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Family Friendly **SPORT**

RESEARCH REPORT CAPACITY OF SPORT CLUBS FOR FAMILY - FRIENDLY PRACTICES



MOVE IT



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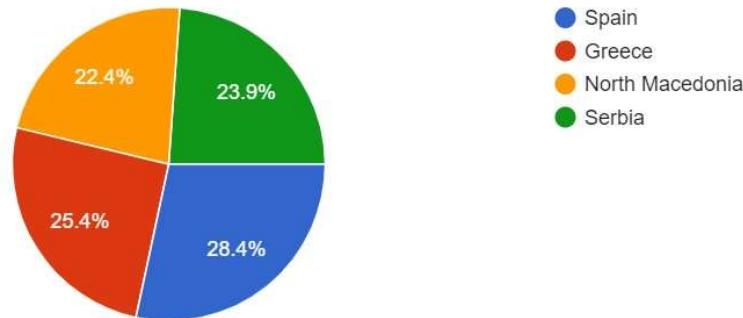
RESEARCH SAMPLE



This research is implemented within a project **Family-friendly Sports**, financed by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. Statistical research included 67 organizations from 4 European countries, Spain, North Macedonia, Serbia and Greece. The respondents are representatives of sports clubs. Research sample encompasses organizations who showed strong interest in family-friendly activities. The main goal of the research is to learn more about the capacities of sports clubs to implement family-friendly activities and practices.

Research is organized using quantitative research method. Questionnaire is designed and distributed using Google forms tool. The questionnaire consisted of 25 questions in total, plus one introductory question, used to determine the distribution of clubs per country. In the following chart we can see that four countries are almost equally represented, thus there is a good geographical distribution of respondents.

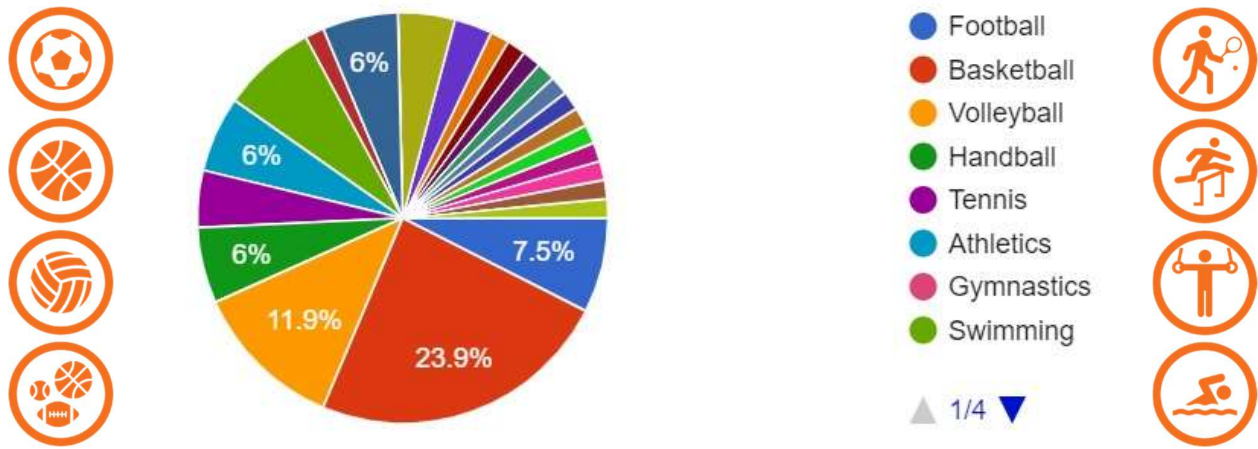
Chart 1. Distribution of respondents per country



When looking at sports practiced in clubs of the respondents, we can notice a large variety. The highest number of respondents, nearly 24% of them, are basketball clubs. They are followed by volleyball, rugby and football clubs, with nearly 12%, 9% and 7.5% of representation respectively. **It is noticeable that great majority of clubs that took part in this research are group sports clubs. It might come as a conclusion that group sports clubs, due to their nature, are more interested in family-friendly domain.** When it comes to primarily individual sports, the most represented sports in the research are swimming with 7.5%, and karate and athletics with 6%.

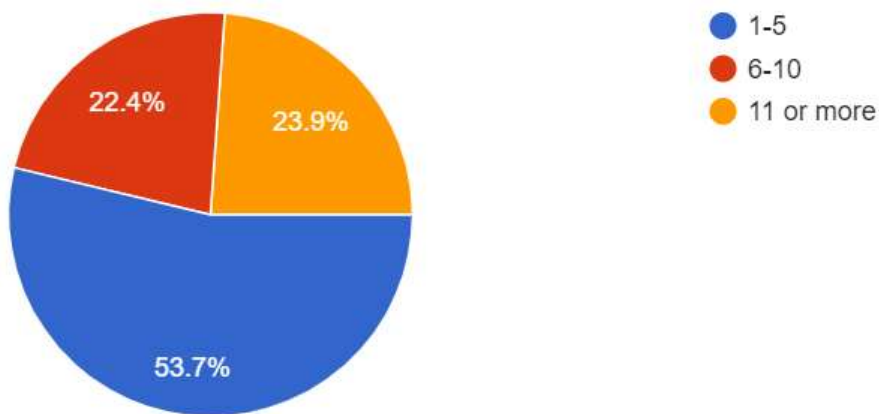


Chart 2. Distribution per type of sports



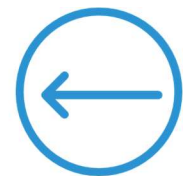
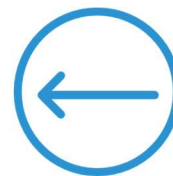
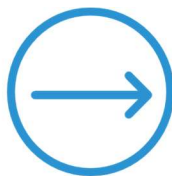
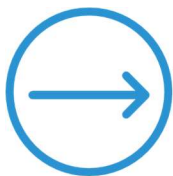
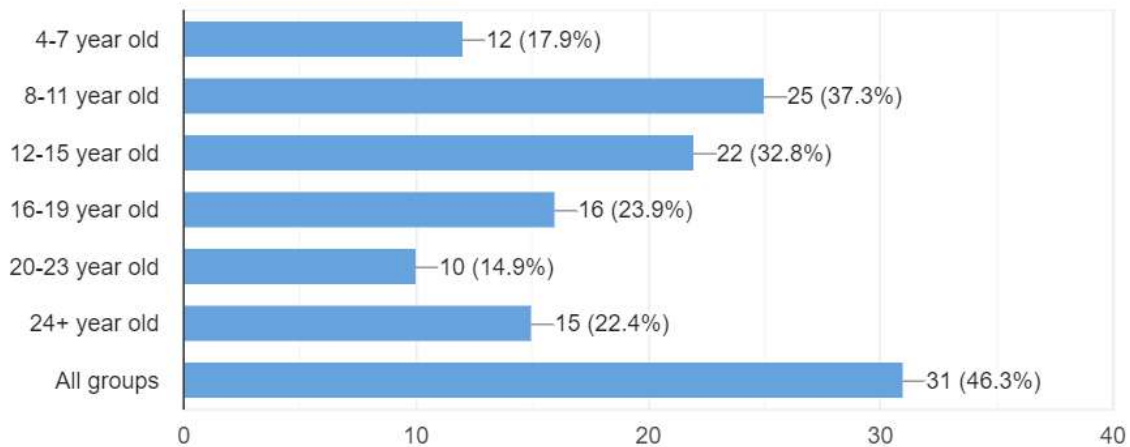
Considering the size and organizational structure of the respondent clubs, it is noticeable that they have **mainly simple structures with small number of employees**. More than half of them have 5 or less employees (including volunteers). Nearly one quarter of clubs have between 6 and 10 employees. Last quarter of respondents are considered as slightly larger organizations with more than 11 or more people employed.

Chart 3. Distribution per number of employees



Almost half of the clubs who participated in this research are **practicing with all age groups**. **Around one third of them are focusing on children age between 8 and 15 years**. Less clubs are coaching younger children, of age less than 8. The same situation is with clubs who train only adults. They too are less represented.

Chart 4. Age groups training in sports clubs

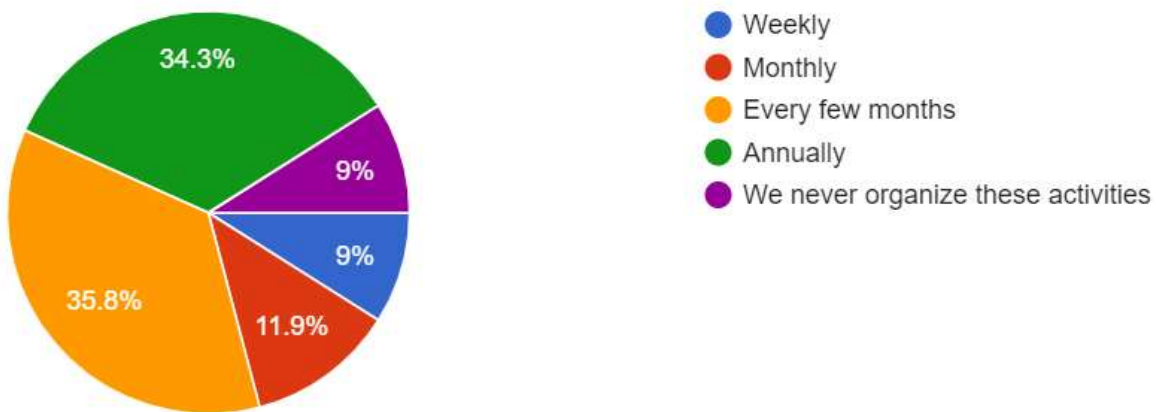


RESEARCH RESULTS

Next phase of the research is dedicated to habits, beliefs and experiences of clubs in the family-friendly domain. We aimed to learn more about their current practices, in case they already have some. For less experienced clubs, we aim to find out about their perception of this segment.

The first question of this research part is investigating the frequency of family-friendly activities of the respondents. **There are two large groups of respondents in terms of frequency of FFS activities they organize. Around one third of clubs practice this type of activity every few months, while another third organize some activities once per year.** Smaller amount of clubs, nearly 12%, dedicates time to the organization of these actions monthly.

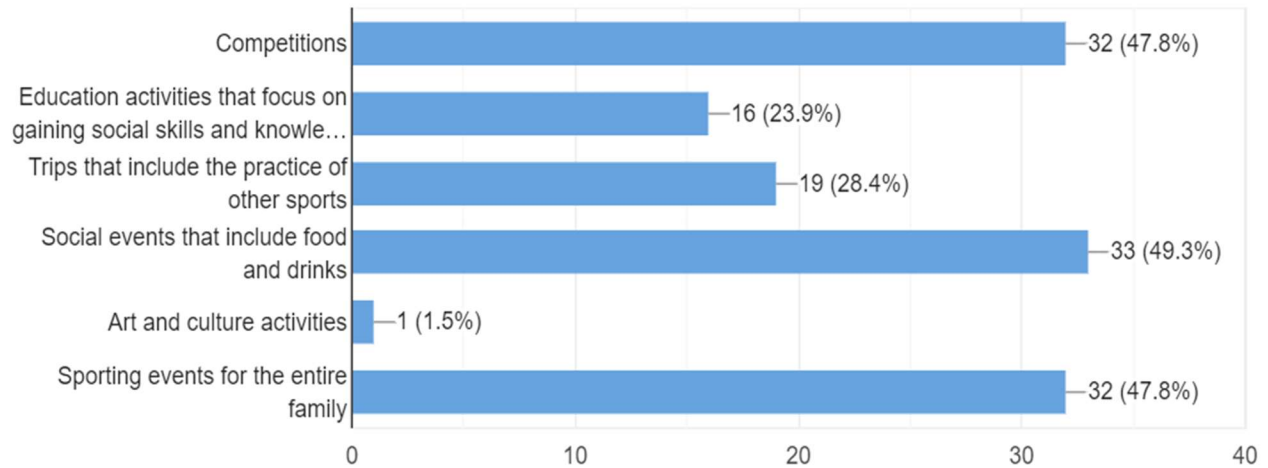
Chart 5. Frequency of FFS activities organized by sports clubs



When it comes to type of the activity provided in the scope of family-friendly domain, a few groups stand out. **The most common activities that involve family members of their athletes are various social events including food preparation and consumption. Very often these activities are organized following some other lighter sports activities. Nearly half of the responding clubs are organizing competitions or sporting events for the entire family as their main FFS action.**

Following activity in terms of popularity amongst clubs are trips that also include practice of sports activity (other than the primary sport practiced in the specific club). This is reported by nearly 30% of respondents. **Slightly less popular activities are educational activities that focus on improvement of social skills and other knowledge. This is a domain that can be very interesting when it comes to the enhancement of capacities to provide more diversified activities.**

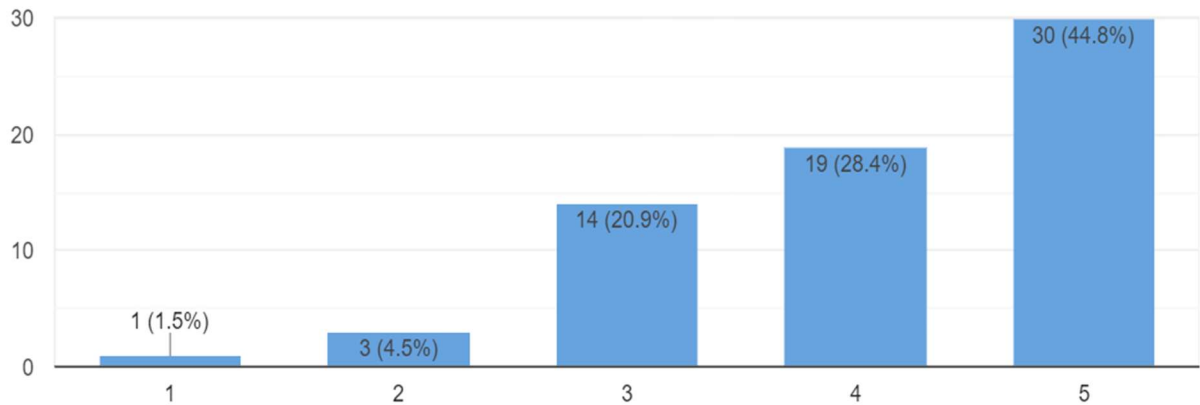
Chart 6. Type of practiced FFS activity



It does not come as a surprise that respondents show great interest for organizing and participating in more family-friendly activities. **Around 45% of them rate this interest with the highest grade on the scale, while 48% shows moderate to high interest.**



Chart 7. Interest in FFS activities

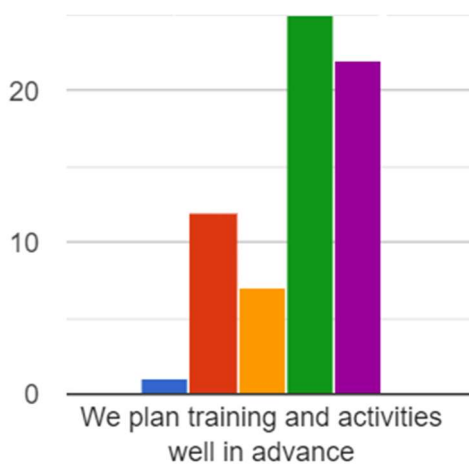


Following questions were designed to look more in detail into practices implemented when providing FFS. Using the Likert scale, we measured the behaviors the respondents demonstrate in implementation of working methodologies. Every sub-question is given in a form of a statement, and the respondents got to rate their compliance to it, on the below given scale.

■ Never
 ■ Rarely
 ■ Sometimes
 ■ Very often
 ■ Always



Chart 8. Planning process



The first step was to learn about the planning practices clubs have developed. This is considered as an important step in order to make proper arrangements and establish connection with target groups on time. **Vast majority of clubs are claiming to have a good practice in preparation of their activities in advance. Still, many clubs are only sometimes (10%), or in rare occasions (18%) performing planning in their organizations. This is very often caused by insufficient planning skills within the structure.**

Chart 9. Preparation of participants



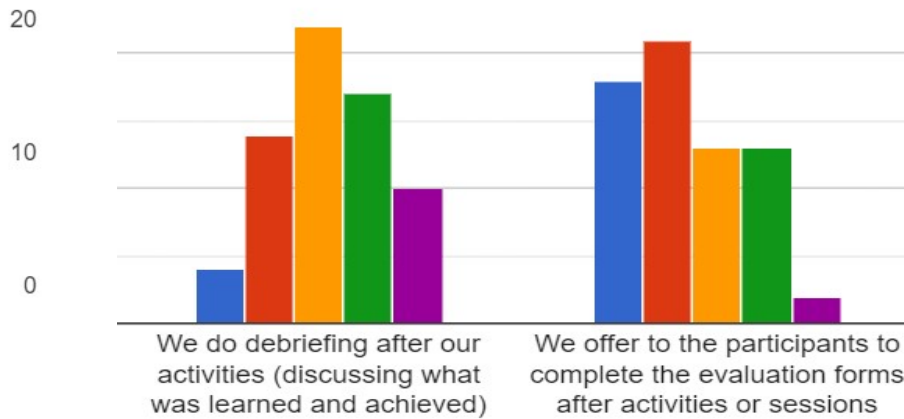
Similar habits are noticed and recorded, when asked about the preparation provided prior to the foreseen FFS activity. **Having the target group well aware about the scope, rules, plan and goals of the activity is vital to its success. This is fundamental when working with such a sensitive group as children are.** Still, around 20% of organizations say that only sometimes they work with the participants to prepare them for the activity. 16% rarely does the preparation, while 3% does not have this practice at all.

The questions below refer to the methodology of implementing the core activity and providing the follow up after completing it. As we can see, **moving towards the closure of the activity is involving less methodological approach of our respondents. Debriefing, as a very important step of learning cycle, is crucial in non-formal educational activities. It is recorded that the majority of organizations only sometimes implement debriefing.**

Evaluation forms are a great strategic approach if there is an intention to improve the activities in the mid and long term. By allowing the main target groups to take part in the evaluation of the activities, clubs are directly inviting them to take an active role in the family activities of the organization. Evaluation forms are also a good way to create an internal base of knowledge about the FFS activities in this case, but also the transfer this knowledge amongst the interested network of partners. However, **nearly 2/3 of clubs never use, or only rarely use evaluation forms in their process of delivering activities.**



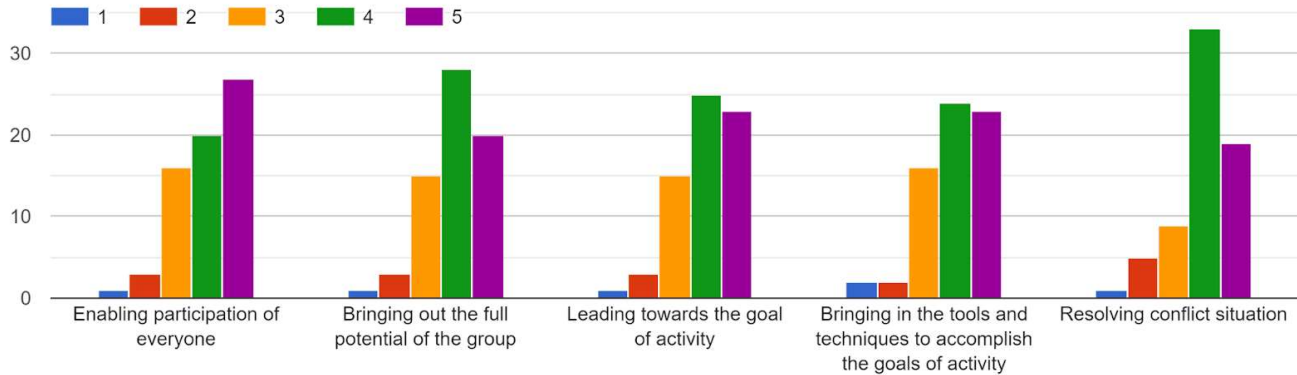
Chart 10. Debriefing and evaluation



In the following question, respondents are asked to rate the skills of their staff in the work with children and youth. Since most of the respondents are working primarily with these groups, it is expected these grades are high, but of course, very subjective. **Slightly less confidence respondents expressed for the ability to bring the tools and techniques to accomplish goals.** The complete results are given in the 5 Charts below.



Chart 1 I. Ability of staff to work with children/youth

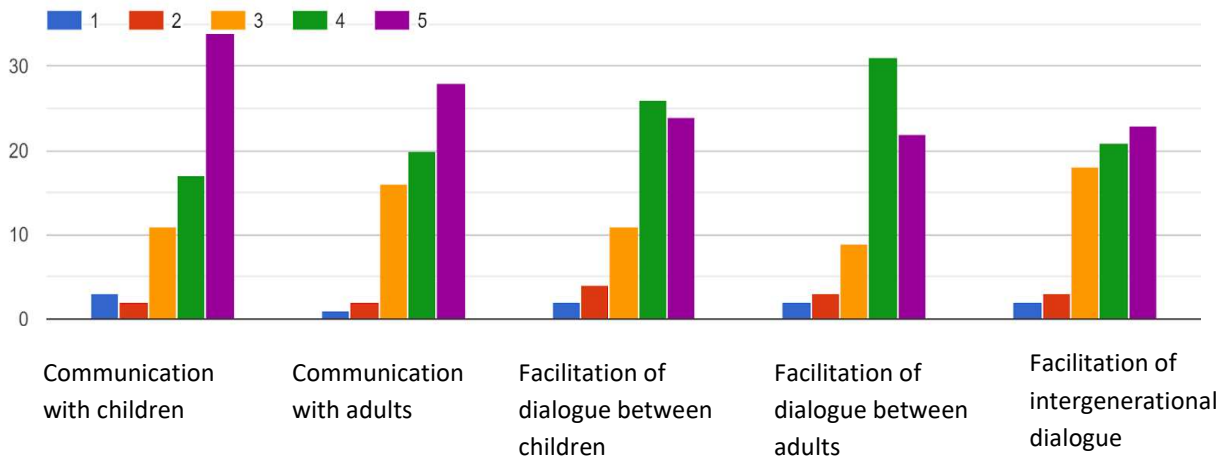


The same set of questions is given to rate the skills that coaches/trainers acquire in their work with adults. Even though working with adults is not the main business of the responding clubs, the marks they given are very similar to the ones when working with children is rated. The only discrepancy is shown in the sub-question 1. **The ability to enable participation while working with adults was given lower score then when working with children.** Since the other scores are almost identical, charts will not be presented here.

In the next question, respondents were asked to rate the communication skills of their staff, as well as the ability to facilitate dialogue. **Over 50% of them rated the communication skills with children with the highest mark. A bit lower scores are given to the ability to communicate with adults, having more respondents opting for moderate skills in this segment.** When looking at the ability to facilitate the dialogue, moderate scores are given to the facilitation of the intergenerational dialogue. This implies the dialogue between different generations, in this case mostly children and adults. **Since one of the most significant reasons for organizing FFS activities is to enhance the relationship of various generations in a family, this is a segment that deserves a lot of attention.**

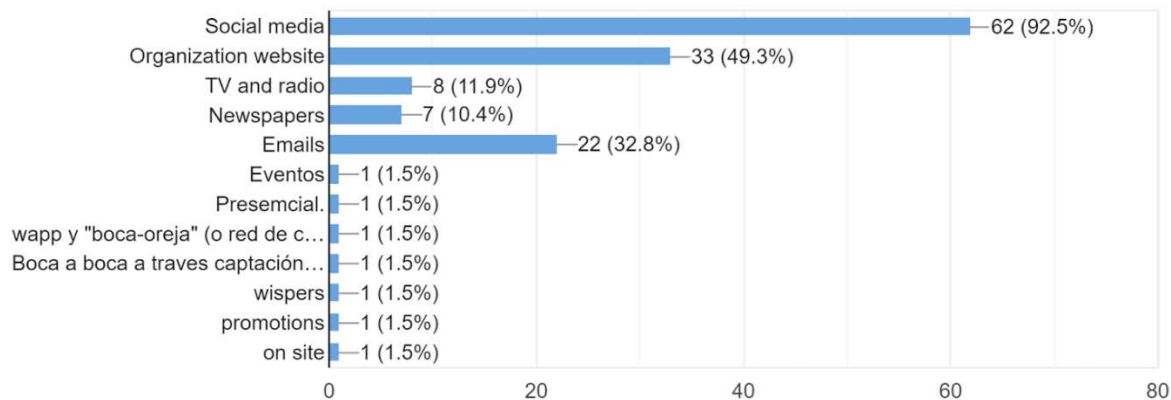


Chart 12. Communication skills



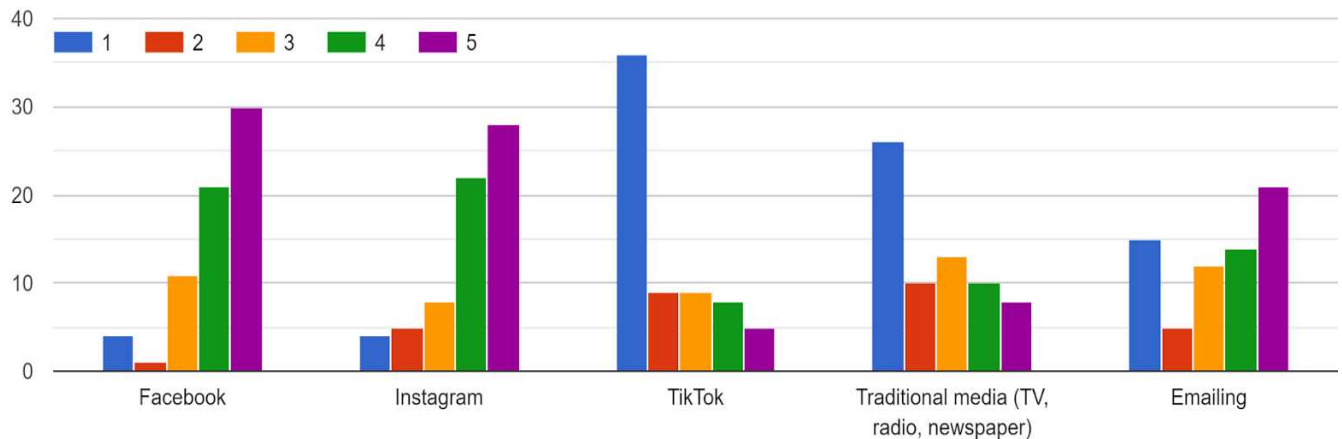
When asked about the channels for promotion they most likely use, **social media are by far the most utilized**. Nearly all of the respondents claim using them as a main method of communication and promotion of their work, which does not come as a surprise considering the benefits and the popularity of this method in today's world. **Own website of the organization proudly takes the second place with almost 50% of the clubs**. Together, these two communication channels prove the unprecedented reign of digital channels when it comes to the promotional activities. **However, the quality and customization of the content towards the target groups is something that requires more in-depth analysis**. Traditional communication methods are largely falling behind when it comes to the promotion of the activities and achievement of sports clubs.

Chart 13. Promotional channels



When questioned about the skills of the staff to communicate via the specific channel it does not come as a surprise that Facebook and Instagram are given the highest scores. These are still the most recognized social media networks and skills of staff to use them are rated mostly with highest scores. However, as being reported as one of the fastest growing networks, TikTok is still not widely recognized by the clubs. Traditional media is again, falling behind and this is understandable considering the target audience, costs, approachability, etc. **Skills to use emails are moderately rated and certain attention could be dedicated to it, considering they are a convenient and permanent way to communicate a message, especially in business environment.**

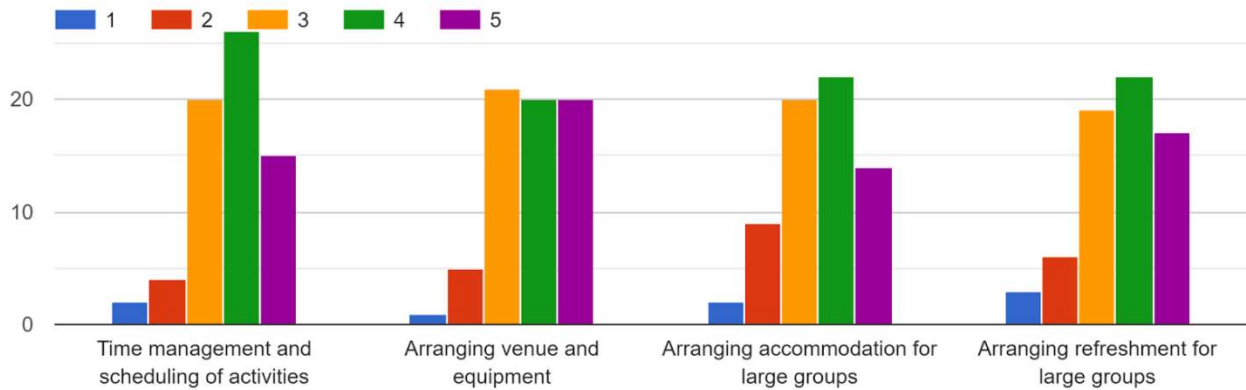
Chart 14. Communication skills



When looking briefly at the **organization skills of the respondents, self-evaluation has given somewhat moderate results.** Time management is in strong correlation with planning in organization, and this segment is already mentioned to have a potential for the improvement. Arrangements such as venue, accommodation, and refreshment are integral parts of organization of events. Majority of clubs are rating their skills in this domain as moderate of high. **Improvement does come with the experience, but when it comes to scaling up in terms of event management, education, too, can have a significant role.**



Chart 15. Organizational skills



Following part is dedicated to the attitude and practices of clubs in terms of providing the necessary resources for the activities. We mainly focus on financial resources. The first question aims to determine the current source of income which they have at their disposal. **Large majority, 87% of organizations are providing mainly through membership fees.** This is stable, but often insufficient source of income if there is a desire to provide additional activities too, the experience has shown. **Half of responding clubs have sponsorship at their disposal.** This can be a great way of involving other organizations in the activities and creating long-term partnership. **Only one third of organizations are relying on grants from domestic funds (including local, regional and national donor actions).** It does come as a surprise that clubs do not rely at on the opportunities to acquire funding in the international environment (EU funds, embassies, etc.)

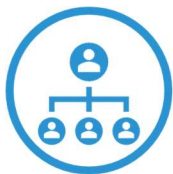
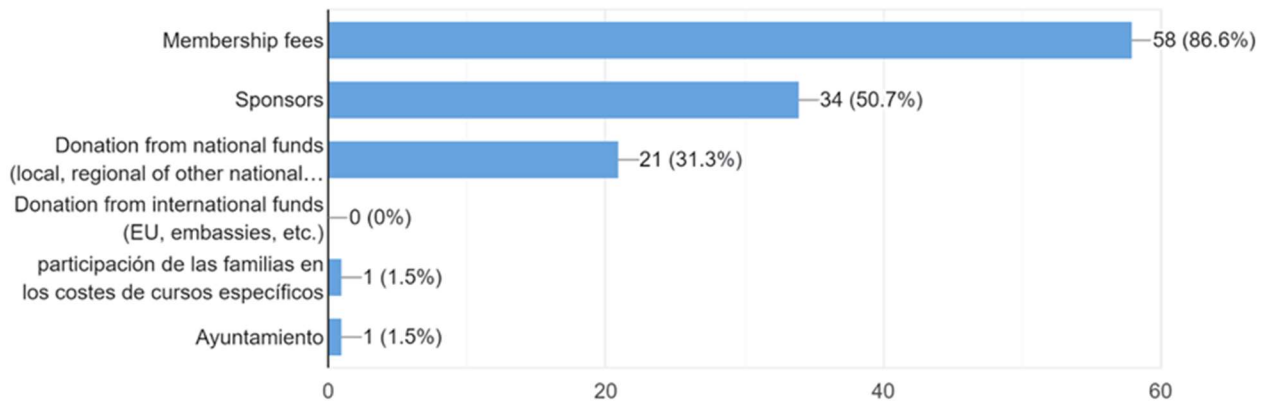
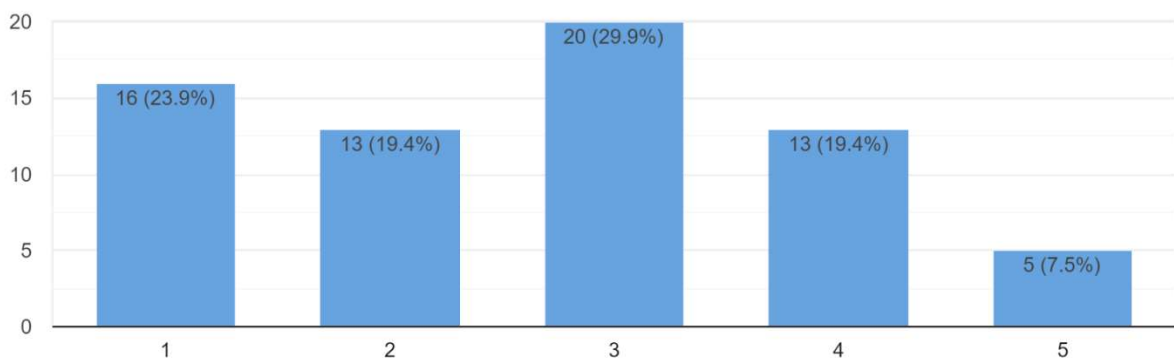


Chart 16. Sources of income



The chart given below is presenting the response on the question to rate the experience in leading fundraising campaigns to donors and general public. High dispersion of results was recorded, meaning that **clubs have different extent of experience in fundraising activities**. Considering that organizations are interested in taking part in more activities, which will require certain financial burden, building strong relationship with donors and sponsors in highly significant. Comprehensive activities, such as, improvement of transparent communication skills, planning, targeting, visibility, and more, can be vital for good sponsorship relation.

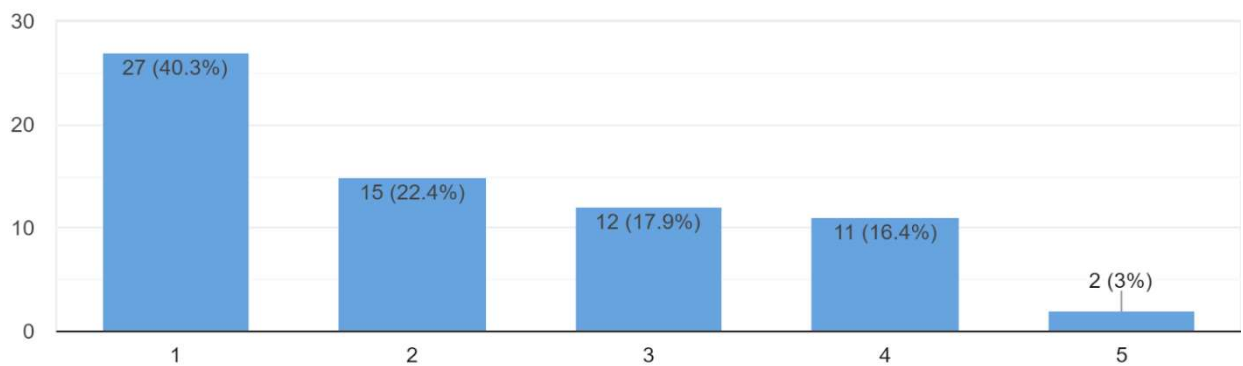
Chart 17. Experience in fundraising



After rating the fundraising experience and practices, we evaluated more specific segment of external funding. Grant management, and especially EU funding, can be a great strategy for scaling up club's activities to the international environment. However, it requires specific knowledge, established partnerships and a lot of dedicated time. We learned that organizations have very low of knowledge base when it comes to these requirements. Nearly 2/3 of clubs are rating their experience with the lowest marks, 1 or 2.

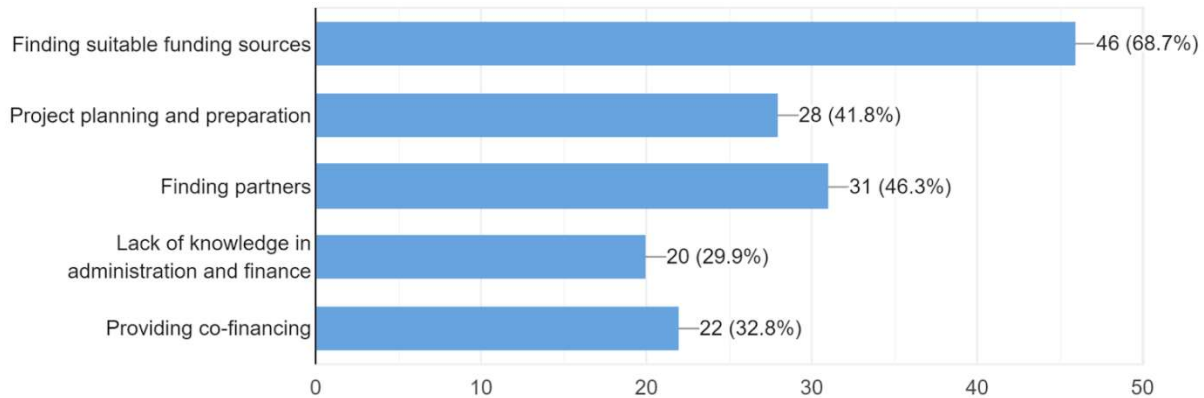


Chart 18. Experience in grant management



Diving deeper into the issue of EU funding, we discovered the problems that clubs encounter are many. Finding suitable funding sources is typical for less experienced organizations and in this case, more than 2/3 of respondents are influenced by it. Nearly 50% of clubs considers the process of finding partners as very demanding, which is also typical for organizations that do not have established strong base of partners.

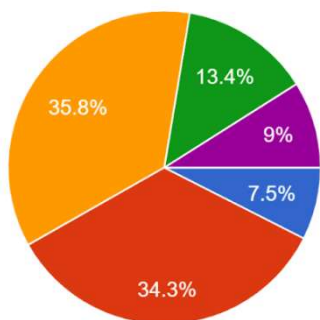
Chart 19. Problems with the process of grant receiving and management



To conclude to given set of question related to financial resources, we aim to discover the true gap in the activities that could not be performed. Therefore, the following questions have been distributed “How often you had to quit an idea for introducing an activity or event due to the lack of finance?” It is clear that clubs do have problems in providing more than their basic activities. More than one third of clubs had to quit some ideas very often, while another third of respondents sometimes had to give up ideas due to the lack of finance. It can be concluded that organizations do suffer from the lack of possibilities to receive additional funding and certain education in these topics would be extremely beneficial.



Chart 20. Lack of financial resources



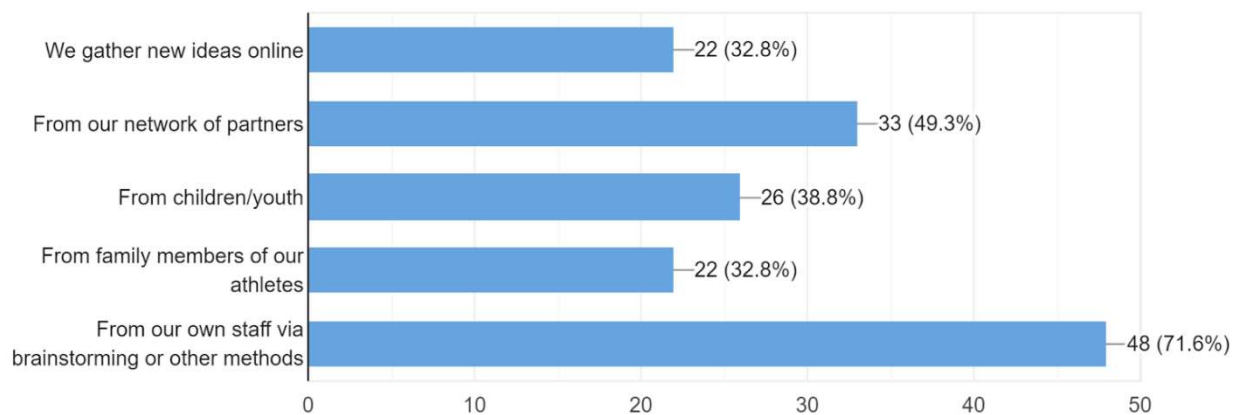
- Always
- Very Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never



The final part of the statistical research aimed to investigate the strategy clubs are deploying in cooperating with other organizations and/or individuals. We wanted to learn more about the motivation behind this cooperation, benefits, frequency, etc. Most important, this will give us better understanding and ideas on how this cooperation can be better utilizes in the future to benefit the FFS system.

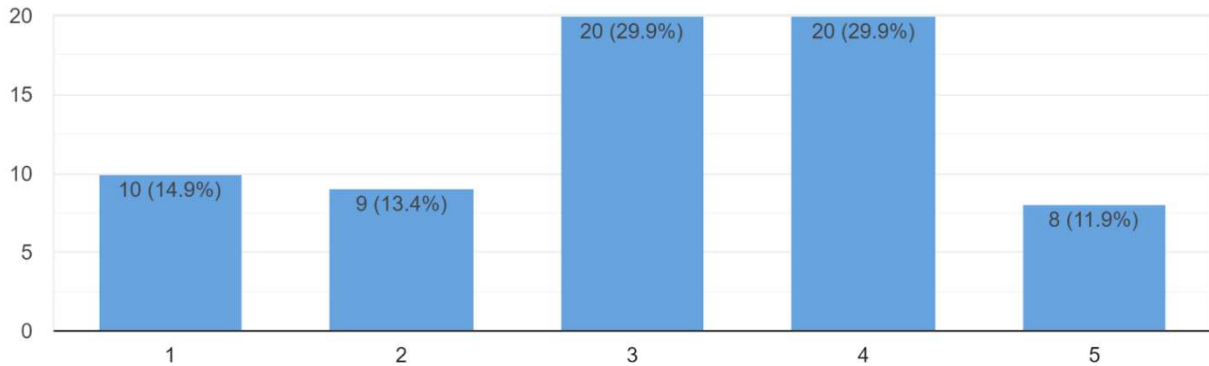
First, the respondents were questioned on the approach they have when designing new activities or events in their clubs. We can notice that clubs keep on using their own resources to the great extent. Almost 72% of respondents said they will mostly rely on the idea of their own staff. Networks or different partners are the source of new ideas for 50% of organizations. A bit over 1/3 of organizations will take into consideration the proposals from children, and the same comes for the percentage that will listen to the ideas of families.

Chart 21. Source of ideas when designing new activities and events



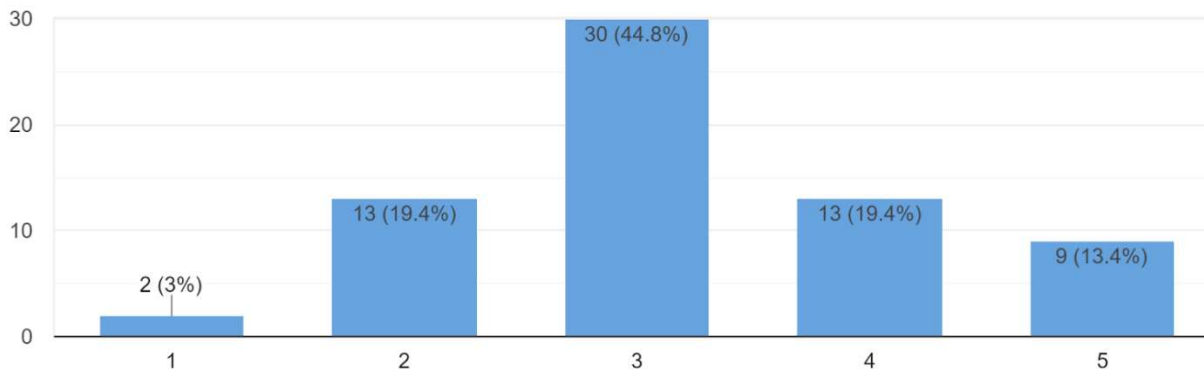
With our following question, we aimed at learning more about the participation of respondents in the umbrella organizations, such as association of sports clubs. Associations can offer many benefits, especially for smaller organizations. They are a suitable place for networking and gaining new knowledge and information. Also, organizations can act together towards the policy-makers or public and have their voice easily be heard. Many respondents recognize these benefits and rate their level of involvement in umbrella organization as moderate or high (30% in both groups). Only 12% of respondents are very active while the rest report very low interest.

Chart 22. Activity in an umbrella organization



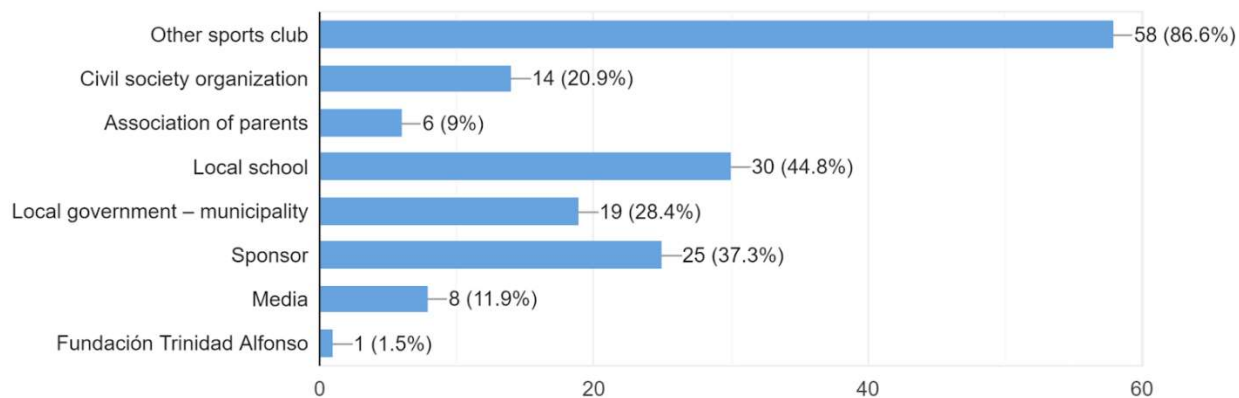
Next question is dedicated to the **extent of cooperation between organizations**, when it comes to working to provide new activities. Again, different practices are identified. Close to 50% of organizations sometimes work with others to prepare and provide additional activities. High degree of cooperation with others is reported by nearly 35% of clubs. The rest of them are showing only small or non-existing cooperation with other clubs or similar organizations.

Chart 23. Extent of cooperation between organizations



Even though the clubs who took part in this research have modest cooperation with others, is it interesting at this stage to discover what forms of organizations they do work with, in the field of providing extra-curricular activities. Until now, clubs have found common interest and worked together with other sports clubs (87%), local schools (45%), sponsors/donors (37%) and civil society organizations (20%).

Chart 24. Cooperation with various types of organizations



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. (NON)SYSTEMATIC APPROACH



One of the most positive aspects of the research is the discovery of the ambition and aspiration of target groups for the implementation of FFS. There is a strong interest that led them to take part in this research. They also expressed enthusiasm to participate in the following activities and to further develop their skills in this regard. However, the research has also revealed the biggest gap from the organizational aspect when it comes to the family-friendly activities. **This is the lack of a systematic approach in family sports.** We learned that clubs very rear have an all-round approach toward incorporating families into their work. Instead, family activities are experienced as events separate from their usual happenings. In order to truly become a family-friendly club, the change should take place horizontally, considering families in all segments of their work. **The current situation shows limited involvement in planning, higher inclusion in the phase of delivery and very low in the closing phase (reflection, debriefing and evaluation). All phases have strong possibilities for improvement in order to reach better quality in family-friendly activities.**

2. INCLUSIVE PLANNING

A well-written plan is half a work done – an expression with many applications. In this case, the planning process is often lagging behind due to many other demands in the functioning of clubs. Therefore, it is a perfect place to start the process of improving the capacities of clubs to implement FFS. Planning goes hand in hand with inclusivity and participation. **When approaching the planning process it is important to include all identified stakeholders (e.g. parents, sponsors, partners, CSOs, etc.) This is also a point where relationship management starts and continues on through the implementation of the activity plan.**



3. NFE METHODOLOGY



The research has proven that many clubs are unaware of the educational role they can play, or they do not have sufficient knowledge to implement educational activities. Presentation of good practice examples could serve as a first step to make them more aware of the many opportunities that might arise when bringing together sport and non-formal education. **Finally, certain attention must be dedicated to the education about the learning cycle approach and its segments. This also encompasses team-building, creating group dynamics and being able to lead the group toward the activity goal.**

4. FACILITATION OF DIALOGUE

Being able to communicate clearly and facilitate the dialogue between others is one the most important skills in youth work (including sport clubs, or non-formal education practitioners in general). The research has shown that practitioners in sport clubs are more confident when working with children, which does come naturally to them. However, slightly lower self-assessment was done in terms of the ability to work with adults, and especially to the work with those two groups combined. **Facilitation of dialogue between children and adults encompasses a set of skills, including the ability to guide the discussions, set up boundaries, make sure everyone understands their role and rules, etc.** This is a strong possibility for improvement through the guided course of action in the upcoming steps.



5. ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS



Organization of activities that involve larger numbers of participants is demanding. It requires good planning, time management, as well as certain event management skills. In this case, the degree to which those skills need to be acquired should not be too burdening, however, the **basics of event management should exist within the organization. This involves communication (internal and external), decision-making skills, risk awareness, etc.**

6. FUNDRAISING / SPONSORSHIP MANAGEMENT

Eventually, the organization of new activities has to be supported with financial resources. The analysis has shown that the great majority of clubs often had to quit some ideas due to the lack of financial resources. Getting more acquainted with the possibilities for additional funding is certainly beneficial. However, when it comes to small organizations with a limited number of staff, the most beneficial course of action would be to learn how to build partnerships in their near surrounding. This might include building and maintaining good relationships with local or regional private sponsors, municipalities, regional government, etc. **The increase in capacities to lead the fundraising campaigns towards these stakeholders would be very beneficial for the further development of clubs towards leading more sustainable family-friendly activities.**



7. NETWORKING



Last but not least, the importance of building and maintaining a good network of partners. This is especially important if we consider that most clubs are small organizations with limited human resources. Overcoming this limitation can be achieved when working with like-minded clubs on common goals. **This cooperation can boost creativity, as well as knowledge-sharing. Not only can partnership improve internal capacities, but it can also have a significant role in building stronger support network to the call for greater family involvement in the life of sport clubs.**