



Photo credit: <https://bit.ly/2xeuc4a>

Theme(s): Inclusivity

Type of initiative:
Public Squares

Year: 2008-2017

Location:
Barcelona
Spain

Owner: Municipality of Barcelona

Contact: <https://bit.ly/2kEGMR6>

Source: <https://bit.ly/2xeuc4a>

DESCRIPTION

The target group of participants is people over the age of 40, with a specific focus on those over 65 years old. The activities includes two sessions per week. In any sessions (1 hour duration) different activities like tai txi, txi kung, memory exercises, and general motor skills exercises are performed. The involved stakeholders are local sport organisations that usually collaborate with the Municipality in the promotion and development of physical activity programs.

In March 2016, the Municipality launched a survey. It showed a monthly participation of 1392 people. The age average was 67 years old (from 27-96 years old) and 87% of participants were women.

SUCCESSSES

One of the key points has been the engagement of local partners like sport organisations. The influence of the instructor has been very important for the development of the project. On certain occasions the participants themselves have led the activity due to the lack of an instructor.

The idea of carrying out the activities in green areas, especially thanks to the weather in Barcelona, has been a key of success as well. Those who do not participate can see (public area) how the practice works and those people usually get involved after a few days. Therefore groups are becoming bigger and bigger.

On the other hand, the activity is free of charge and it helps to create social engagement. In different parks and green areas, as the environment changes, people respect the area and it's provision towards people having an "active life". The idea to have groups of people practicing in the park motivates others to use the park, by walking, running or carrying out other activities.

CHALLENGES

The main challenge of the project is how to increase the engagement levels of men. As has been mentioned, in certain cases and circumstances, the participants are leading the activity. It becomes more than a physical activity, it becomes a meeting point. Participants discover the potential of the parks and green areas as a health care environment. Using this motivation as a way of engaging people to use parks means that the areas are respected, and the rest of the population respect those who participate regularly in the activities.

Generally speaking the goals of the project have been achieved, and the challenge now is to increase the number of participants and the number of parks.