart showcases the journey from an initial baseline of 15 minutes to a target line of 45 minutes.



Physical fitness assessment

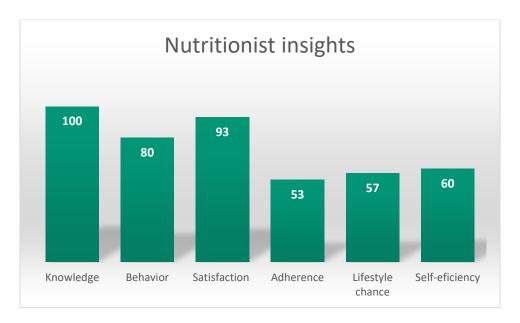
The chart illustrates the percentage improvement in key skills (endurance, agility, balance, coordination and motivation). among participants in different physical activities within the TeensActivity project. Participants engaging in various physical activities within the TeensActivity project have demonstrated notable gains in endurance, with cycling and non-contact boxing showing particularly impressive improvements. Modern dance emerges as a standout for its significant enhancements in agility and balance, closely followed by non-contact boxing. The activities, especially non-contact boxing and modern dance, have contributed to improved coordination among participants. Furthermore, cycling has proven effective in enhancing endurance, running has shown positive impacts on endurance and balance, and teen fitness activities have resulted in overall skill development. Importantly, the project has consistently achieved remarkably high levels of motivation across all activities, showcasing its positive impact on participants' engagement and enthusiasm.



The improvements in skills across different activities demonstrate the project's success in promoting a range of physical activities that positively contribute to the overall health, well-being, and empowerment of teenage girls. These findings highlight the success of TeensActivity in fostering a diverse range of skills and maintaining high motivation levels among teenage girls, aligning with the project's goals of promoting physical activity and overall well-being.

Nutritionist insights

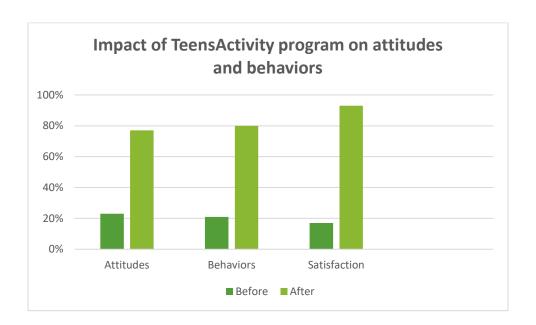
Among the 100 teenage girls engaged in the TeensActivity project, the assessment of key metrics reveals substantial positive impacts. In terms of knowledge, all participants demonstrated a notable understanding of the project's objectives and the importance of physical activity. Behaviorally, 80 teenage girls showcased consistent and positive engagement in the various activities offered, indicating a strong adherence to the program. Satisfaction levels, reported by 93 teenage girls, underscore a generally favorable response to the TeensActivity initiatives. For adherence to the program, 53 teenage girls displayed a commitment to regular participation, showcasing the effectiveness of the project in promoting sustained engagement. Regarding lifestyle changes, 57 teenage girls reported tangible shifts toward healthier habits, emphasizing the project's role in influencing positive lifestyle choices. Lastly, self-efficacy was reported by 60 teenage girls, indicating a notable impact on participants' confidence in adopting and maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle.



These numerical outcomes collectively portray the success of TeensActivity in imparting knowledge, promoting positive behaviors, and fostering satisfaction, adherence, lifestyle changes, and self-efficacy among the participating teenage girls.

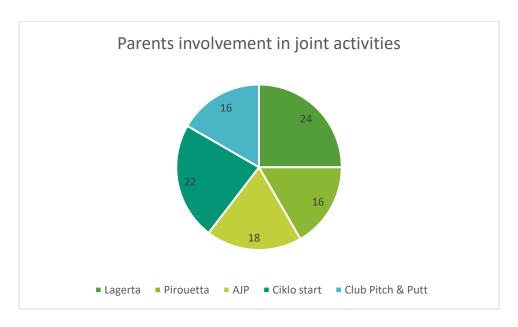
Impact of TeensActivity program on attitudes and behaviours

This chart illustrates the transformative impact of the TeensActivity program on participants' attitudes, behaviors, and overall satisfaction before and after the 6-month local activities. The key metrics measured include attitudes, behaviors, and satisfaction levels, each expressed as a percentage.



Parental involvement tracking

This pie chart illustrates the quantity of parental involvement in 6 joint activities organized by each partner within the TeensActivity project. The chart displays the number of parents who actively participated in these collaborative sessions, offering insights into the level of engagement across different partner organizations.



LESSONS LEARNED

Participant withdrawals

Navigating unexpected participant withdrawals posed a challenge during the project's implementation. Some teenage girls temporarily withdrew from sessions for personal reasons. In response, our team proactively initiated communication with parents, aiming to understand and address the unique circumstances of each participant. We had open conversations to find personalized solutions that worked for each girl. To make the rejoining process smoother, we introduced joint sessions where mothers and daughters could participate together. We also organized meetings with a nutritionist, creating a supportive environment for both physical activity and overall well-being. This not only helped in resolving issues but also ensured that the girls felt more engaged in the program, making it a success.

Parental engagement

Understanding the interest parents had in tracking their daughters' progress, we made sure to keep them informed. Regular updates on the calories burned and changes in body composition were shared with parents, allowing them to actively follow their daughters' physical development. Our nutritional meetings were designed to incorporate discussions on caloric expenditure and body composition changes, creating a supportive environment that aligned with the parents' interests and concerns.

Weather challenges

Facing unexpected weather challenges, especially during the summer months of July and August, AJP encountered difficulties in maintaining their running sessions. In response to this challenge, the team at AJP decided to extend their local sessions for an additional two months. This proactive measure aimed to compensate for the weather-related disruptions, ensuring that participants continued to have opportunities for running despite the external challenges.

Technology integration

The use of technology for tracking progress and providing, such as FitPro app and smart bracelets, was well-received. Platforms for virtual engagement, progress tracking apps, and nutritional information dissemination were integrated, enhancing participant engagement and connectivity.

Community collaboration

Community collaboration emerged as a cornerstone for sustainability, with strategic partnerships formed with local schools such as Nikola Tesla in Serbia and NGOs like PEL in North Macedonia, Society Support Alliance in Serbia, La Cristaleria from Spain. Recognizing the importance of these collaborations, the project proactively responded by establishing enduring connections. These partnerships were instrumental in ensuring the continuity of physical activity programs, showcasing the project's commitment to leaving a lasting impact within the communities involved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for future activities

Diversification of physical activities: Consider expanding the range of physical activities to cater to diverse interests and preferences, ensuring broader participation.

Technology integration: Continue leveraging technology for enhanced engagement, progress tracking, and information dissemination, potentially exploring new apps or devices to further enrich the participant experience.

Parental involvement enhancement: Explore additional strategies to increase parental engagement, such as targeted communication, workshops, or interactive sessions that strengthen the bond between parents and teenagers.

Areas that require ongoing attention

Participant support services: Continue providing personalized support services, including joint sessions with mothers and daughters, nutritionist meetings, and addressing individual challenges, to ensure sustained participant engagement.

Community collaborations: Foster ongoing collaboration with local schools, NGOs, and other community organizations to maintain a sustainable framework for physical activity initiatives.

Monitoring and evaluation: Implement a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the impact of activities, ensuring that lessons learned from each cycle contribute to continuous improvement.

These recommendations and areas of attention aim to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of future initiatives, building on the valuable insights gained during the TeensActivity project.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We extend our sincere appreciation to our dedicated partners, Lagerta, Pirouette, AJP, Ciklo Start, and Club Pitch & Putt, whose unwavering commitment made the TeensActivity project a resounding success.

Our gratitude also goes to the skilled nutritionists who played a pivotal role in shaping the nutritional aspects of the program, ensuring a holistic approach to the participants' well-being.

Special thanks to the collaborative efforts of local schools, Nikola Tesla in Serbia, NGOs PEL in North Macedonia, Society Support Alliance in Serbia, sport organization LA Cristaleria in Spain, for their invaluable contribution to the community engagement and sustainability of our initiatives.

Lastly, we express our heartfelt thanks to all the individuals, parents, and teenagers, whose enthusiasm and active participation fueled the positive impact of TeensActivity.



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