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SURVEY REPORT

Healthy and Fit Work Team (HFTeam) - 101133322

Erasmus+ Sport Programme - Sport Small Collaborative Partnership

<https://projecthfteam.com/>

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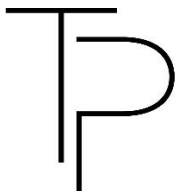
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INTRODUCTION

The project »Healthy and Fit Work Team« is focusing on the current changes to dynamic of work and the impact that it has on employee's health and the level of sport activities. In today's stressful times, we forget too many times that movement is a source of health. Since the Covid crisis employees started working from home on a much larger scale, which has led to and decrease in the level of physical activity of employees across all of the EU. Many employees suffer from a variety of pains due to prolonged sitting at a computer, standing work, repetitive movements etc. what causes many work-related illnesses. Many diseases can be avoided by regular daily exercise during work to strengthen the most exposed parts of the body. This project is focused on developing & promoting a sport program for employees with special needs and disabilities. The implementation of wellness programs and sport programs at work is rising in all EU countries, however there is a big lack of programs and adjustments for employees with special needs, who are often left out because they can't participate. We are also going to collect best practices on how to increase the level of sport activities while working from home and on location to complement the developed sport program.

This project consortium consists of sport clubs, NGOs and research institute to achieve the best synergies between sport experts. Professional experts from project partners' countries Slovenia, Croatia, Italy and Turkey will collaborate to achieve the project goals. The project started on 1.1.2024 and will last till 30.6.2025. To implement a successful project, the consortium partners were chosen based on their knowledge and experience from different areas of sport and work with people with disabilities. The project consortium consists of four partners, the project coordinator is Institute TREND-PRIMA, Maribor (Slovenia) and three partners: Udruga Sport VIV (Croatia), ÇEBDER (Turkey) and MSV (Italy).



METHODOLOGY

The report was realized during the project HFTeam. It was designed using qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the data, using guided and open questions to create the survey report and policy recommendations. Project partners collected 163 surveys that were filled in by employees with different disabilities and special needs from 4 European countries (Slovenia, Italy, Turkey and Croatia). Collected answers were as follow: Slovenia 44, Italy 47, Turkey 37 and Croatia 35.

This survey results present the findings of the employees with disabilities, attitudes and participation in physical activity and sports with special focus on their physical activities at work.

The measurable nature of sports and physical activity participation provides real insights for the project consortium to identify existing situation, expectations, barriers, needs and facilities in local environments for sport activities. Findings will be used to develop the sport program for employees with disabilities that can be performed at work during a short break, the program aims to encouraging active participation of employees and to create policy recommendations for local and national stakeholders.

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide a robust picture of attitudes, barriers, level of activity and solutions to participation in sport activity of employees with disabilities from partners' countries,
2. Identify current barriers to participation and potential levers for change,
3. Determine the employees' level of physical activities in 4 partner countries (Slovenia, Italy, Turkey and Croatia),
4. Develop policy recommendations that will improve the level of sport activity of employees with disabilities on local and national level,
5. Provide a consolidated data analysis with national research findings.

RESULTS

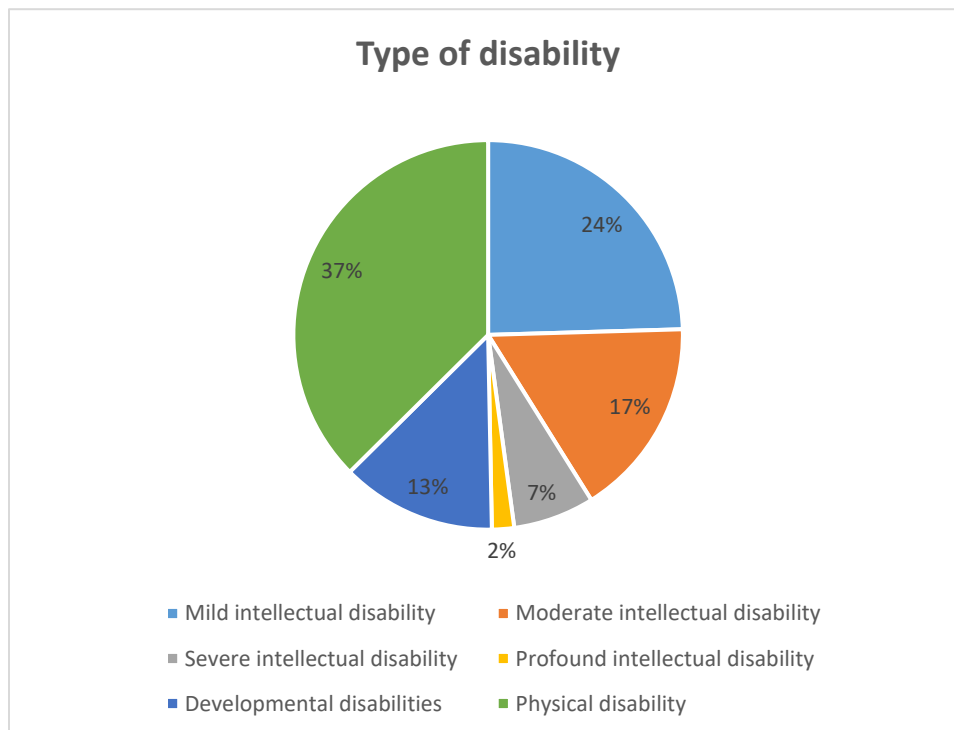
The results from the survey report are directly extracted from the collected answers and a correlation between them to notice particularities from different countries and participants. While a small sample size limits the generalizability of the findings to the entire population in EU, it can still provide valuable insights into the specific characteristics. By including participants from multiple countries, even if it's a small sample, we can conduct comparative analyses to identify similarities and differences across different contexts. The survey results will be used to present an overview of the sport condition for employees with disabilities and special needs, so it can help us to improve the existing policies, barriers and methods in regard to sport activities.

The created report policy recommendations are structured with the main goal of increasing the level of physical activity of sedentary employees with disabilities. So that they reach the WHO recommended weekly physical activity level. The WHO recommends that people with disabilities:

- should do at least 150–300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity.
- or at least 75–150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity; or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity throughout the week
- should also do muscle-strengthening activities at moderate or greater intensity that involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week, as these provide additional health benefits.
- As part of their weekly physical activity, older adults should do varied multicomponent physical activity that emphasizes functional balance and strength training at moderate or greater intensity, on 3 or more days a week, to enhance functional capacity and to prevent falls.
- may increase moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity to more than 300 minutes; or do more than 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity; or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity throughout the week for additional health benefits.

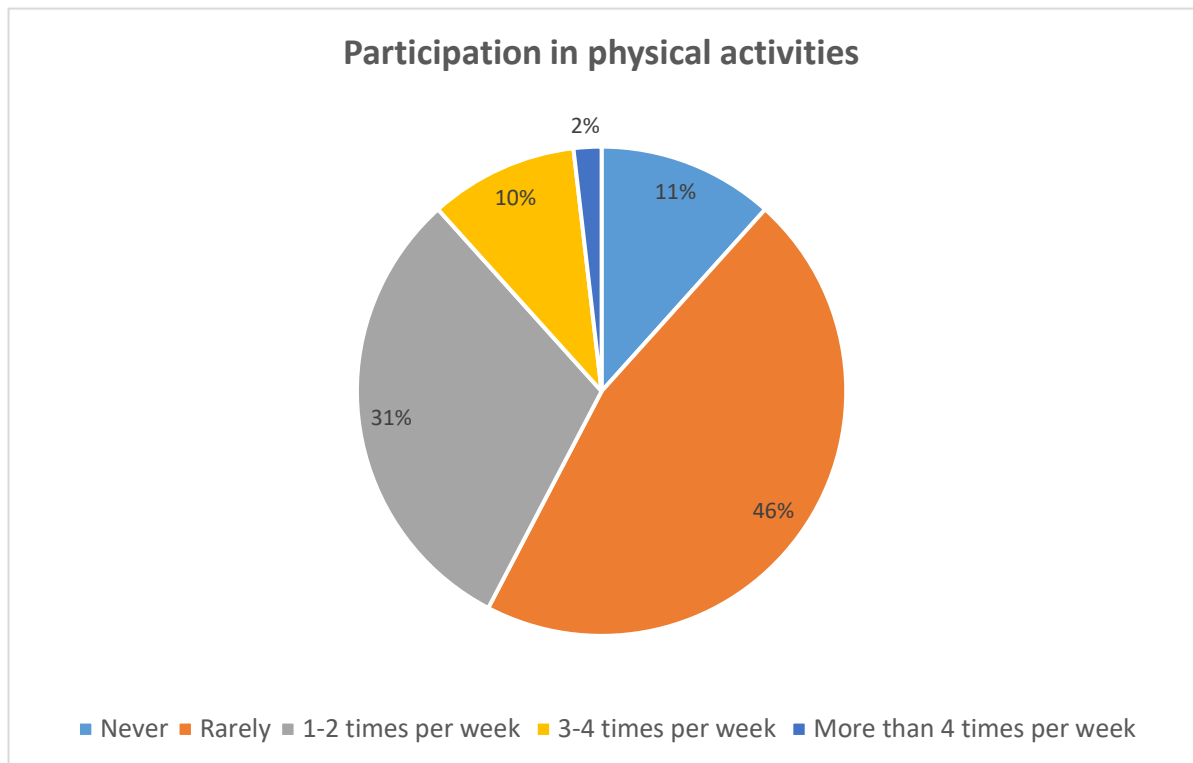
BASIC INFORMATION

During the research we collected surveys from employees with disabilities and special needs in which we asked about basic information such as their age and gender, the environment that they work. The results show that only 4% of respondents were above 65, 10% of respondents were between the age of 51 and 65, 23% of respondents were between the age of 41 and 50, 25% of respondents were between the age of 31 and 40, and 38% were between the age of 18 and 30. The results also show that 51% of respondents were men and 49% were women. The participants were also asked about their work environment, where 60% were working in an urban environment and 40% in a rural environment. We were also interested in the type of disability of participants to better analyze their accessibility to sport activity, 24% head mild intellectual disability, 17% moderate intellectual disability, 7% severe intellectual disability, 2% profound intellectual disability, 13% developmental disabilities and 37% physical disability.



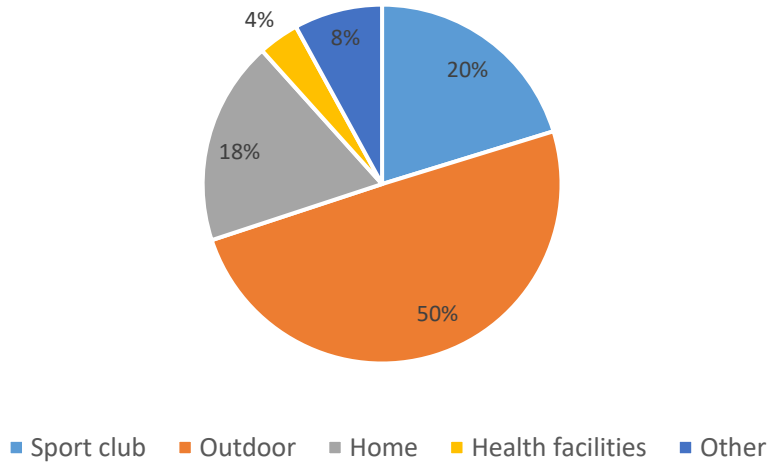
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OF EMPLOYEES

One of the most important aspects of this survey report was to analyze the level of sport activity of employees with disabilities and special needs. For this purpose, we asked the participants how often they participate in physical activities. From the collected responses, we can see that 2% participate more than 4 times per week, 10% participate 3 - 4 times per week, 31% participate 1 – 2 times per week, 46% participate rarely in sport activities and 11% never participates in sport activities. We see that only 12% are active more than 3 times per week and 88% are active rarely or never.



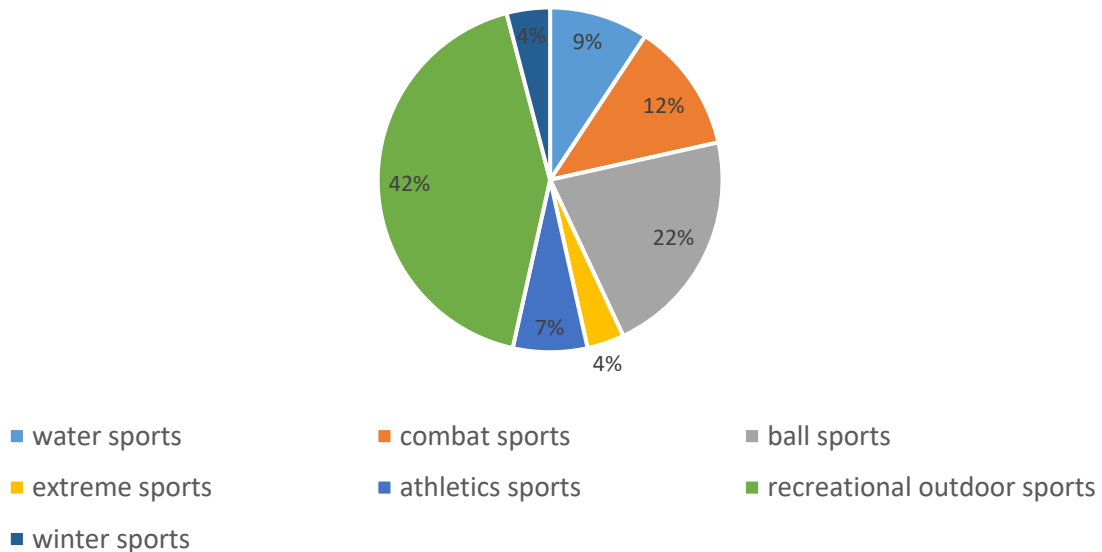
Participants were also asked where they get the most exercise in the week. The results show that the majority is mostly active outdoor with 50%, sport clubs 20%, home 18%, health facilities 4% and other 8%.

Most exercise

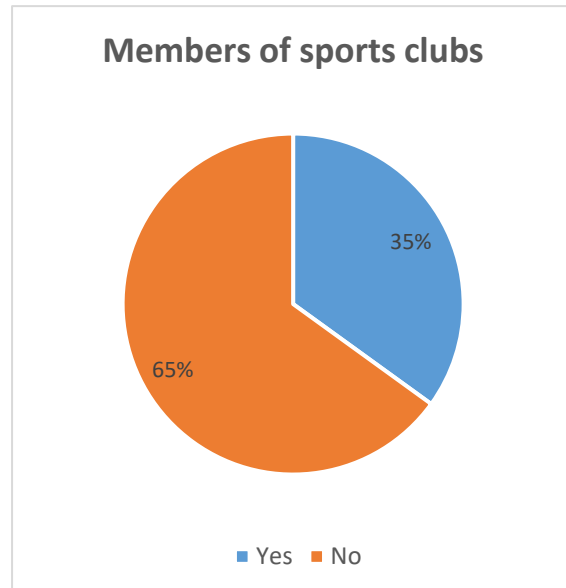
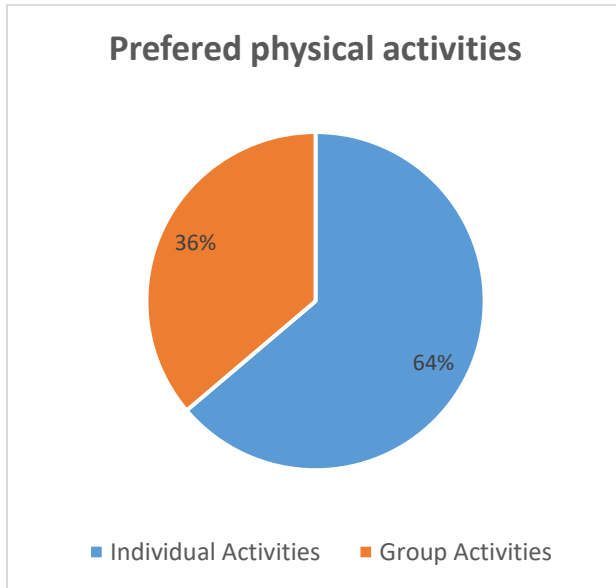


The consortium was also interested in what sport activities employees with disabilities and special needs are participating in. The purpose of this question was to tailor sport activities and exercises to meet the people’s needs. The results indicate that 42% participate in recreational outdoor sports (cycling, hiking, cross country running, bocce, etc), 22% in ball sports (volleyball, basketball, handball, football, tennis etc), 12% in combat sports (karate, taekwondo, judo, boxing, wrestling etc), 9% in water sports (swimming, waterpolo, diving, freediving, artistic swimming), 7% in athletics sports (running, long jump, discus throw, javelin throw, etc) and 4% in extreme sports (rock climbing, slacking, paragliding, kitesurfing, windsurfing, etc).

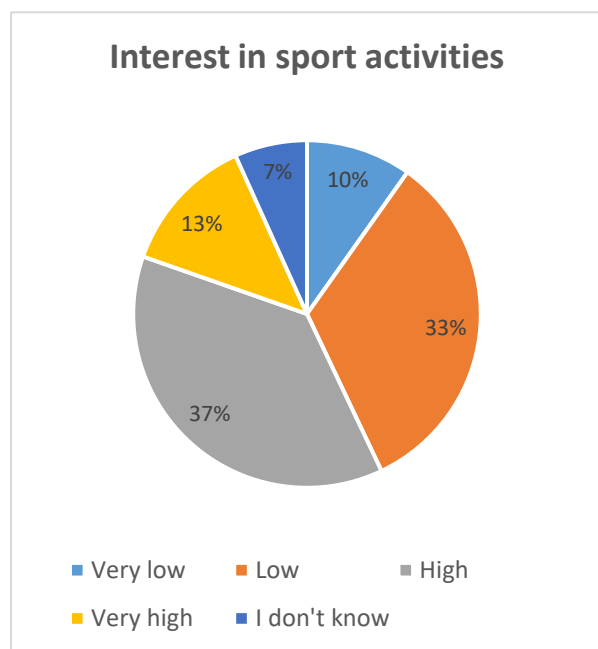
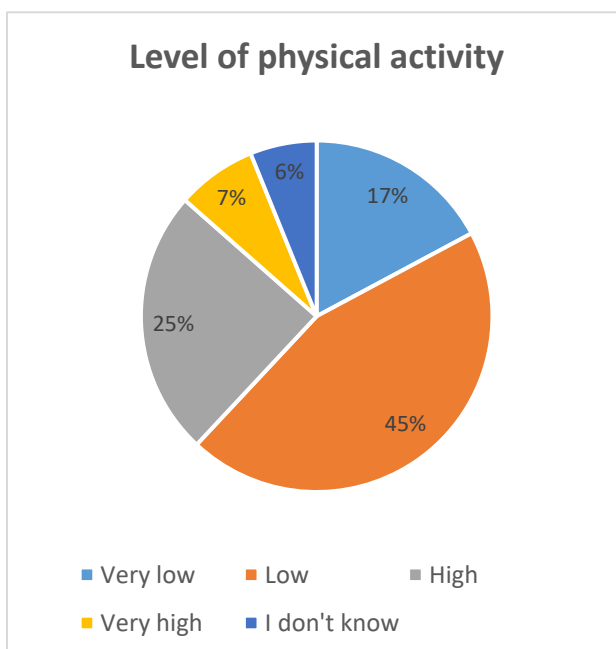
Sport activities participants participate in



Participants were also asked about the type of physical activity that they prefer. The participants indicated that 64% preferred individual activities and 36% preferred group activities. We were also interested if the participants were members of sport clubs, the results show that only 35% are members of sport clubs and 65% are not members of sport clubs.



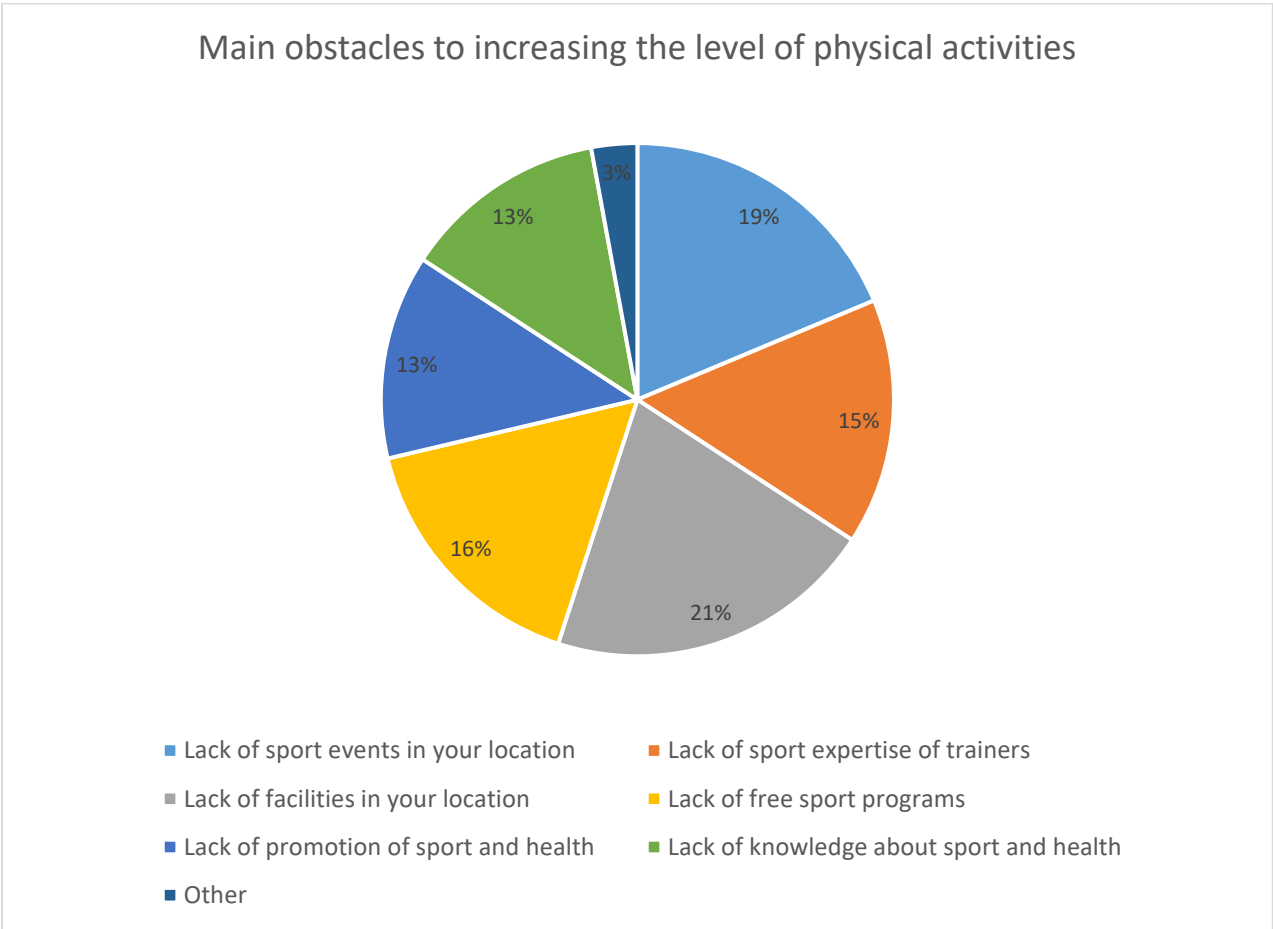
Other very important questions addressed the level of physical activity and interest of participants in engaging in sport activities. The results show that only 32% of participants had a high or very high level of physical activity and 62% had a low or very low level of physical activity. The consortium was also interested in the interest of employees with disabilities in participation in physical activity, the results indicate that 43% have very low or low interest and 50% high or very high interest.



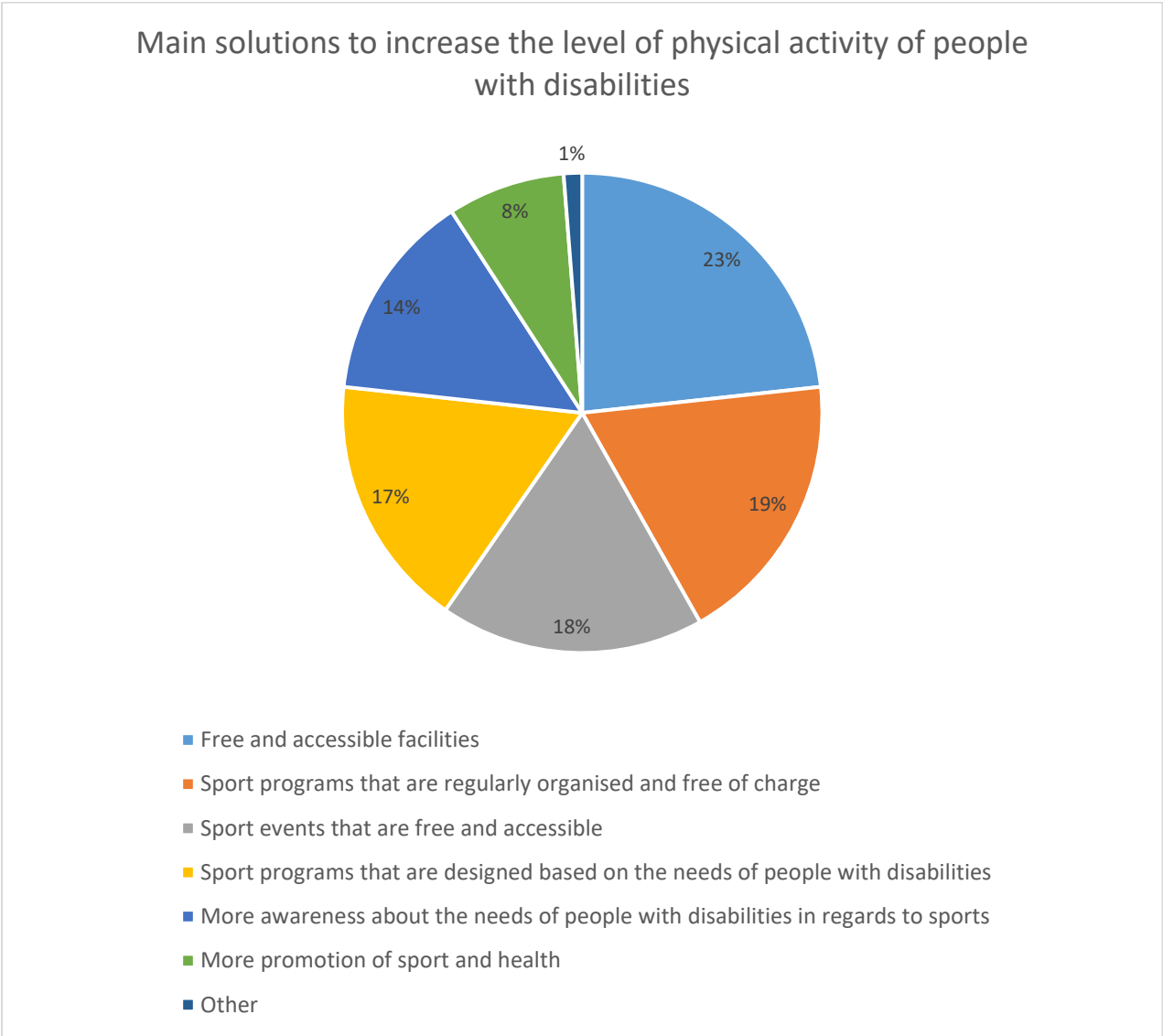
The consortium was also interested in the participants' attitudes to explore new sports. The results show that the participants were very interested in exploring new sports, 55% were very high or high and only 37% were not interested in new sports.

BARRIERS TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The main objectives of the project HFTeam is to increase the level of physical activity of employees with disabilities. During the project the consortium will develop a custom sport program that will be performed at work during a short break, the other project activities will be designed to promote sports to people with disabilities. For this purpose, we asked the survey participants what are the main obstacles to increasing the level of physical activities of sedentary employees with disabilities. The results show that the two main obstacles were a lack of facilities and lack of sport events.

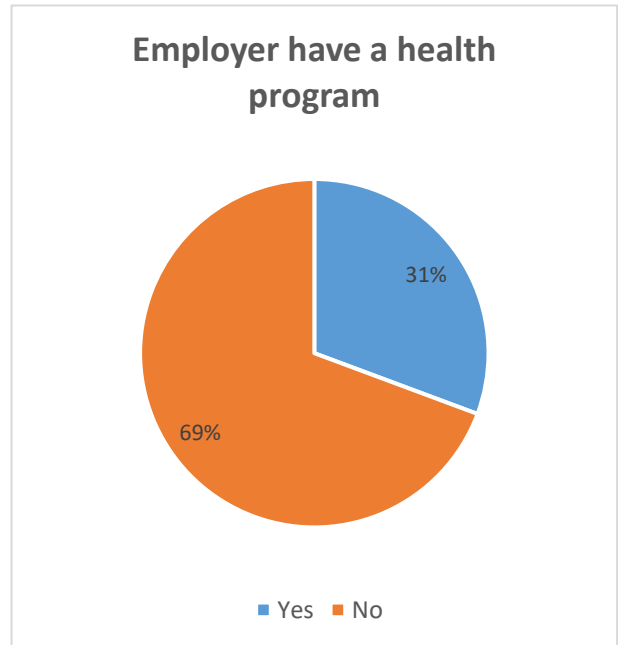
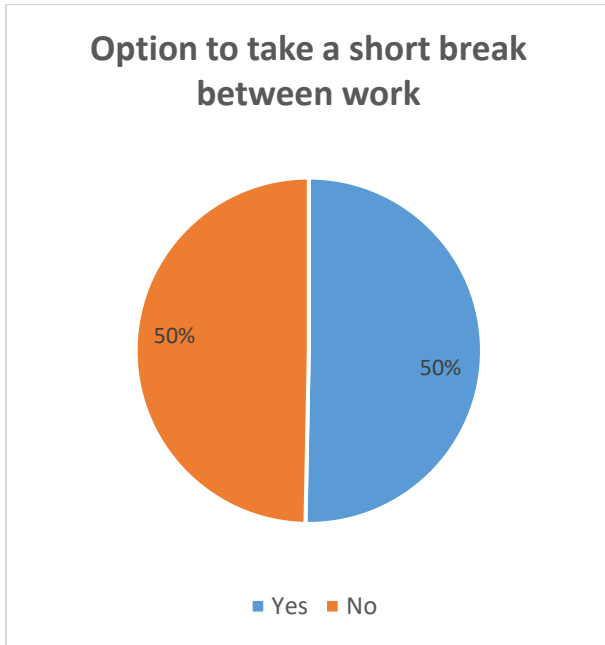


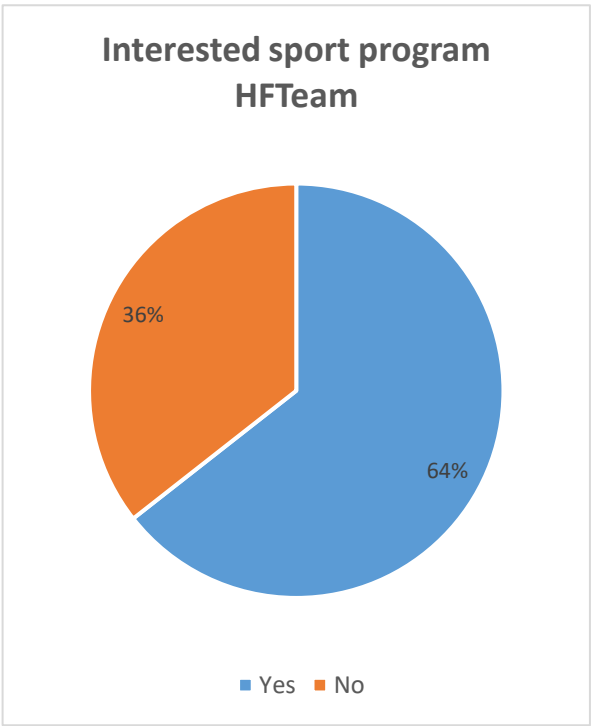
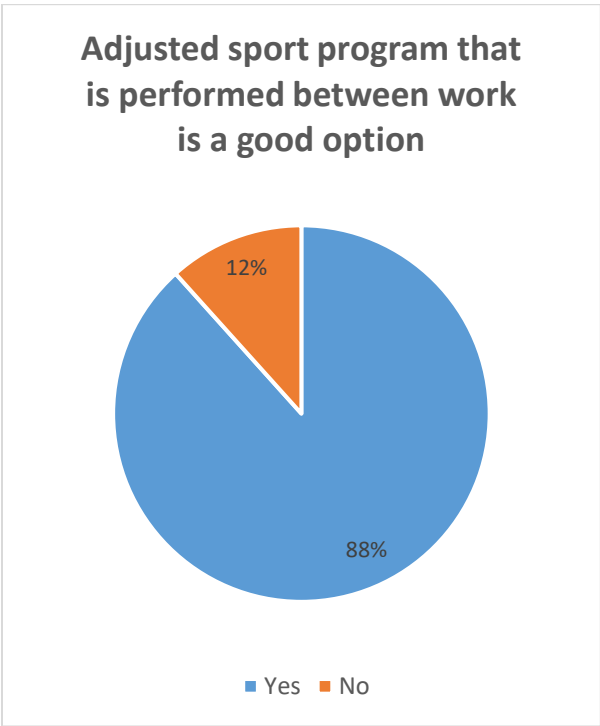
The participants were also asked what they believe are the main solutions to increase the level of physical activity of people with disabilities. The participants indicated that the most popular solutions would be more free and accessible facilities.



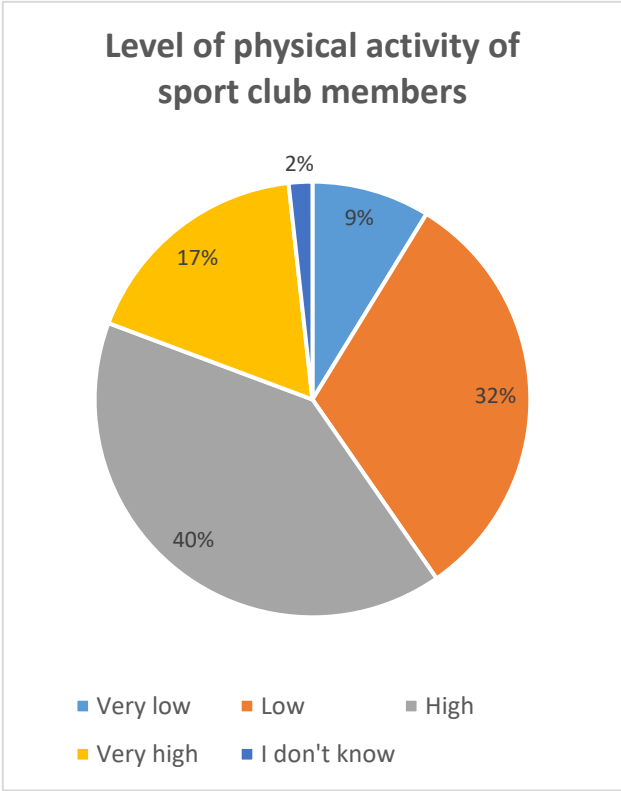
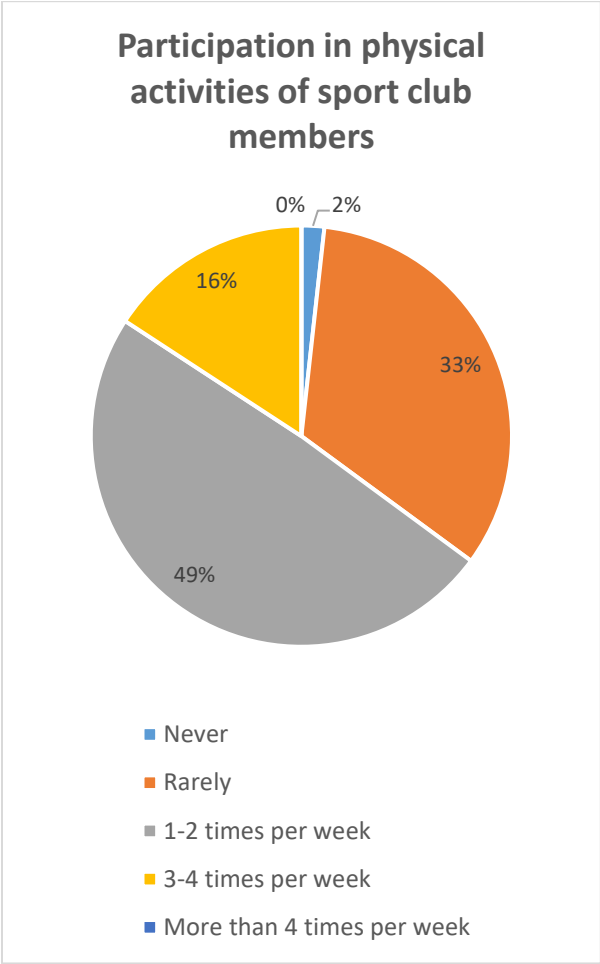
Other questions that the consortium was interested in were related to the sport activity that can be performed at work or on the way to work and the attitudes of employers to sport activity and health programs that they offer to their employees. Survey participants were asked if they have an option to take a short break between work to perform a set of exercises, 50% can't take a break and 50% can take a break. The consortium was also interested if employers have a health program that encourages short exercise between work and offers the attendance of sport events,

the results show that only 31% of employers offer a health program. Participants were also asked if an adjusted sport program that is performed between work is a good option to motivate sedentary employees with disabilities for physical activity, they indicated that this would be a great option for 88% of participants. We also asked the participants if they would be interested in knowing more about the adjusted sport program and best practices for sedentary employees with disabilities from the project HFTeam. The results show that 64% are interested in the FHTeam sport program.





To better understand the data the consortium analyzed the correlations from the responses of participants that were members of sport clubs to the remaining data and the responses of participants whose employers offer a health program to other data. The results for the participants who were members of sport clubs show that they are more physically active with 65% who participate in physical activities at least 1 – 2 times per week. Also, the level physical activity of sport club members was much higher compared to other participants with 57% having a high or very high level.



The consortium also analyzed the responses of employees whose employers offer a health program and give them the option to take a short break for a sport program. The results show that these respondents were more likely to participate in physical activities compared to other participants with 46% being active at least 1-2 per week compared to 43% of other participants. Also, their level of physical activity was higher with 52% percent compared to only 33% of other participants.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this survey was to provide a robust picture of attitudes, barriers, level of activity and solutions to participation in sport activity of people with disabilities and special needs with special focus on those who also perform sedentary work from partners' countries. Survey results show many positive aspects in regards of sport activity of sedentary employees that are in line with the WHO recommendations, but also indicate that there is a lot to improve to address the barriers to participation in sport activity.

Participants' responses indicate that only 43% are active more than 1-2 times per week and 57% are active rarely or never. We were also interested in the level of physical activities of the employees. Results show that only 7% are very high, 25% are high, 45% are low and 17% very low. Here we see that 62% have a low or very low level of physical activity. The results of both questions show the need to increase the participation of people with disabilities in regular weekly sport activities.

Participation in sport activities and the level of sport activity of employees is very connected to their inclusion in sport clubs. This was the reason that the consortium was also interested in the percentage of people that are members of sport clubs. Our survey participants indicated that 35% were members of sport clubs.

We can establish that the connection with local sport clubs is very important to increase participation in sport activities. The significance of connection between local sport organizations and the community is very important to achieve the goal of increasing the level of physical activity of people with disabilities.

The consortium also analyzed the correlation between the participation in sport and level of physical activity of participants whose employers head a health program and enabled short sport breaks for employees. The results show that these employees were more likely to participate in physical activities compared to other participants with 46% being active at least 1-2 per week compared to 43% of other participants. Also, their level of physical activity was higher with 52% percent compared to only 33% of other participants. These results show how important is the awareness of employers about health and sport. They can greatly increase the health of their employees by offering a health program and enable short sport breaks.

Participants indicated that there are many different obstacles to increasing the level of sport activity of employees. The most important was the lack of free and accessible facilities and sport events that are free and accessible. To address all the mentioned problems and obstacles above, we can see how important the engagement of the community is, to acknowledge the topic of sport for people with disabilities. For this purpose, we created policy recommendations that can be used by national, local stakeholders and organizations who work with people with disabilities in order to improve their level of sport activity.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Health and sport program for employees.** Implementing policies such as supporting health and sport programs in companies may increase physical activity levels of employees with disabilities through improved quality and quantity of physical activity at work. Minimum 150–300 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week to reach one of the WHO physical activity recommendations.
2. **Urban design, environmental and transport that is accessible.** Implementing policies that enable planning urban design that includes parks and other green spaces that are accessible and that enable sport activities. Urban design should also be planned so that it is accessible for all and that it enables an active way to travel to work with a bicycle, walking or bus.
3. **Free and accessible sport facilities.** Implementation of policies and procedures that support the development of sport facilities in areas with low access to sport facilities is one of the biggest obstacles to increasing the level of physical activity of people with disabilities. Policies that support development of new sport facilities are crucial to enable access and improve equality.
4. **Free and accessible sport events.** Implementation of policies that support organizations by organizing sport events and regular sport activities is very beneficial in enabling access to sport activities. Policies should offer financial or material support to organizations that are able to implement sport events that should be accessible and inclusive for all participants.

APPENDIX I: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your country of residence?

Slovenia

Croatia

Italy

Turkey

Other

2. Age

Between 18 and 30

Between 31 and 40

Between 41 and 50

Between 51 and 65

65+

3. Gender

Male

Female

Other

4. In what type of environment do you work?

Rural

Urban

6. What type of disability do you have?

Mild intellectual disability

Moderate intellectual disability

Severe intellectual disability

Profound intellectual disability

Developmental disabilities

Physical disability

7. How often do you participate in physical activities?

Never

Rarely

1-2 times per week

3-4 times per week

More than 4 times per week

8. In which places do you get the most exercise in the week?

Sport club

Outdoor

Home

Health facilities

Other

9. What sport activities are you participating?

- water sports (swimming, waterpolo, diving, freediving, artistic swimming)
- combat sports (karate, taekwondo, judo, boxing, wrestling etc)
- ball sports (volleyball, basketball, handball, football, tennis etc)
- extreme sports (rock climbing, slacking, paragliding, kitesurfing, windsurfing, etc)
- athletics sports (running, long jump, discus throw, javelin throw, etc)
- recreational outdoor sports (cycling, hiking, cross country running, bocce, etc)
- winter sports (skiing, snowboarding, cross country skiing, ski jumps, etc)

10. What type of physical activities do you prefer?

- Individual Activities
- Group Activities

11. Are you a member of sports clubs?

- Yes
- No

12. How would you rate your level of physical activity?

- Very low
- Low
- High
- Very high
- I don't know

13. How would you rate your interest in participating in sport activities?

- Very low
- Low
- High
- Very high
- I don't know

14. How would you rate your interest in exploring new sports activities?

- Very low
- Low
- High
- Very high
- I don't know

15. What do you think are the main obstacles to increasing the level of physical activities of sedentary employees with disabilities (multiple answers)?

- Lack of sport events in your location
- Lack of sport expertise of trainers with regards to the needs of people with disabilities
- Lack of facilities in your location
- Lack of free sport programs for people with disabilities in sport clubs
- Lack of promotion of sport and health
- Lack of knowledge about sport and health
- Other

16. What do you believe are the main solutions to increase the level of physical activity of people with disabilities (multiple answers)?

- Free and accessible facilities
- Sport programs that are regularly organised and free of charge
- Sport events that are free and accessible
- Sport programs that are designed based on the needs of people with disabilities
- More awareness about the needs of people with disabilities in regards to sports
- More promotion of sport and health
- Other

17. Do you have the option to take a short break between work to perform a set of exercises?

- Yes
- No

17. Does your employer have a health program that encourages short exercise between work and offers the attendance of sport events?

- Yes
- No

17. Do you think that an adjusted sport program that is performed between work is a good option to motivate sedentary employees with disabilities for physical activity?

- Yes
- No

18. What do you think should be done to increase the level of physical activity of sedentary employees with disabilities?

19. Would you be interested in knowing more about the adjusted sport program and best practices for sedentary employees with disabilities from the project HFTeam?

Yes

No

20. If yes please provide us with your contact information (e-mail address):