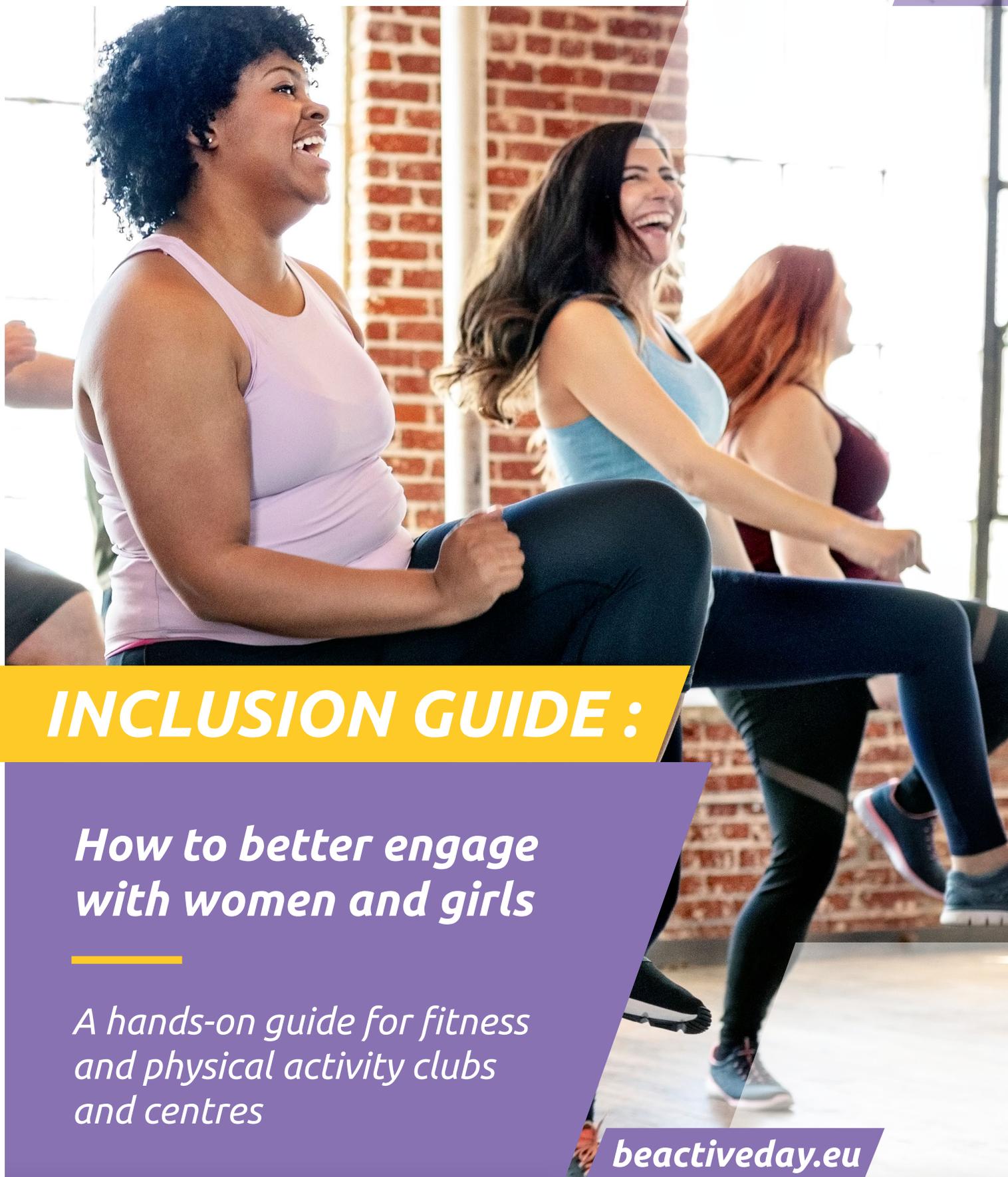


# #BEACTIVE DAY



## INCLUSION GUIDE :

*How to better engage  
with women and girls*

*A hands-on guide for fitness  
and physical activity clubs  
and centres*

[beactiveday.eu](https://beactiveday.eu)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....

This guide is developed as part of the **#BEACTIVE DAY** 2022 campaign, funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The content was developed by TAKT, NL Actief, and EuropeActive, with the support of the 2022 **#BEACTIVE DAY** partners. We would like to thank all involved in producing this final document.



## WEBSITE .....

Project:	<a href="https://europeactive.eu/projects/beactive-day-2022">europeactive.eu/projects/beactive-day-2022</a>
Europe:	<a href="https://beactiveday.eu">beactiveday.eu</a>
Bosnia-Herzegovina:	<a href="https://beactive.ba">beactive.ba</a>
Bulgaria:	<a href="https://beactiveday.bg">beactiveday.bg</a>
Czechia:	<a href="https://komorafitness.cz/beactive-day-2022">komorafitness.cz/beactive-day-2022</a>
Italy:	<a href="https://beactiveday.it">beactiveday.it</a>
Netherlands:	<a href="https://nlactief.nl/beactivedayclubs/?gf_protect_submission=1">nlactief.nl/beactivedayclubs/?gf_protect_submission=1</a>
North Macedonia:	<a href="https://takt.org.mk">takt.org.mk</a>
Slovenia:	<a href="https://slofitdan.si">slofitdan.si</a>
Ukraine:	<a href="https://ukrainian-active.org.ua/proekty/beactive-yevropeiskyi-tyzhden-sportu">ukrainian-active.org.ua/proekty/beactive-yevropeiskyi-tyzhden-sportu</a>



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# 01 INTRODUCTION

**This guide has been developed through the vision that every person, regardless of gender, ethnical, cultural or economic background, sexual orientation or gender identification, ability or disability has the right to participate in health-enhancing physical activity. This guide promotes the power of physical activity to bridge differences and to unite people, and strives to inspire new standards of inclusion in the sector.**

Women and girls unfortunately do not enjoy the same access and opportunities to fitness and physical activities, whether they be indoor or outdoor. The relevance and necessity of having readily available guides, that provide not only the status quo of unequal access to physical activity but also a hands-on approach to assist physical activity providers, has been stated by fitness and sport organisations and by public authorities countless times across the continent.

This document will, therefore, provide an overview of the current physical activity 'pandemic', explain how gender plays an essential role in this reality, and review common barriers and challenges women and girls face. The document will then offer a roadmap for fitness and physical activity providers to create more accessible and inclusive opportunities for the target group. Thirdly, it sheds light on successful initiatives and stories that seek to inspire a flurry of new, or strengthened, activities and programmes that will enable greater inclusion in physical activity for all. Finally, this guide paves the way for an annual campaigning platform that is sensitive to the needs and realities of all for better inclusion in physical activity, starting with that of women and girls. The guide offers specific focus on the project partner countries.

## 02 ABOUT THE 2022 #BEACTIVE DAY PROJECT

The **#BEACTIVE DAY** 2022 project is a 12-month initiative coordinated by EuropeActive and funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The Action includes 6 partners which are the national fitness associations of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czechia, Italy, the Netherlands, and Slovenia.

The **#BEACTIVE DAY** concept is based on EuropeActive's previous 'National Fitness Day' campaigns, which were successfully developed across 15 different European countries since 2017, proving that the core of this concept is a sustainable formula for success.

The **#BEACTIVE DAY** campaign materialises the vision of getting more people across Europe more active, and more often, and is designed to tackle the issue of increasing levels of physical inactivity through the core message of #BeActive. By fostering greater participation in physical activity events during the last week of September, the **#BEACTIVE DAY** campaign contributes directly to the continent's largest campaign

promoting sport and physical activity- the European Commission's annual European Week of Sport (EWoS).

As a proven flagship event, **#BEACTIVE DAY** intends to be the main annual celebration and contribution from the fitness and physical activity sector through coordinating national campaigns. By working under the umbrella of EWoS, which is already creating strong and natural connections, at European, national, and regional levels, it is already demonstrating considerable success.

**#BEACTIVE DAY** celebrates the fun of fitness and physical activity, and relies on implementing free events and activities that take place in hundreds of fitness and sport centres, parks, high streets, schools, universities, and workplaces and all for the benefit of anyone who wants to embrace being physically active for the day. In doing so, our campaign inspires individuals to move a bit more, and to better understand the benefits and importance of an active lifestyle.

# 03

## WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR ? WHAT DOES IT OFFER ?

*As part of EuropeActive's collective vision to get more people, more active, and more often across Europe, this document is developed under the framework of the 2022 #BEACTIVE DAY project.*

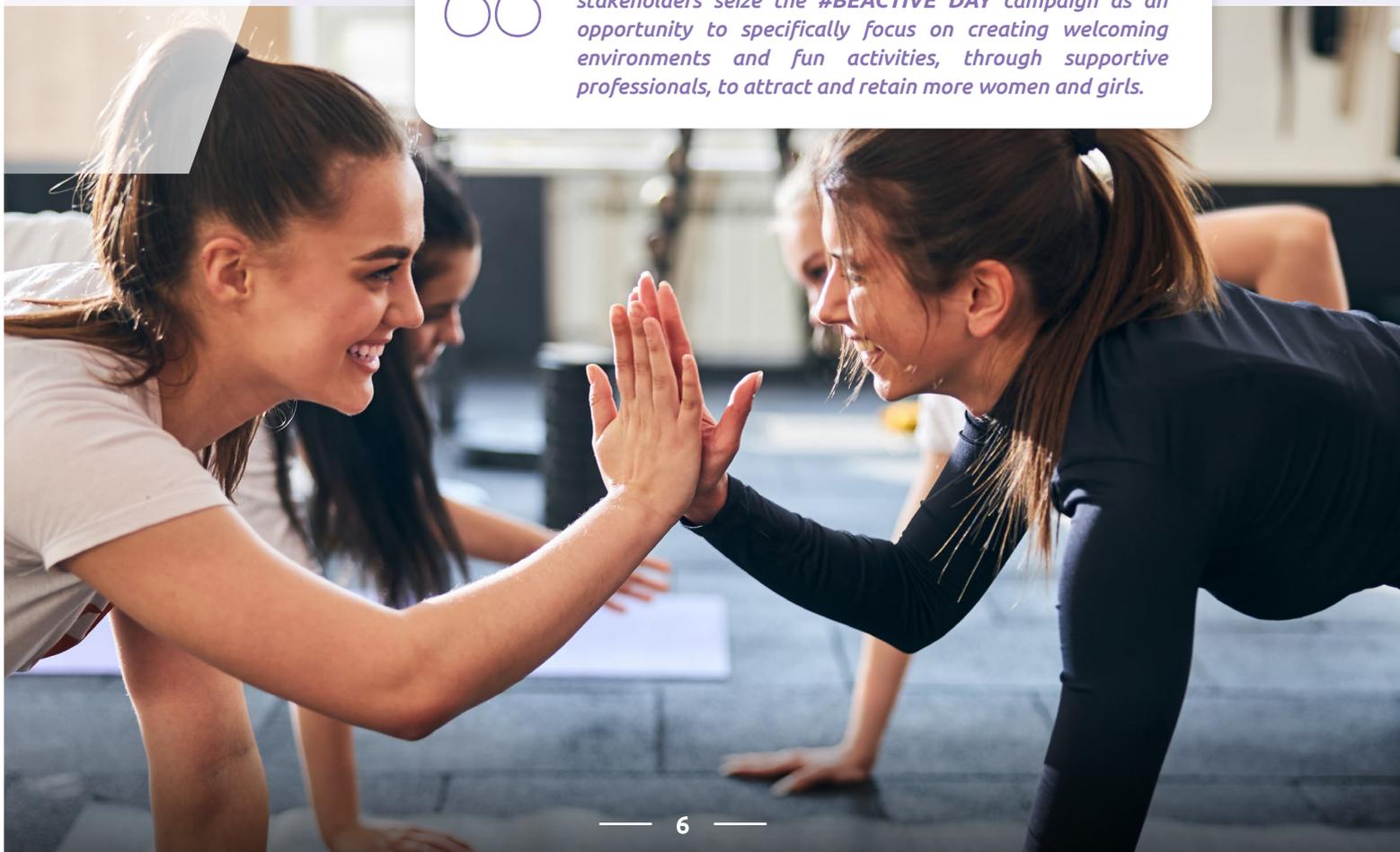
This guide is meant to support fitness and physical activity providers to successfully create and deliver activities, initiatives, programmes, and a general approach, which are best tailored to the needs (structural settings, timings, internalised challenges and barriers) and preferred activities of women and girls, as part of the **#BEACTIVE DAY** campaign. An inclusive lens should appeal to a broader audience and is of most help for organisational and strategic planning.

**With fitness and physical activity provider staff and management in mind, the guide offers :**

- A review of physical activity levels across Europe, broken down by age and gender
- An overview of common challenges and barriers that dissuade, discourage, or that prevent women and girls from being active
- A roadmap for action
- A step-by-step guide to creating a campaign
- Some country insights and best practices
- And a bibliography of resources to go further



*This guide proposes that fitness and physical activity stakeholders seize the #BEACTIVE DAY campaign as an opportunity to specifically focus on creating welcoming environments and fun activities, through supportive professionals, to attract and retain more women and girls.*



# 04 **PHYSICAL INACTIVITY & GENDER** STATUS QUO

## The reality of physical inactivity

The physical inactivity 'pandemic' is an unfortunate global reality which continues to worsen since 2001, and which contributes to at least 5 million deaths recorded annually. High-income countries record physical inactivity levels that are twice as high as low-income ones. Increased levels of physical inactivity have negative impacts on health systems, the environment, economic development, community well-being and quality of life. The drop in physical activity is partly correlated to sedentary behaviours during leisure time, time at work and at home, and to passive modes of transport.

**European countries are not spared from this dangerous trend, with :**

**46%**

*of Europeans never exercising or playing sport in 2017.*

**4%**

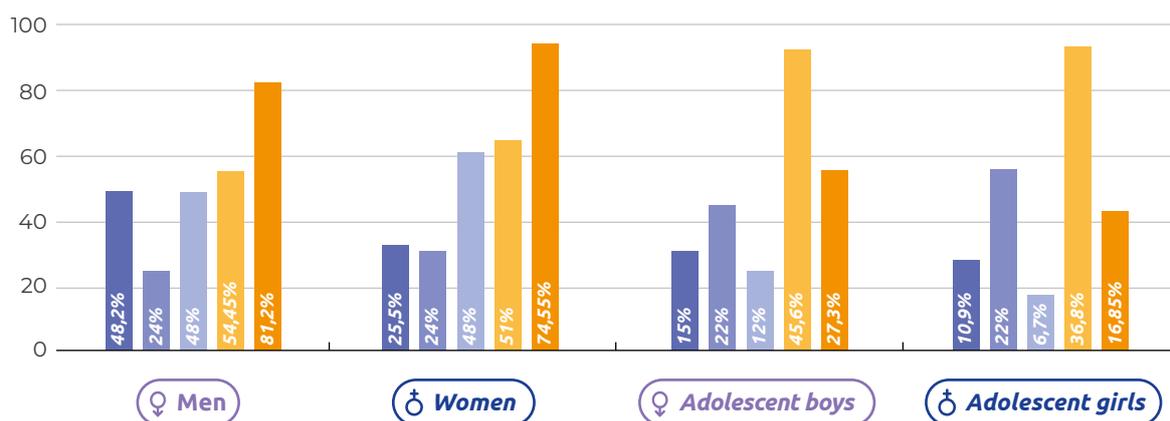
*increase in inactivity since 2014 (42%)  
Is in keeping with the trend since 2009 (39%)*

From a global perspective, WHO states that 1 in 4 adults and 3 in 4 adolescents (11-17 years) do not reach the physical activity recommendations.

Today, a vast amount of research proves regular physical activity provides broader benefits than improved over-all wellbeing, mental and physical health; and that it is directly correlated to preventing and managing noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular diseases, some cancers and type II diabetes.

While comparable data between Member States and countries of the continent remains to be implemented, WHO's 2021 physical activity factsheets provide us with the following indications of sufficient levels of physical activity per demographic groups, in our project's countries:

### Estimated prevalence of sufficient physical activity



*The most recent physical inactivity numbers available for Bosnia-Herzegovina date back to WHO's 2008 Nutrition, physical activity, and obesity factsheets, which recorded that 39.2% women and 31.5% men over 15 years old were estimated insufficiently active.*

- Bulgaria
- Czechia (\*per age group, not gendered)
- Italy (\*Not gendered)
- The Netherlands
- Slovenia

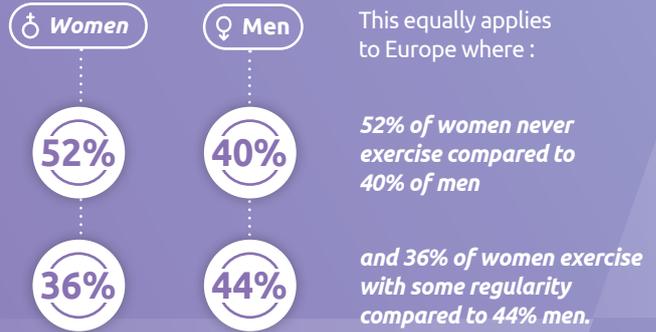
1 | Physical activity, WHO newsroom. 26 November 2020. <https://shorturl.at/hwBZ9>  
 2 | Eurobarometer 472 (2018); Eurobarometer 412 (2014); Eurobarometer 334 (2009).  
 3 | Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030, WHO, 2018. 6 <https://bit.ly/3H425GI>  
 4 | 2021 Physical Activity Factsheets for the European Union Member states in the WHO Europe Region. WHO, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3MCF429>  
 5 | Nutrition, physical Activity and Obesity, Bosnia and Herzegovina. WHO, 2013. <https://bit.ly/3frEFO>

## The Gender Gap

The above numbers highlight the necessity to consider physical activity levels beyond a 'one size-fits-all' approach, as age and gender play strong roles.

**Gender inequality is defined as the 'Legal, social and cultural situation in which sex and/or gender determine different rights and dignity for women and men, which are reflected in their unequal access to or enjoyment of rights, as well as the assumption of stereotyped social and cultural roles.'**

Women and girls are consistently less active than their counterparts. The Netherlands and Slovenia present more gender balanced percentages of physical activity, but the younger generation of adolescents confirms these countries are also affected by sedentary trends. Globally, 1 in 3 women do not do enough physical activity to stay healthy, in comparison to 1 in 4 men.



*The gender gap is strongest among younger age groups (15-24) where 33% of women never exercise compared to 15% of men.*

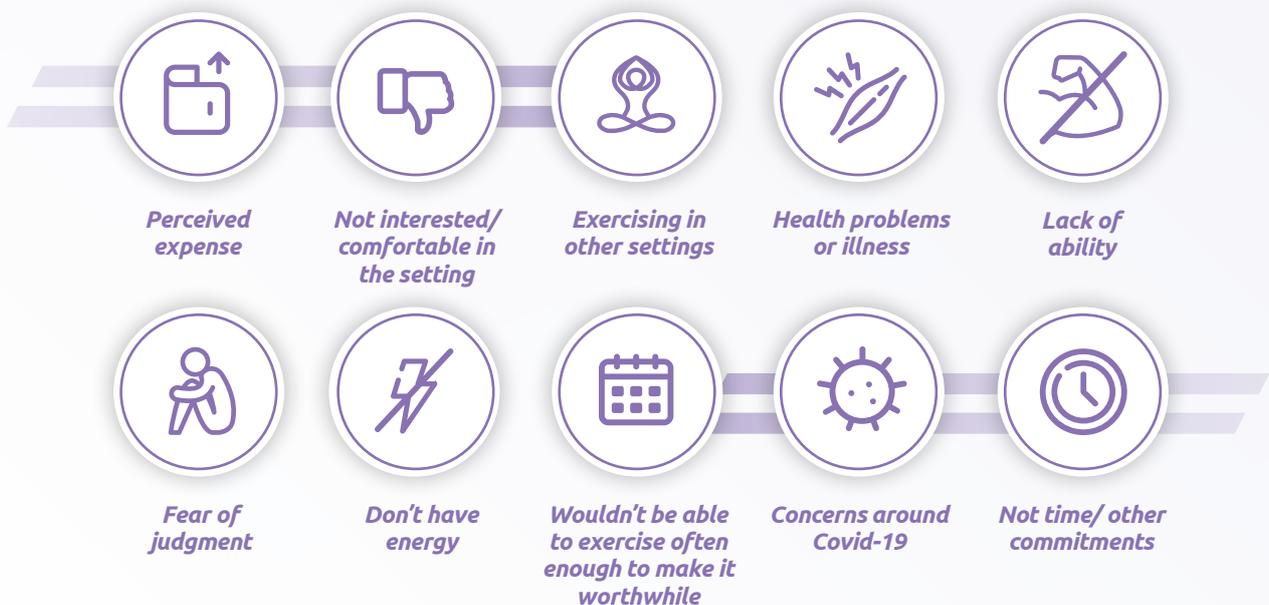
Given that physical activity levels consistently tend to drop with age, addressing the gender gap in physical activity levels is crucial, even for countries that record very positive levels of physically active women, such as Slovenia.

As stated by WHO, 'Differences in levels of physical activity are also explained by significant inequities in the opportunities for physical activity by gender and social position, within as well as between countries. Girls, women, older adults, people with disabilities and chronic diseases, people of low socioeconomic status, migrant populations and people living in rural areas often have poorer access to safe, accessible, affordable, and appropriate spaces and places in which to be physically active. Increasing the opportunities of

these groups for physical activity should be a national priority, in line with the underlying principles of both regional and global strategies.'

In sight of bridging the gap, many studies, reports, and research have been undertaken to better understand which obstacles and challenges women and girls face to be physically active.

Late 2021, ukactive and Sport England published a practical guide on improving services for women and girls, which explores fresh findings and data from the research conducted with women of 16 years old and above. The top ten reasons for non-attendance of fitness and leisure centre in the last years are:



6 | <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1182>

7 | Eurobarometer 472. 11.

8 | Towards more Gender Equality in Sport. Recommendations and Action Plan. High Level Group on Gender Equality in Sport, 2022. 15. <https://bit.ly/3MBQI2e>

9 | Physical activity factsheets for the 28 European Union Member States of the WHO European Region, 2018. 30

10 | How to improve your services for women and girls: As told by the 51%. Ukactive, 2021. 4.

In 2022, the EU's High Level Group on Gender Equality in Sport published a report of Recommendations and Action Plan (see Chapter 8) to achieve gender equality in sport and physical activity. The report pinpoints three categories of barriers that women still face :

**Practical barriers**

- > lack of time,
- > childcare and money,
- > safety concerns
- > and limited access to facilities.

**Personal barriers**

- > Negative body image,
- > lack of appropriate clothing and/or equipment,
- > lack of self-confidence/self-esteem
- > and parental/family influences.

**Sociocultural barriers**

- > a perception of sport as male-dominated,
- > gender stereotypes,
- > a lack of female role models,
- > harassment and abuse (related violence)
- > and attitudes and prejudices regarding sexuality, disability and ethnicity.

More specifically, WHO proposes the following list of barriers and facilitators to physical activity participation for adolescent girls specifically<sup>11</sup> :



**Individual**

- > Lack of time
- > Perceived lack of competence
- > Discomfort during and after PA
- > Increased social and family obligations
- > Preference for other leisure activities
- > Weight management
- > Perceived competence or skill level
- > Health benefits
- > Enjoyment



**Interpersonal**

- > Lack of support from family, peers, and teachers
- > Support from family, peers and teachers
- > Opportunities to socialize



**Environmental**

- > Costs of participation in available opportunities
- > Safety concerns in neighbourhood outdoor areas and environment
- > Accessibility and availability of recreational facilities
- > Opportunities to try new types of PA
- > Input from girls on preferred activities and formats of delivery
- > Influence of media on social norms

11 | More specifically, WHO proposes the following list of barriers and facilitators to physical activity participation for adolescent girls specifically:



### ***Why is this relevant for you?***

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*As the main driver making more people active across Europe, our sector has a key role to play in enabling more women and girls become more physically active. This should be taken as an opportunity!*



*By demonstrating that the sector acknowledges existing barriers to health-enhancing physical activity for different groups, and is contributing to remedy issues, the sector will gain the health sector's recognition as a solution to contemporary European public health challenges!*



*While the sector has a positive female client base, increasing women and girls' presence unlocks a potential snowball effect where their social and personal circles may also join!*

# 05

## **ROADMAP: HOW TO IMPROVE THE INCLUSION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN FITNESS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?**

Under the umbrella of the **#BEACTIVE DAY** campaign this guide proposes fitness and physical activity stakeholders adopt the campaign as part of their journey to creating welcoming environments and fun activities, through supportive professionals, to attract and retain a new clientele.

The benefits of improving the target group's accessibility to physical activity are manyfold. While it will evidently grow levels of participation, ripple effects across the entire community are as noteworthy. Women and girls will enjoy new perspectives and improved public health throughout the community.

A few steps are required to ensure new initiatives proposed by the staff and management of providers of fitness and physical activity will directly affect women and girls, and to reap the benefits of a successful implementation. This **ROADMAP** will facilitate an easier planning and implementation of your new inclusive initiative.

### **Analyse your target group**

#### **Who do we want to include?**



**Analysing the needs of the centre or club will help determine which specific groups of women and/or girls are not present in current activities. This may mean that existing activities do not appeal to, or lack focus for, the target group, which could suggest some necessary extra efforts to promote the new initiatives to target group in sight of securing them as members and clients. The planning process starts when deciding to include this specific group in the activities and club working towards this being an integral action towards increasing inclusion.**

When planning the next actions, staff and management should consider which improvements, changes, or new initiatives will best reach out to the target group. To do so appropriately and effectively, it is necessary to consider the exact characteristics of this particular group. Simply, this means answering: who are the target group?

Having identified the target group (such as teenagers or from a migrant background), it is necessary to seek their opinion and input, and to involve them in the planning process. This first-hand information from the group will provide a clear overview of their needs, which allows the adaptation of the club and initiative(s) to them.

**The following questions cover the basics to better understand who the target is, and how to cater an improved offer to them:**

- ① What age is the designated target group?
- ② Where are they located: city, village, community?
- ③ What is the level of education, profession, and income of the target group?
- ④ What are the interests, values, and lifestyles of the target group?
- ⑤ What are the needs, challenges, and frustrations the target group faces around physical activity?.
- ⑥ How will the new initiative help the target group?
- ⑦ Which elements trigger/ motivate the group in the new initiative? Specific benefits? How will it contribute to quality of life, or to making things simpler?
- ⑧ What type of media appeals to the target group? (How best to get in touch with them?)
- ⑨ Are these the right target group for the activities being offered?

# *Creating physical activity programmes according to the needs of women and girls from your community*

Having identified the specific target group, it is now time to carefully plan a specific initiative that will suit their needs. Knowing the obstacles and challenges the group faces when it comes to physical activity is crucial. **Your initiative must overcome identified challenges and be an accessible opportunity** for them to take part in the proposed activity, and potentially become a club member.

Whether an initiative, programme, event, or campaign, it is important initiative meets the needs of the target group and is appropriate. **Identifying a coach or trainer (preferably a woman) who is aware of the group's challenges to be active, along with a dedicated team person who firmly believes in the initiative's positive outcomes, and who will not give up, is a necessary part of the planning.**

When creating the initiative, include these following essential aspects:

- The designed initiative must be age-appropriate
- It should be welcoming for women of all backgrounds and abilities
- It should be articulated around appropriate fitness levels for participants, and be mindful of specific stage in life
- Lastly, it must be flexible, fun, and social! The social component has proven essential to secure buy-in, trust and peer support when it comes to including groups other than the 'usual suspects' in your activities

## *How to inspire young girls to be more physically active ?*

When seeking to appeal to the younger people, the team responsible for their recruitment needs to be aware of young girls and teenagers' specific needs by :

- Reaching out to teenagers and young girls is an active process. This means demo classes or school demos can be useful; telephone follow-ups or social media group chats that remind them of the programme
- Present a community fitness or physical activity role model (this can be their trainer). Young girls identify better with positive role models who inspire them, share their story, and who present the programme in a way that will inspire them to be physically active
- Organise school demo days. Get in contact with local schools, explain the benefits that physical activity offers to young girls, and try to organise a demo class
- If possible, get in touch with parents. Inform parents why it is important for their daughters to be involved in healthy activities that will boost their self-confidence and social skills
- Do not give up! Although this process might be challenging, the benefits of having more girls physically active are endless. In the long run it will mean having more women physically active and contributing to a culture that thrives on positive values and health
- Within the initiative find ways to emphasise the benefits these young girls enjoy from being physically active- such as physical, social, psychological, and health!

# How to include and motivate older women to be physically active ?

When seeking to appeal to older women, be aware that they have different needs and values than younger generations, and will face different barriers and challenges to being more physically active. These could include negative body image, low self-confidence, the pressure of and lack of identification to media focusing on young and fit women, health conditions (such as non-communicable diseases), traditional settings which may be predominant among women with a migration background. When reaching out and trying to motivate older women these points need to be considered :

- Share positive messages, use relatable visuals and introducing age-appropriate role models.
- Offer initiatives that suit varying levels of fitness, ages and values- make it fun, make it sociable!
- Creating a safe space for older women where they can avoid feeling overwhelmed by younger generations' fitness levels
- Inform them of physical activity's benefits on physical and mental health, on cognitive abilities, and introduce the concept of active ageing
- Present positive examples and stories of peers who achieved fitness results
- Present the social benefits of group exercise through new relationships and support.

## Reaching out to women from migrant, different ethnic or religious backgrounds

If seeking to include more women and girls with a different religious, ethnical or migrant background that your own, several considerations should be an integral part of staff and management planning :



- Before reaching out ensure there is reliable information about the religious background of the group to be involved, including their values and customs
- For many of these women and girls, their religion represents a comprehensive way of life, diet, clothing, and behaviour
- When creating the initiative it is beneficial to include the opinion of these women in the planning process
- Pay particular attention to the challenges they may face to being more physically active, and find creative ways to overcome them in the planned activity
- Clothing might be important for these women, therefore emphasise and provide a dress code appropriate to the needs of the women in question
- Hygiene: different religions also prescribe specific codes of hygiene. For this purpose, you must make sure the toilets have adequate access to water to maintain hygiene
- The notion of a safe space is crucial for many women with a different religious or ethnical backgrounds. Note that some communities shield women from the male gaze
- Finally, women-only groups can be particularly beneficial to ensure the feeling of being protected and safe during exercise.



## ***What is important for women and girls from disadvantaged groups?***

**Women and girls from disadvantaged groups may face a variety of challenges to being physically active and adopting health habits such as regular exercise—ranging from stereotypes, low economic background, or social exclusion.**

They may not be in the education system, or have little to no access to recreation, physical activity, or sport. By including women and/or girls of these communities through planned campaigns or initiatives, it is not only enabling access to improved health and well-being, but is also acting as a changemaker.

When supporting women/girls' who lack financial possibilities in a fitness or sport club it offers them the chance to transform their lives, to enjoy the benefits of leading an active lifestyle, and at the same time creating a positive example of community action.

## ***Creating physical activity programmes according to the needs of women and girls from your community***

**Finding different possibilities to engage women and girls with disabilities is essential as it can greatly contribute to increasing their independence.**

When planning a new initiative it is important to acknowledge that this specific group faces additional factors that influence participation, notably obstacles prior and after entering the premises. The most common obstacles in the way of being physically active are environmental, psychological, and personal. To improve understanding of this target group these points are important:

- Create a survey to identify their needs, or approach to ask them about their preferences and possible challenges
- Plan how to overcome the challenges they might face
- Plan how to improve the group's access to the possibilities of trainings

- Create safe spaces for these women and girls
- Adapt the equipment or space to the needs of these women and girls
- Consider working on their self-esteem and motivate them to care for their health now and in the future

By being physically active, women and girls with disabilities can significantly improve their quality of life. Being part of fitness or physical activities can also contribute to the development of life skills such as teamwork, communication, goal-setting, dealing with emotions, decreasing stress, anxiety, or depression; while boosting self-esteem and confidence. It is good practice to constantly reinforce the message to these groups about the important benefits of being active.



## 06 **STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO CREATING : A CAMPAIGN THAT BETTER ENGAGES WITH WOMEN AND GIRLS**

STEP

1

**Define campaign goals (how to distribute the message?)**

When starting a new campaign, firstly set clear, smart and achievable goals. If the campaign is for something specific, such as **#BEACTIVEDAY**, it is equally important to set specific campaign goals:

1. Create a timeline defining the campaign start and progression
2. Define the goals to be achieved through the campaign (i.e. We want to increase my participants by 20%, with more women who will get involved, and be part of this year's **#BEACTIVEDAY**)
3. Link the campaign to the target group that has been identified and defined

**Define the message (how to create the correct message for the target group)**

Having set the campaign goals, it is now necessary to define the message for the target group, and then choose which channel to communicate with them. Good communication with the target group means that it should be possible to more quickly and effectively recruit them.

While working and implementing a new campaign the term used most often is “message” which refers to how a fitness or sport club can present itself, and the values it upholds. Furthermore, with good messaging it is usual to develop a set of convincing “key message” statements that are created to catch the eye of the reader.



*A clear, precise, and consistent message can make a huge difference in the success of the campaign!*



In order to create the right message for the selected target group it is important to combine the following three steps:

- the activity or product to be presented
- key message statements
- and the specific target group or even combination of groups

Once combined, these three elements are needed to create the primary message. It is important to know how to get across the main ideas of the message in only three short sentences to a member of the target group.

- ① The primary message should be clear, easy to understand and must provide all the basic information needed for people to get involved in the **#BEACTIVE DAY** campaign
- ② Add credibility to the message by involving the target group and regular people who are part of the fitness or sport club
- ③ Create a call to action with a message that will motivate people to be active. The call to action gives instructions to the target group about what is expected of them to do once they have heard and understood the message
- ④ This call to action is mostly seen within the message, with the use of the following words: Register now, register here, visit this web page, see how you can join or more
- ⑤ Track and Attract - Tracking responses to the call to action will help ensure that the message has done a good job in convincing them to follow the provided instructions to follow

*The overall purpose of the campaign message is to ensure all communicated elements tie back to the main points that have been previously established and the target group understands the #BEACTIVE DAY event.*

**Identify the social media channels for the campaign**

Social media is increasingly popular and effective on a daily basis. Now, in 2022 it is reported that more than half of the world (58.4%) uses social media. Knowing these facts, and that almost 80 percent of markets and regular people see value in social media and are also confident in the return on investment, as it can help to gain more customers, create a better relationship with the target group. It can also help spread the idea that your fitness or sport club is engaging faster to a bigger population, so it is very important which social media channel you will use and how will you deliver the message within it.

Firstly, when choosing social media as a communication channel it is essential to understand how to successfully link current social media channels to your goals. Then, one must consider which channels are likely to be favoured by the target

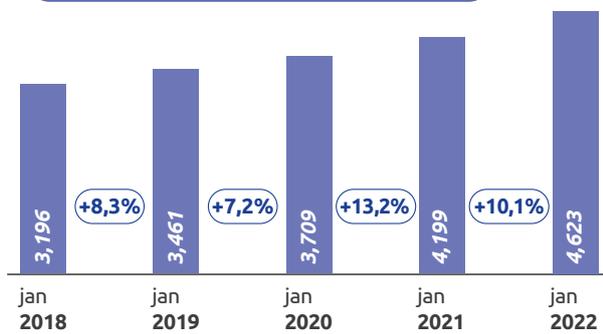
group. For example, if the campaign is to help over 70 year-olds get more active, using an Instagram account won't help because Instagram is largely used by the younger generations. This is why research on the target group and globally on the social media channels to see which groups of people use which social media channel is essential.

The best way to start the campaign to get more women and girls into physical activity is to use the social media channel that it is mostly visited and where there is the biggest number of followers. It is always better to combine several social media channels. With this idea it is possible to either create a social media calendar where scheduling posts for different social media channels can be done. A calendar will avoid confusion and provide a clear picture of all channels being covered.

Here are some statistics that can help you deliver your message in the right channels.

Ongoing growth of social media users and time spent.

Social media users over time (in million)



Total European population : **746,4 millions**

Social media users : **539,5 millions**

**72,3%**



Average daily time spent :

**2h25**



Over **2.9 billion** global active users (+6,2%)  
Av. time spent per day: 33 min  
Largest age group: 25-34 y.o.



Over **1,5 billion** global users (+6,1%)  
Av. time spent per day: 29 min  
Largest age group: 25-34 y.o.



Over **436 million** global active users (+2,4%)  
Av. time spent per day: 31 min  
Largest age group: 30-49 y.o.



Over **2.5 billion** global active users  
Av. time spent per day: 41,9 min  
Largest age group: 15-25 y.o.



Over **885 million** global active users  
Av. time spent per day: 31 min  
Largest age group: 18-24 y.o.



Over **808 million** global active users (+2,8%)  
Largest age group: 25-34 y.o.

STEP

4

#### Create visual content/message

Social media works best with strong visual content as it encourages people to follow and engage with the posts. Research has proved that social media posts with visuals have the best engagement rates (comments and like). Also, people are 65% more likely to remember information that includes an image or video.

Visuals should therefore be integrated into a social media strategy- great visuals can be as powerful as your strategy. Visuals should be planned in advance and be posted with set purposes, narrative and timing.

As this will be the main place for communication it is important to know that strong visual content on social media gives people a reason to follow and engage. In all research done for social media it is said that people have bigger engagement rates (comments and likes) if there is a visual with the post. Furthermore, people are 65% more likely to remember information if it includes an image or a video, especially when promoting a sport or fitness event. Choosing visuals will also set the theme of the broader campaign communication.

Visuals include pictures, videos, live streaming, memes, or gifs, so choose which fit best the profile of the campaign and selected target group. You can always use all of the visuals so long as the timing and messaging are right. The chosen visuals should illustrate the key messages, and be appropriate for the initiative being presented to the target group. Positive body images are crucial, so choose pictures of 'real' people or trainers rather than of the 'perfect body type'. Also consider taking visuals in the fitness or sport, which makes for authentic visuals. Consider that if you plan to run the campaign or initiative annually, it is possible to keep your visuals and simply update the details. Ask other people who are involved in activities to promote your posts and communication to their own networks.

**Finally, to be most effective the visuals should match any branding or style adopted by the fitness or sport club.**

STEP

5

### Create a content calendar

Having completed these steps and having defined the message, set the goals, chosen social media channels, and designed your visuals, it's time to create the content calendar. Content calendar is actually a social media calendar that provides an overview of upcoming social media posts. The social media calendar should contain the following :

- The length of the proposed media campaign with a date and time that you need to post
- The social media channel needed to publish the post
- The visual that will be posted
- Links or tags to include in the post
- The text that serves as a description to the visual

*The calendar can also help enable more consistency and organisation in the posts, which ultimately saves more time. The content calendar can be done on a spreadsheet or free templates that are available online.*

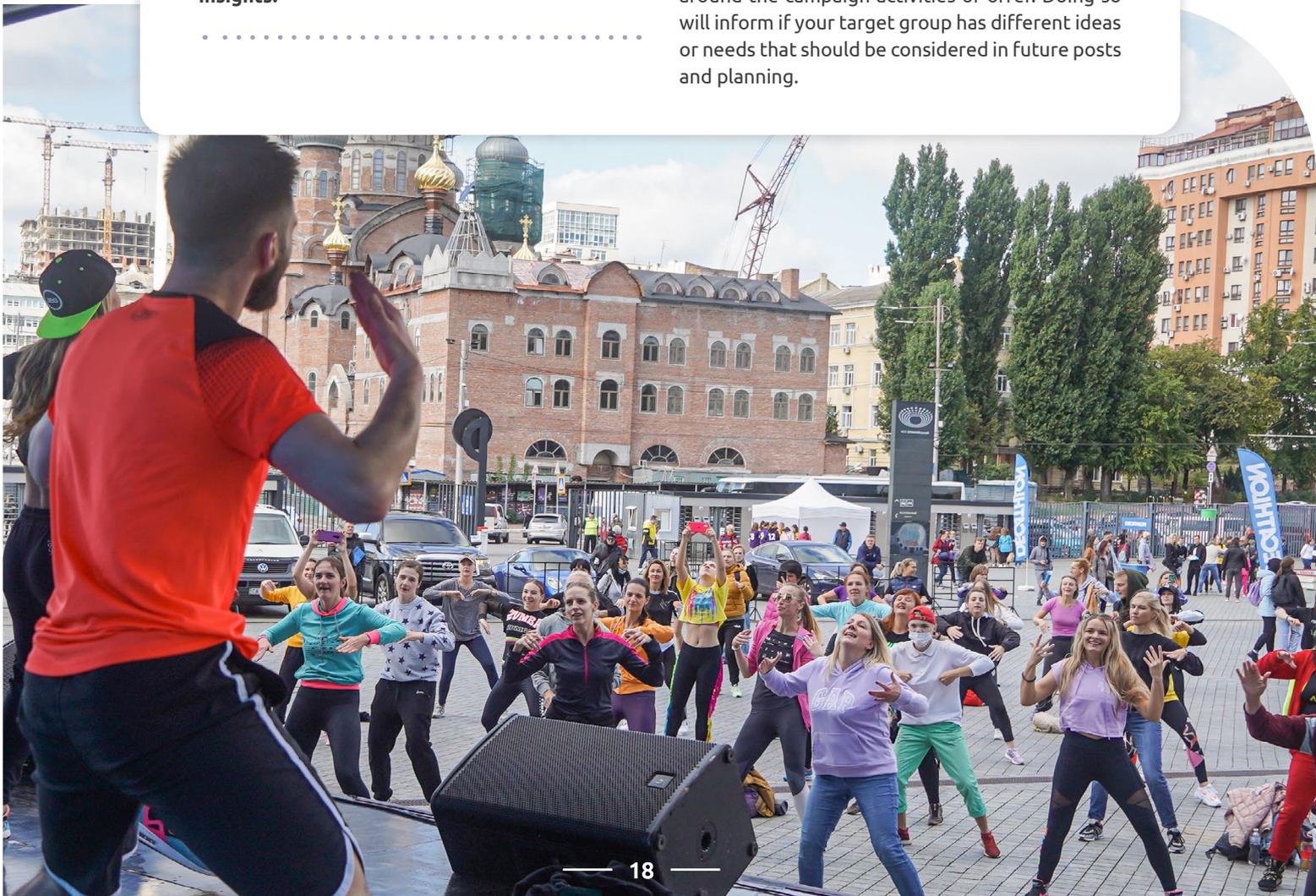
STEP

6

### Monitor and respond

Even though social media is widely used, and is the best way to promote an activity or service to be offered, monitoring people's engagement on different channels is important, and in particular the engagement of the selected target group. Social media analytics offer great insights!

By monitoring the social media posts' engagement, you can assess if the strategy and calendar are working well or if they need to be changed to a more adoptable content for the target group. Monitoring social media also provides a deeper understanding about the conversations arising around the campaign activities or offer. Doing so will inform if your target group has different ideas or needs that should be considered in future posts and planning.





## TIPS & TRICKS SUMMARY

- ✓ *Set SMART campaign goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound)*
- ✓ *Create a clear and consistent message*
- ✓ *Always use positive wording*
- ✓ *Find the target group's language and use it*
- ✓ *Talk about the benefits that people will gain by joining this activity*
- ✓ *Use examples and share stories! For example: If another fitness or sport club has already implemented this event or initiative use it as a positive example*
- ✓ *Use real time photos and videos. They can also be taken with mobile phones*
- ✓ *Use real people and real instructors in all visuals*
- ✓ *Brand the campaign with specific colours and hashtags, and use them throughout the campaign. Also, find out how the target group can use the same colours, logos and hashtags. It could be an idea to create a picture frame which can be used by the target group*
- ✓ *Give as specific information as possible in all messages. For example: if calling members of the target group to join for an event, always specify location, time and type of event*



# 07 GOOD PRACTICES TO SPARK INSPIRATION

*This final chapter shares a handful of tangible and well-received campaigns dedicated to women and girls, from across the fitness, physical activity, and sport sector!*

## Yoga Bootcamp - Bulgaria



The Bulgarian Association for Health and Fitness organised this event focused on girls and women, in order to promote a healthy lifestyle and increase interest in recreational physical activity. For this occasion, all Athletic Fitness clubs across the country were mobilised, both on the ground and online. All their members, but also the general population, were asked to enrol in the event organised in a remote city, located in a mountainous area. The campaign ended with a social event, based on the motto “Lots of fun!”.

**More information :**

<https://athletic.bg/en/#>

## dm Tek za ženske (race for women) - Slovenia



Organised on an annual basis since 2006, the event gathers many participants in Ljubljana city's Tivoli park. Women and girls from across the country are invited to run, dance and have fun together. The interest in the initiative increased from one year to another, namely due to an active communication campaign, mainly carried out via social media channels and radio. The event allows parents to register their children in a specific children's race (Oscar Run), and offers childcare.

**More information :**

<https://www.tekzazenske.si/>

### #Just4Girls - The Netherlands (2020)



Organised in Amsterdam as an after-school programme, this initiative aimed to increase the participation of young girls, mainly from an immigrant background, in physical activity. Initially organised in six primary schools, the campaign's goal was to increase social-emotional skills, through physical activity. Diverse activities were organised, such as dance, martial arts, football, gymnastics, and yoga. The campaign, regularly adapted following feedback received from the participants, revealed that many girls could not get involved in regular physical activity, due to a busy programme at home.

#### More information :

<https://www.allesoversport.nl/thema/beweegstimulering/zo-verleidt-gemeente-amsterdam-meiden-tot-meer-bewegen-en-sporten/>

### #KeepUpWithTheGirls - The Netherlands (2019)



The campaign was linked to the Special Olympics' Women's Football Week, held between 25 May and 2 June 2019, and activities were organized in 20 European countries to show that every woman can play football. The campaign aimed to increase interest in playing football, for all women regardless of their disabilities. In order to achieve this goal, several well-known sportspersons joined forces in supporting a campaign that gathered a strong interest on social media. The campaign allowed all women and girls to create a video and upload it on social media to strengthen engagement.

#### More information :

<https://www.specialolympics.org/stories/news/keep-up-with-the-girls-on-football-pitches-across-europe>

### #ThisGirlCan - UK (2015)



The UK's nationwide campaign kicked off in 2015 aims to get women and girls moving, regardless of physical ability or age. The campaign sought to break the taboo of sweaty women and girls in order to encourage them to be physically active.

The campaign is centred around images and stories of real women and girls, making the campaign relatable while also sending a powerful message to society.

To achieve its goals, the campaign created a HUB for instructors, club owners, leisure centres or any individual, to help women find their way to get active.

#### More information :

<https://www.thisgirlcan.co.uk/>

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