

TENDENCIES IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION, STUDY CASE - EUROPEAN CAMPAIGN “MOVE WEEK” IN ARAD - ROMANIA

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Abstract

Scientific evidence shows that physical inactivity is a leading risk factor for ill health, going well beyond issues related to weight control and influencing both physical and mental well-being. Over the past few years, the promotion of physical activity has increasingly been recognized in Europe as a priority for public health, and many countries have responded through the development of policies and interventions. With almost one million deaths per year attributable to physical inactivity, this has become the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality in high-income countries and a major public health issue (WHO). In this paper we want to present an example of best practice in the field of physical activities to the broad masses of the population. These activities were conducted in the month of October 2013 throughout the European Union. Our case study approach the events organized Aurel Vlaicu University of Arad during this campaign. With over 300 attendees at the event and the first edition, we consider it a successful campaign.

Keywords: *movement, health, plain, students*

Introduction

Nowadays it is being discussed more and more problems physical activities performed by the population, namely mass sport. Are presented TV spots, press articles, radio or television programs dedicated to this topic and other ways to approach the subject ... but concrete action happens quite few and rare.

A recent study published by the “Adevarul” newspaper and

conducted “Student Sports” Association among students in Romania, highlights some negative aspects of mentality and the way young people relate to physical education classes:

- Nearly 75% of students were not at any hour sports university in this academic year, citing “lack of information”;

- Over 70% of Romanian students who participated in the online poll, said they participate in sports activities at least 2-3 times per month, but outside the university;

- Among those who went to such courses, over 56% have attended a maximum of 5 hours of training and 20% maximum of 3 lessons;

We believe if young people, who have hours of sport in school schedules, are such figures, in other categories of the population may be more worrying situation. Romania suffers from this point of view and the causes are multiple. Data taken from Eurobarometer are conclusive:

- 29 % Romanians say they play sport with regularly or with some regularity. 71 % never play sport or do so less than once a month;

- 57 % Romanians say that lack of time prevent them from practicing sport regularly;

- Only 11 % of respondents in Romania say they exercise for fun. In Sweden, 53% of respondents say they exercise for fun; this is followed by Denmark (46%), Germany (46%) and Lithuania (46%);

- Romanians don't use sports clubs or sport centres. Only 3 % percent attend a sports club or a centre. In the Netherlands 25 % use a sports club and in Germany the number is 19 %. The main factors determining the usage of such facilities are presumably quite simple: their availability (most likely to the urban population) and the disposable income of citizens in the different Member States;

- 15 % of the Romanians exercise in order to improve physical appearance. Only 7 % of respondents in the Netherlands are motivated by this, while Bulgaria (17%), Poland (17%) and Portugal (17%) also are well below the average.

QF1. How often do you exercise or play sport?

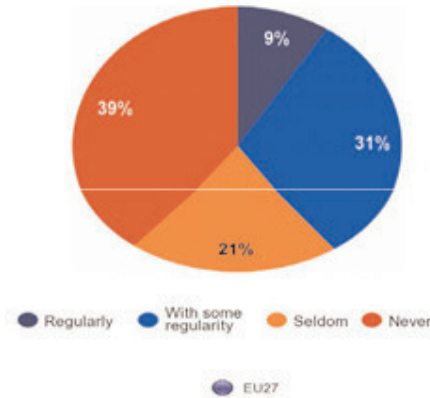


Fig. 1. Poll in the E.U. on the frequency of practicing sports or other physical activities by citizens (according to the Eurobarometer).

World Health Organization (WHO) listed in a report several key factors on physical activity, which should be taken into account:

- Physical inactivity is one of the leading risk factors for health and is estimated to attribute to one million deaths (about 10 % of the total), per year in the WHO European Region.

- Physical inactivity accounts for 8.3 million disability-adjusted life-years (DALYs - about 5% of the total) in the Region.

- In particular, two thirds of the adult population (people aged over 15 years) in the European Union do not reach recommended levels of activity (30 minutes/day on most week days). On average, only 31% of respondents in a European survey reported sufficient physical activity.

- 40% of EU citizens say that they play sport at least once a week

- Only 34% of European young people aged 11, 13 and 15 years reported enough physical activity to meet current guidelines. In most countries boys were more active than girls and activity declined with age in both sexes.

● Proportions of active young people vary widely between countries, ranging from 11% of girls and 25% of boys in France to 51% of girls and 61% of boys in Ireland among 11-year-olds. Similar variations existed among the other groups; for example the proportion of active 15-year-old boys was 49% in the Czech Republic and 25% in Portugal.

● Inequalities between countries are rising, with those in the eastern part of the Region bearing the heaviest burden. The citizens of the Nordic countries and the Netherlands, generally speaking, are the most physically active in the EU. Meanwhile, the citizens of Mediterranean countries and the 12 new Member States tend to exercise less than average.

● Emerging estimates of the direct (health care) and indirect costs of physical inactivity (loss of economic output due to illness, disease-related work disabilities or premature death) are alarming. On the basis of two studies, in Switzerland and the United Kingdom, physical inactivity can be estimated to cost each of the Region's countries about 150-300 per citizen per year.

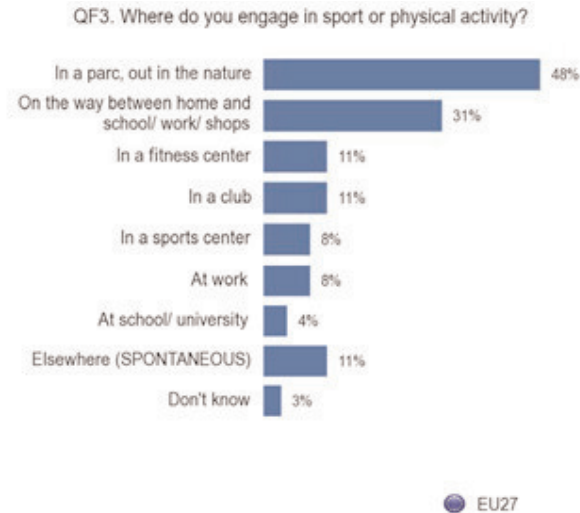


Fig. 2. Poll in the E.U. on the place of practicing sports or other physical activities by citizens (according to the Eurobarometer).

Also an article recently published in the U.S. says that exercise does not have only limited effects on somatic development side, but they extend also in the effective plan to theoretical classes. asserts that “children who are more active show greater attention, have faster cognitive processing speed, and perform better on standardized academic tests than children who are less active.” ()

Methodology and content of the study case

To conduct this work we used the following research methods:
- the study of archived recordings, - interviews, - documentation,
- direct observation - participatory observation.

Through this project we want to address in particular to the young population (pupils, students), because in this time they form their habits of life. It is important that these habits include the pleasure of doing physical activities or sports (any form of practice), or recreational sports character. Referring to recreational sport, Professor Gagea Adrian said: “Packaging the recreational sport is individual health interest to rebalance and restore the physical and mental state to control and eventually remove individuals from wasting or using flawed free time etc. “(Gagea A., 2008).

MOVE Week is an annual European campaign promoting the benefits of being active and participating regularly in sport and physical activity. Organisers are : ISCA (International Sport and Culture Asociation), ECF (European Ciclism Federation) cu sprijinul Comisiei Europene si avand partener media postul TV Eurosport.

In 2012 the first ever MOVE Week engaged individuals, organizations and cities from across Europe in a large-scale celebration of sport and physical activity, by promoting a myriad of successful sport and physical activity initiatives across Europe. This test run of the MOVE Week was held from the 1st to the 7th of October 2012, where more than 100 events were held in 23 countries with approximately 140,000 participants.

Vision: “100 million more Europeans active in sport and physical activity by 2020”

ISCA seeks strategic partners to fulfil this vision. The overall

objective of NowWeMove is to facilitate cross-sector collaboration for promotion of participation in sport and physical activity.

Objectives of the campaign:

- a) Raise awareness about the benefits of sport and physical activity among European citizens;
- b) Increase accessible opportunities to be active in sport and physical activity by developing new and up-scaling existing initiatives;
- c) Enable sustainable and innovative capacity building for MOVE Agents through open-source solutions and advocacy.



Fig. 3. Some pictures which have been used to promote activities inside the Move Week

Results

Throughout the week, 550 MOVE Agents ensured that 1,257 MOVE Week events in 510 European cities across 33 countries brought fun and physical activity opportunities to their communities. The success of these events brought an estimated 250,000 people to join in their local MOVE Week activities. The events were lit up in orange by 300,000 bracelets, 250,000 stickers, 5,000 MOVE Week t-shirts and 3,500 banners.



Fig. 4. Map of Europe with cities that have conducted activities in the Move Week.

During the Move Week campaign 2013, in Romania was held about 30 events and the University “Aurel Vlaicu” of Arad were organized two events: > one in wich the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport has proposed to students but also pupils who began school, to participate in an organized manner in a series of sports competitions, held in sports hall of the university, by which they can enter in a pleasant atmosphere into theoretical seminars and courses; > the second event was the “Aurel Vlaicu” University by the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports as a partner in a national competition of orientation.

We believe that the mission of a sports faculty is not only that of transmit knowledge and to train specialists in the field, but also a faculty must develop practical activities (competitions, demonstrations, games and other activities, with practical character) for both, its students and for community it is part. We had into account for choosing the sports of these actions, the survey conducted by the association Studentsport among the students from Romania, so that three disciplines of the students appreciated were found also in the the actions of the Week Move from UAV Arad.

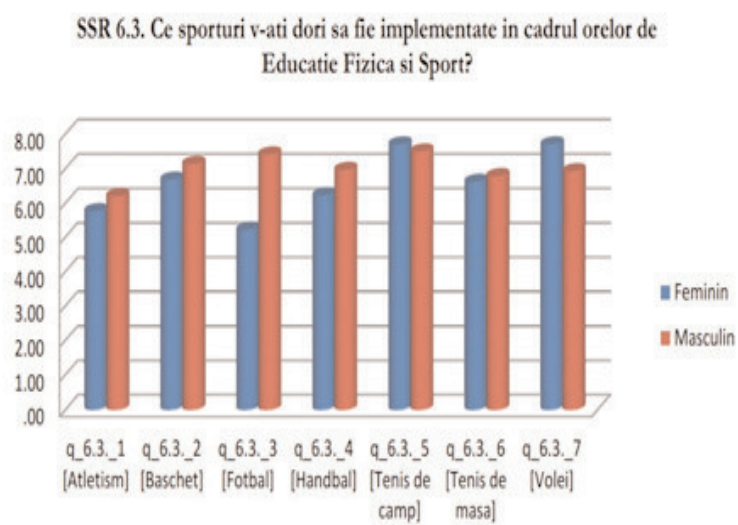


Fig. 5. Graphic regarding options for practicing sports by Romanian students in universities (according to Studentsport survey).

For this event were made ??a series of posters (with Now We Move logo) who divided in the schools, have been exhibited on the notice boards of the University and in various public spaces in the city. Also were launched invitations to sports teachers from high schools.

Also in this sense, to inform the school population were sent press releases (to the newspapers or on-line) have been posted ads on facebook, on the University website, on the websites www.orienting.ro, www.condorclub.ro, and on the forum of Arad School Inspectorate. To the events, held at the sports hall of the UAV, participated and realize an interview, regional television “West Regional TV”. The press has received a series of informative materials about the campaign.

Table no. 1. Summary of activities conducted at UAV Arad during the Move week campaign.

No.	Competition	Place / date / hour	Competitors (sex & categ.)	Volunteers involved
Event I: "Move your body and ...back to school"				
1	Table Tennis Tournament	CSM AR, 08.10.2013; 10,00	15 students (m+f)	3 pers.
2	Volleyball Championship	Sports hall UAV, 09.10.2013; 09,00	4 team x10pers = 40 (stud., m+f)	7 pers.
3	Martial arts Demonstrations (karate, kyokushin, ju jitsu)	Sports hall UAV, 09.10.2013; 12,30	10 students (m+f)	3 pers.
4	Football Championship	Sports hall UAV, 09.10.2013; 13,00	4 team x10pers = 40 (stud., m)	7 pers.
5	Dance Demonstration (salsa, bachata, cha-cha and ballroom dance)	Sala spect. Camin stud., 09.10.2013; 18,30	10 pairs x2pers = 20 (m+f)	4 pers.
Event II: " Zarandului Cup 67, „Dávidházy Kálmán" Memorial and „Aurel Vlaicu" University Trophy				
1	Long distance orientation stage	"Neptun" swimming pools, 12.10.2013, 12,00	~ 50 pers., (m+f)	5 pers.
2	Night orientation stage	M Eminescu park, 12.10.2013; 07,00	~ 30 pers., (m+f)	5 pers.
3	Medium distance orientation stage	A.V. University, 13.10.2013; 10,00	~ 60 pers., (m+f)	5 pers.
4	Short distance orientation stage	"Neptun" swimming pools, 13.10.2013; 15,00	~ 40 pers., (m+f)	5 pers.

Before each competition organized, at the opening ceremony, were presented to the participants: - vision and purpose pursued by organizing these events; - the initiators and supporters of the project; - data about importance of physical activity for good health (all data taken from the detailed statement of information for Romania).

Promotional materials provided by European organizers of the campaign (presentation banners, t-shirts worn by volunteers, bracelets, Stickers and diplomas received by participants in events) had the role to arouse curiosity and give the possibility to some questions like: what? who? for what purpose? is performed such events. Volunteers were instructed to provide the necessary answers.



Fig. 6. A few pictures within the activities performed at UAV Arad during the Move week.

Conclusions

We appreciate that this campaign organized at European level was a success, which can be verified by the multitude of actions that were performed in the 33 countries included in the campaign and over 1250 events by which were involved in physical activities approximately 250,000 persons.

Also consider as events organized by UAV Arad in the campaign was a success, as the first edition. The strengths of this campaign in Arad were: - enabling students to start school in an pleasantly way, with a series of sports competitions; - informing them about the importance it has physical exercise in any form; - involvement of some students, like volunteers, in organizational activities of these events were beneficial for him.

Like measures what can be taken to improve the following participation in this campaign: - a better communication with schools in order to involve more numerous school population - the opportunity to give more importance of the event involving some authorities, institutions or local companies.

Next we want to present appreciation of ISCA president (the main organizer of this campaign):

“We know the challenge. We know that multi-sector approach and commitments are needed to create motivation for change and impact. We have to act upon this challenge and knowledge! Governments, corporate sector and civil society need to align around ambitious visions for increased physical activity.

The challenge of inactive lifestyle is far too big for one single sector. However, if the major stakeholders from the various sectors align, collaborate on the innovation of solutions and contribute to the implementation from our respective positions, we have a chance to succeed in reversing global inactivity trends.

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