



PILOT PROGRAM SOFIA EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF SPORT



MAKING WOMEN
MORE ACTIVE WITH A
CHILD-FRIENDLY APPROACH

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INTRODUCTION

Sofia, the Bulgarian capital, has exceptional geographic features such as the Vitosha Mountain, just on the outskirts of Sofia, and numerous green spaces (parks and forests). Being a city with a longstanding tradition of sports promotion, Sofia has succeeded in encouraging sports, knowing that the practice of sports is a healthy habit, as well as an integrating force for its citizens and an optimal way to occupy their free time. Over the years, we have materialized this commitment by building a network of modern sporting installations and spaces for public use, including spaces for the handicapped.

The Sports Movement and the ideals that guide it have been close to the heart of generations of women in Sofia and their preservation is one of the main tasks of the Sofia City Council. The aim of Sofia2018 is to help strengthen the sports spirit of the young generation, making it more active in engaging in sports, building on national traditions and fostering a legacy to embrace the future.

In order to ensure women participation in sport and to enhance Sofia's image as a city, which is inclusive, and gender neutral, Sofia European Capital of Sport took part to the SWUP, the EU-funded project aiming at increasing women's practice of outdoor physical activities in urban spaces. Based on several studies and surveys, both local and international, a pilot program based on a child-friendly approach was designed to make women more active.

Making women more active with a Child-friendly approach includes actions, which aim at making it easier for women of Sofia to participate in various types of sporting events, which are part of Sofia European Capital of Sport program. The learning deriving from the implementation of pilot activities will be used to continue improve our strategies to encourage women's participation in sport.

We are convinced that this initiative will transform and inspire the lives of women in Sofia, creating benefit for present generations and a modern heritage for generations to come.

for women involvement considering that Sport chapter represents an absolute priority. The implementation of the Pilot Program will take into account the involvement of all these structures, will unify the human resources, and will generate a structure, SWUP SUS RAMNICUL CLUB, centered on women involvement in mass sports.

WHY SOFIA NEEDS THIS PILOT PROGRAMME TO BE IMPLEMENTED?

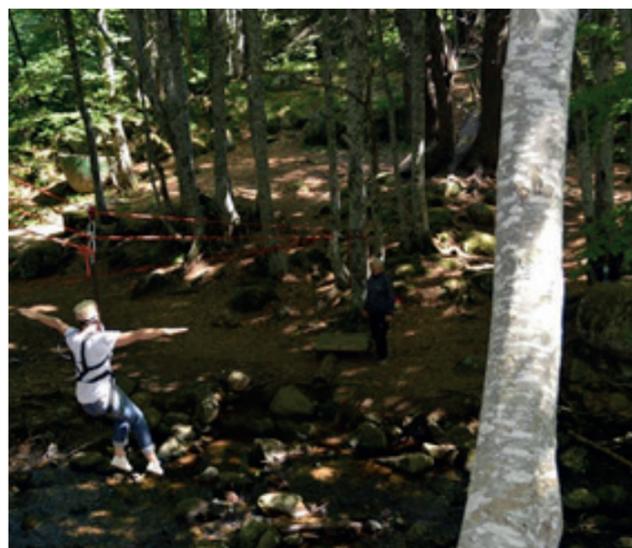
During the project we implemented a survey in which we asked the women of Sofia who participated in our events information about the barriers and motivations to do outdoor sports. About 100 women were included in the sample and 50% of the respondents answered to the questionnaires fully.

According to the results of the SW-UP survey, the main reasons indicated by women for not being active on a weekly basis was the lack of time due to work or study (47%) and family obligations (42%), followed by the lack of company to do sports (23%). Being outside were most often mentioned, with both placing within the top five motivations.

Based on these results, we understood that the objective is to improve the quality and quantity of the participation of women in sports by providing suitable conditions for them to come and participate with their children. More specifically, we identified childcare and a variety of outdoor activities with a focus on health and relaxation, including activities for groups, both inside and outside working hours, as key activities to make women more active.

For this reason, our pilot program will focus on the offer of childcare service in 10 out of 100 events of the capital, thus hoping to encourage women in taking part to the events and be more physically active.

In our program, we highlight the beauty of the Vitosha Mountain and three city parks as places for playing sports and being active. We created the slogan "CITY IN THE MOUNTAIN, MOUNTAIN IN THE CITY" which emphasizes how suitable our city is for doing outdoor sports.



The slopes of the Vitosha Mountain are conveniently situated only 17 km away from the center of Sofia. The mountain is a National Park and a space for leisure activities, sports and tourism. It is precisely in the Vitosha Mountain that we offered events with childcare service for those mothers participating to the event.

ABOUT THE PILOT PROGRAMME

What is this Pilot Programme about?

The pilot program aims at encouraging more women to engage in outdoor activities by providing a free-of-charge child-care service led by students. In this way, women will be able to bring their children with them and it will be easier for them to take part to the sport events and consequently increasing the amount of outdoor physical activity.

The people in charge of taking care of the children will be the students of National Sports Academy. Sofia 2018 signed an official contract with the Academy so that we can officially offer internships to the sports students in the 5th and 6th semesters. This document will allow students to apply for an internship with Sofia2018 and participate as volunteers in our events, in activities such as organizing a children's playground or being instructors in the events. This practice will be recognized for their curriculum.



This will ensure that children using the childcare service will be assisted by qualified students in physical education and sports, who will place tents and organize sporting activities for the kids in the timeframe of the event.

During the events with childcare service, we place a banner indicating, where the tent for childcare is. We placed a Tent where mothers can leave the kids belongings filling the form with the personal information of the mother and the child (name, telephone for emergency, age, the power of attorney on the child during the time of the event). Once the children are sent to their assigned area, the students will entertain them with games and physical activities according to their age.



In order to improve the tool and offer additional services in the future, in three from our ten events we will ask participating mothers for an assessment of the service and for their further needs.

The child-friendly approach

This initiative aims at making women's life easier and giving women a forum to support each other by doing sport together, exchanging views regarding child development and care and finding new friends.

Child-friendly care" includes the notion of "family-friendly", facilitating the interaction between kids and their mothers, facilitating contacts between the child and his or her mother.

After taking part in our events, the mothers are excited and tired. In the meantime, their kids being entertained become excited and tired too and most important - willing to come and play again. Therefore, this reaction becomes a strong impulse for the mothers to participate.



The following conditions must be met in order to achieve higher participation of women

Free time	Our volunteers taking care of the children
No cost	Free of charge sporting events
Instructors	Professional advice and motivation

The most important benefit resulting from the adoption of the child-friendly approach is to bring harmony and synergy between all the stakeholders – sports organizations or professional groups, including children and mothers themselves and to draw attention on the understanding of needs as a strategy to improve and expand the services for woman with children in the future.

Principles

Following principles is particularly relevant to the child-friendly approach:

- Participation

The level of women participation in our Program depends on our efforts to provide a child-friendly approach so that women can bring their children with them. The level of child participation depends also on their age. The younger the children, the harder it is for the mother to find time and a suitable childcare to participate in sports.

- Promotion

Sports promotion is “the process of enabling people to increase their level of participation”. It includes all actions that allow women and their children to become more involved in sports.

Target Group

Women with children between the ages of 2 and 10.

Action plan

In more than 90 events organizing under the initiative Sofia European Capital of Sports, we try to encourage woman participation providing suitable conditions (mobile changing rooms and toilets) for their involvement and at ten events child-friendly approach. In all those activities, the pilot program seeks to mobilize women of all ages, focusing on those with children, which can broaden the scope of involvement of women.

In the 10 following events, childcare service will be provided free of charge:

- 16-17 June: OM Yoga Show – in Borisova Gradina Park-outdoor open yoga session for women.
- 8July: Vitosha Summer Fest Sports Festival – at Momina Skala Chalet, Vitosha Mountain. Several thousands of mountain lovers gather near Momina Skala Chalet during Vitosha Summer Sports Fest. About 1200 people in total take part in the mountain running, mountain biking and mountaineering, there are many attractions with free wall climbing and descending by alpine trolley above Boyana River. The festival ends with many games, dances and mountain songs.

- 25 August: Vitosha Run – mountain biking – from National Palace of Culture (Sofia) to Cherni Vrah Peak (Vitosha Mountain). The climbing from the centre of Sofia to Cherni Vrah Peak for the third consecutive year is part of Sofia –
- 21-23September:ExtremeFest+DanceandHealthyFoodDay–inKnyazheskaGradinaPark For a few days the centre of Sofia turns into a huge sports ground for 22 disciplines. The Extreme Fest usually gathers around 10 000 participants and spectators to do play basketball, extreme disciplines, bungee, acrobatics and martial arts, wall climbing, bicycle test ride and longboard, free running, drift motor show, stunt and other sport activities.
- 23 September: Vitosha My Mountain – Mountain Running and Festival – from Boyana Residential Area to Aleko Chalet, Vitosha Mountain. This is a very popular mountain run that received many awards and prizes. It offers two distances: 16 km (men and women) and 3 km (children).
- 10 February: Family Snow Day – Winter Family Festival in Vitosha Mountain – Ofeliite site, Vitosha Mountain. Organizers from Sofia – European capital of Sport and Machirski Sport will delight over 1200 children and their parents with many family competitions, fun games, contests and quizzes.
- 14 April: Sofia Rides a Bicycle – Bike Procession and Sports Festival – from Aleksandar Nevski Square to South Park. The Bike Procession will merge with The Bike Carnival. More than a thousand bicycle riders are expected to gather in front of St. Aleksandar Nevski Cathedral Temple under the motto “Sofia Rides a Bicycle” and go to the South Park, where on a special stage the festival continues with Sports Festival. Sound platforms and young people in carnival clothes add colour to the procession.
- 13 April: 24 Hours Sport in Vitosha Mountain – 16 different sports
- 4 April: Practise Sport in Your City – Urban Zone – near Vasil Levski National Stadium. Participants will take part to 3x3 basketball, skateboarding, street BMX, roller skating, wall climbing, cross-country running, cycling and fencing – in different zones around Vasil Levski National Stadium.
- 2-3 June: Sofia Practises Sport – Borisova Gradina Park under Bratska Mogila. This is a sports festival with competitions in several sports, in the area in front of Bratska Mogila in Borisova Gradina Park. A lot of entertainments and contests for the people who love sport in the park will be carried out. It is organized for the second consecutive year with the help of Sofia – European Capital of Sport.

Involvement of participants and partners

In order to recruit more women to participate, we will pass through many of the already established channels that Sofia European Capital of Sport already put in place to communicate its events.

ACTION	What	Who
Communication	6 billboards with LCD screens and HD resolution will be placed in strategic parts of the capital. They will present extensive information for the project Sofia – European Capital of Sport, which will be shown at the request of those using the system	Sofia 2018
	The webpage of the initiative was developed and started in June 2015. The site hosts the whole information of the project with four main menus: - FOR SOFIA2018 - INFOCENTER - TOGETHER - CONTACTS In April our Facebook page. was launched. Now it has 3 000 followers, many of them uploaded their videos and photos.	Sofia 2018
	Infocenter We opened an Infocenter Sofia2018. Fully renovated, it is located at a busy crossroads with good visibility.	Sofia 2018

The following logo of Sofia European Capital of Sport will be used:



Time Frame

The duration of the activities is from 15.06.2018 to 03.06.2019

Expected results

With the implementation of the pilot program in Sofia we expect the participation of around five thousand women attending our sporting events in the Vitosha mountain and the city parks.

Activity	Expected women's participants	Expected total participants
16-17.2018 June: OM Yoga Show	90	90
8 July: Vitosha Summer Fest Sports Festival	350	800

25 August: Vitosha Run – mountain biking	250	700
21-23 September: Extreme Fest + Dance and Healthy Food Day	300	700
23 September: Vitosha My Mountain – Mountain Running and Festival	350	800
10 February.2019: Family Snow Day	350	700
14 April Sofia Rides a Bicycle -Bike Procession and Sports Festival	200	300
13 April: 24 Hours Sport in Vitosha Mountain – 16 kinds of sports	400	500
21 April: Practise Sport in Your City – Urban Zone	400	800
2-3 June: Sofia Practises Sport	300	400

As a result of women participation to these activities, we expect to:

1. Increase the participation of women in outdoors physical activity;
2. Promote awareness among women regarding the physical activities they can practice outdoors;
3. Challenging women to be more physically active outdoors with friends and partners.



