

Evaluation Study Together in Sport project

by HIGGS

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Limitations

The purpose of this evaluation study is to provide information with regard to the implementation of the “Together in Sport” (TiS) project funded by the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. The project is implemented by the German Olympic Sports Confederation (Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund, DOSB) in cooperation with the Hellenic Olympic Committee (HOC) and METAdrasi with the collaboration of local municipalities in Greece.

The evaluation study was prepared and conducted by the team of the HIGGS Social Impact Assessment Unit to measure and depict the social impact of the “Together in Sport” project. It was based on information and data provided by METAdrasi as well as primary data collected through semi-structured questionnaires targeting beneficiaries, project teams and various stakeholders.

The information provided by METAdrasi has not been independently confirmed by HIGGS team in any way. HIGGS team treats the data, assumptions or estimates provided by METAdrasi as accurate. It is clarified that HIGGS team proceeded to an independent primary research. This study is not or should not be considered as a promise or binding provision for the future impact of the “Together in Sport” project.

The exploitation of this study by any party and any decisions based thereon are the sole responsibility of those who will use this study. Each recipient should make their own estimates about the “Together in Sport” project and its future course. HIGGS team bears no liability or responsibility of any kind with regard to this study and cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions that may result from the use of the analysis presented herein.

The present Evaluation Study was developed in order to assess the impact of the “Together in Sport” project in the Attika region, explore the successes and challenges experienced and evaluate the results achieved during its 21-month duration.

The initial section of the study lays emphasis on the methodology and tools used for the evaluation process. The evaluation was based on a mixed-methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data and methods to inform the evidence-based conclusions, inferences and recommendations. The second section of the assessment focuses on the main findings emerged by the key findings of Social Impact Assessment (SIA).

The “Together in Sport” project in Attika has significantly achieved its objectives to a large extent although some minor challenges occurred. Some of the main findings are presented below:

- ❖ The project’s dissemination activities were impressive in terms of numbers and outreach as they exceeded the initial target set.
- ❖ The outbreak of the pandemic Covid- 19 has definitely impacted the project activities, as some activities were postponed.
- ❖ The coordination among the Open Facility of Temporary Reception in Shisto Attikis was in an excellent level, something that helped to the further dissemination of the project.
- ❖ Project’s impact proved positive for asylum seeking children in terms of developing strong relationships with peers and the feeling that they belong somewhere.
- ❖ All partners agreed that the collaboration among the partnership was very good, especially the last months when new members on behalf of METAdrasi joined the team.

The project's aim is to enable participation in sporting and other recreational activities for asylum seeking children in every stage of the asylum procedure in order to promote meaningful recreational activities and to strengthen reception structures in the participating municipalities.

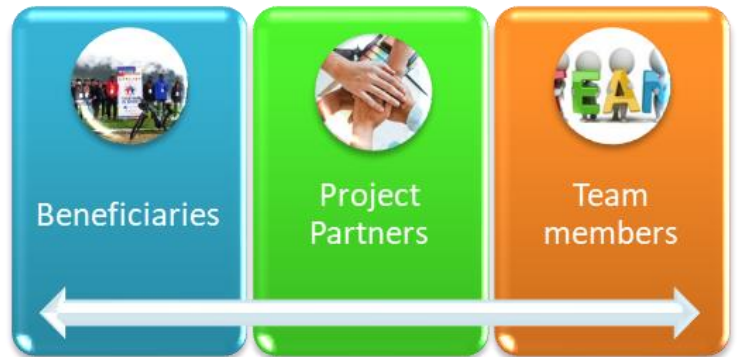
Using sports as the core component of the project, the project initial goal is to give the chance to asylum seeking children and youngsters to get in touch and learn more about organized sports and to develop relationships through sports with their peers from the local communities. The project is offered free of charge and is addressed to asylum seeking children and youngsters aged 7-17 and their peers from local communities. In addition, the support of the cooperating municipalities was important for the project to succeed its goals.

Specifically, the project "Together in Sport" aims to:

- ❖ Cultivate and promote values like mutual respect, team spirit and intercultural tolerance.
- ❖ Familiarize the participants with the values of Olympic education.
- ❖ Improve the everyday life of asylum seeking children/youngsters and to enhance their sense of belonging.
- ❖ Strengthen the existing structures and the initiatives regarding the reception and the care especially of unaccompanied minors at local level.
- ❖ Promote new communication channels through sports, in order to enable the peaceful coexistence among children and youngsters coming from different cultural backgrounds.
- ❖ Reduce the reservations of local communities towards asylum seekers and improve and strengthen social cohesion.

The Social Impact Assessment (SIA) study of the “Together in Sport” captures qualitative and quantitative data. The methodology consisted of three key phases. In the first stage of the study, a kick-off meeting with the core team of METAdrasi and an interview with the Project Manager (PM) of the organization was conducted in order to gather initial opinions and feedback about the scope and the aims of the project. During this phase a stakeholder analysis was prepared and discussed with METAdrasi team in order to determine the interested parties which were to be involved in the process. Specifically, the research focused on the following stakeholders:

- **Beneficiaries of the project**
- **Project partners** (coaches, representatives of municipalities, representatives of sports facilities)
- **Team members of METAdrasi**



In the second phase, satisfaction questionnaires were created for each stakeholder group and interviews were conducted with stakeholders who directly or indirectly were impacted from the implementation of the project in order to collect their views, opinions and experiences gained through their participation. In particular, HIGGS, with the support of the leader partner, organized interviews either in person or via video/tele conference in order to assess the involvement of the stakeholders and enlighten aspects of the project.



TiS in Attika

Attika was one of the three cities in Greece in which “Together in Sport” was implemented. Overall, a dedicated team led to a very successful project implementation.

During the project implementation the following outputs were achieved:

- ✓ Number of beneficiaries: 2.998
- ✓ Number of participants in regular training activities (sports): 196
- ✓ Number of participants in recreational activities: 2.849
- ✓ Number of recreational activities and events organized: 41
- ✓ Number of partners (Municipalities, Coaches, Sports Clubs): 40

In total the targeted beneficiaries participated in **3** sports (football, beach volley and TAE KWONDO), in 17 different groups. Furthermore, most children participated in a total of **41** events throughout the project’s implementation.

These were as follows (highlighted in green the sports related events):

Beach Volley

Sports Activities (EAS Championship)

Tae Kwon Do

Wrestling

Rugby Game

Sports activities in OAKA

Open Taekwondo Course

Judo Training

Football

Game Attendance

Hiking (Hymettus)

Explore Museum

Goulandris Museum

Olympic Museum

Olympic Museum & Veikou Park

Panathenaic Stadium

Planetarium

Adventure Park

Findings of Impact Assessment

During the interview process, HIGGS used semi-structured online questionnaires for each stakeholder element and the key findings are presented below. Moreover, HIGGS representative visited the Open Facility of Temporary Reception in Shisto Attikis on 8th of September 2022. The interviews and questionnaire-based research aimed at:

1. METAdrasi local team personnel (4 persons)
2. The football coach
3. The Tae Kwon Do coach
4. The head of the Open Facility of Temporary Reception
5. Representatives of the Hellenic Olympic Committee (2 persons)
6. Representative of the psychosocial services of the Open Facility of Temporary Reception
7. Representatives of NPOs collaborating with METAdrasi (2 persons)
8. Refugee children from the Open Facility of Temporary Reception in Shisto Attikis (6 persons) with the following characteristics: 4 out of 6 were boys and the rest were girls. 4 children were below the age of 9, while the oldest two were 13 years old.

The Social Impact Assessment focused on the following key aspects of the project:

Beneficiaries

Initially, HIGGS designed a semi-structured questionnaire as a guide for the interview process. However, due to the young age of participants (the majority less than 9 years old), most of them could not respond to the questions developed and a semi-structured discussion was chosen as a method to assess the project's impact for them.

The main findings are presented below:

- ❖ The majority of beneficiaries (5 out to 6) participated both in regular training activities and in recreational events during the project implementation.
- ❖ All of them stated that they liked mostly football and TAE KWONDO.
- ❖ Two children admitted that during the games with other peers, **some minor disagreements took place but the coaches** always helped them to resolve them quickly.
- ❖ All children stated that the **best thing that happened** during the implementation of the project was **the fact that they received sports equipment** (new clothes and athletic shoes).
- ❖ All beneficiaries said that **they felt proud** when an award ceremony took place.
- ❖ All of them agreed that through the project **they had the chance to meet other peers and make new friends**.
- ❖ Half of the participants had prior knowledge of selected sports while **the other half was their first time to participate in sport activities**.
- ❖ Two of the participants (33%) said that **they felt a sense of security with the local children during the events** as they were very helpful and facilitated them regarding language learning and understanding.
- ❖ All participants agreed that without the “Together in Sport” project, they would not have had the opportunity to visit places and to gain knowledge of the city of Athens outside of the facility.

All participants were very pleasant with the “Together in Sport” project requested the project to be continued for the next year.

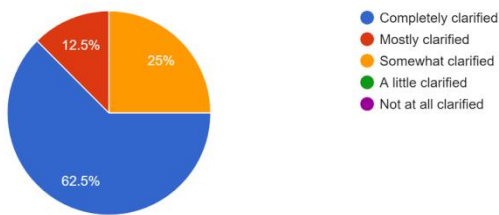
Partners

HIGGS representative scheduled online interviews with 8 partners (coaches, external collaborators and the head of the Open Facility of Temporary Reception) in order to assess the impact of the project.

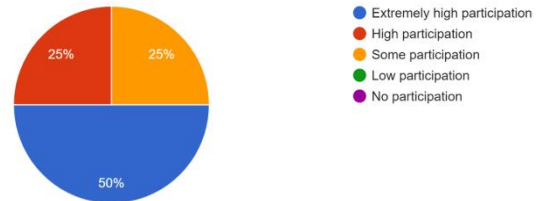
62.5% of the responders agreed that their tasks were completely clarified by the lead partner, mostly clarified was for the 12.5% and somewhat clarified for the rest 25%.

In addition, 50% of the partners pointed out that they intensively participated in the project, 25% that they were highly involved and the same percentage (25%) had a limited participation in the project.

How clearly were your tasks clarified by the lead partner?
8 responses

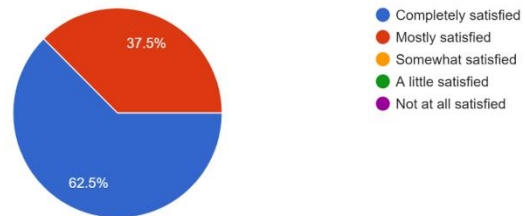


How much participative was your role?
8 responses



Regarding their satisfaction level, 62.5% felt completely satisfied by their role in the project and the other 37.5% were mostly satisfied with their role.

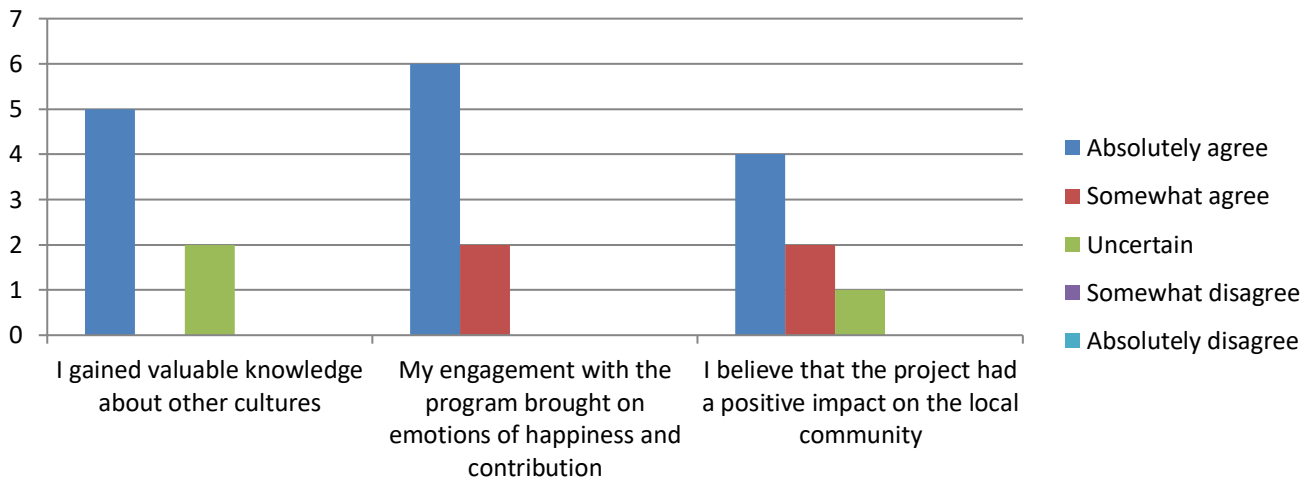
How satisfied were you with your role in the project?
8 responses



Additionally, partners were asked to evaluate some statements regarding the level of organisation received by the lead partner.

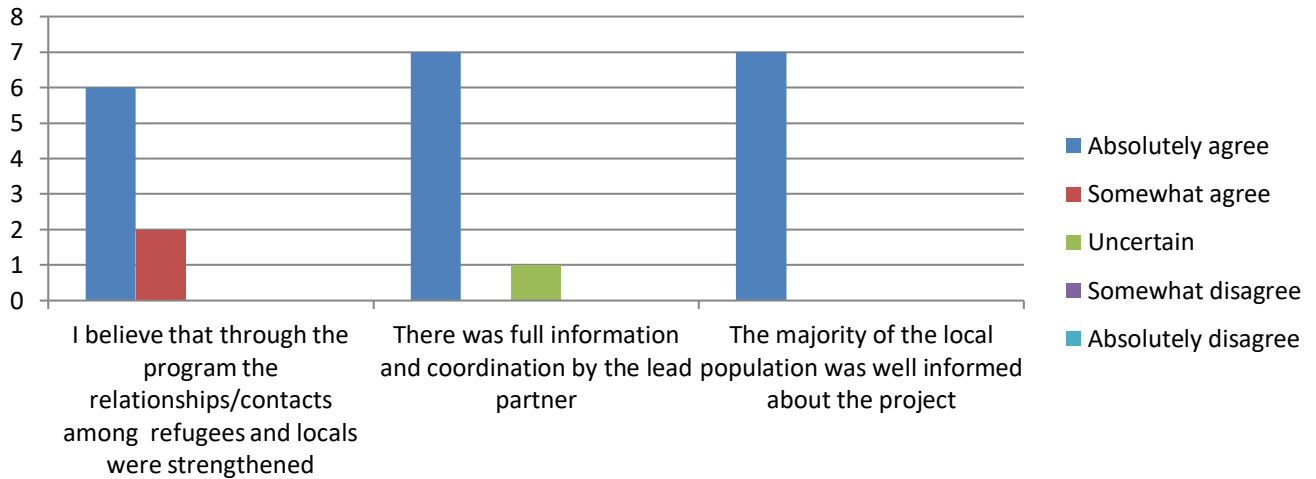
Some of the main findings are:

- ❖ Five (5) of the partners (62.5%) absolutely agreed that from their participation in the project, **they gained valuable knowledge about other cultures**. Two partners felt uncertain about this statement as he/she did not have a direct connection with the target group.
- ❖ Three partners (37.5%) also revealed that from their participation in the project, they can **understand better the needs of asylum seeking children** and two others somewhat agreed.
- ❖ **All partners (100%) stated that their engagement with the project brought on emotions of happiness and contribution.**
- ❖ **The majority of the partners (87.5%) agreed that the project had a positive impact on the local community** and one partner felt uncertain with the statement as his/her position does not allow him/her to comment on this statement.



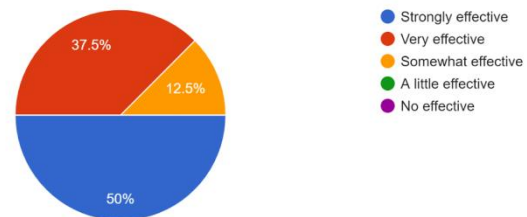
- ❖ Regarding the relationships and contacts developed among refugees and locals, all partners (100%) agreed that the **relationships among them were strengthened** by their participation in the project.
- ❖ In relation to the information and coordination received by the lead partner, **seven partners (87.5%) stated that there was complete information sharing and coordination**, one partner neither agreed nor disagreed with the above statement as he/she referred that sometimes the degree of responsiveness of the lead organisation is somewhat slow.

❖ According to the majority of partners (87.5%), **the local population was well informed** about the project, especially during the last months of the project implementation.



As for the quality of the communication with the lead partners, **50% of the partners characterized the quality as strongly effective, the other 37.5% as very effective and 12.5% as somewhat effective.**

The quality of your communication with the lead was:
8 responses

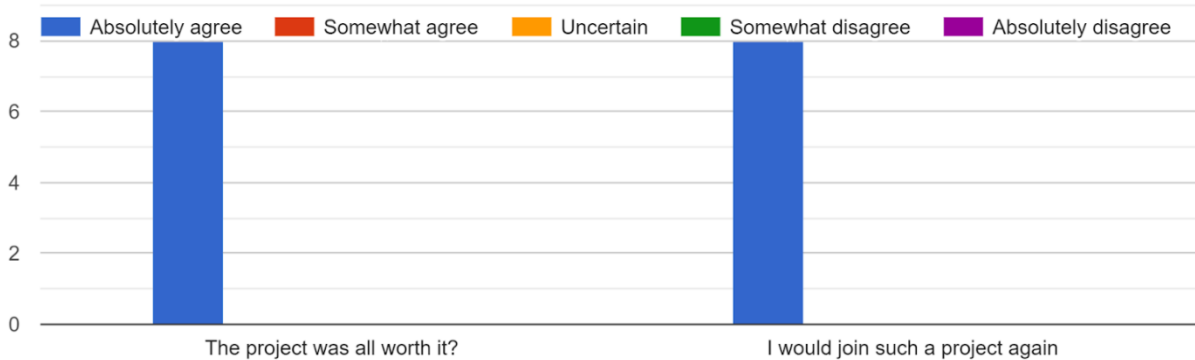


Moreover, seven out to eight partners (**87.5%**) **are thinking of some type of continuation of the cooperation** with the project after its completion. Some of them also proposed the introduction of new activities, such as more sports and/or events, while others referred that the project could be expanded to children with disabilities.

All partners also strongly agreed that the project was all worth it and that they would join such a project again.

It is worth mentioning that for four of the partners TiS was their first opportunity to participate in a project of similar thematic area, while the other four partners have participated in similar projects in the past.

Please, rate your level of agreement with the following areas:

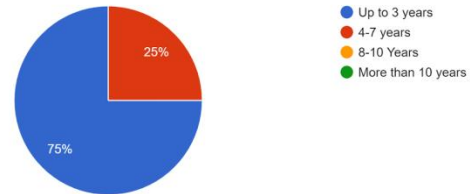


Interestingly, a HIGGS team member had the opportunity to meet with two representatives of a public school that had participated in some events of TiS during the 29th of September. Though the meeting was initially related for another issue, the two representatives were very eager to talk about Together in Sports project. In general they were both very positive on TiS and highlighted that they would notice positive changes in their children/students. Moreover, they both stated that one of the most important aspects of the project from their point of view is the fact that it is providing their students with an opportunity to diversify their knowledge intake and to break their daily routine. In addition, their good collaboration with METAdrasi render them more open to cooperation with other Civil Society Organizations and even to reach out themselves for joint initiatives.

Team member

HIGGS representative met on September 2022, online and in person, 4 team members of METAdrasi in Attika in order to examine the impact of the project. The majority of the team members are working at the organisation up to 3 years while one member he/she is working at METAdrasi the last 7 years.

How many years have you been working in the organisation?
4 responses



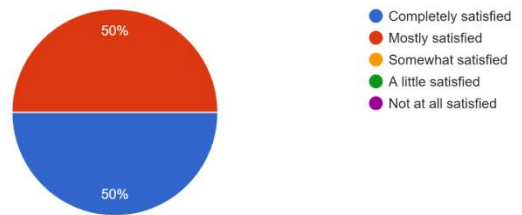
Some of the main findings are presented below:

100% of the team members stated that **the tasks were completely clarified** by the TiS Project Manager (PM). Moreover, half of the respondents (50%) revealed that they were completely satisfied with their tasks, responsibilities and their role concerning the project, while the other half (50%) said that they were mostly satisfied.

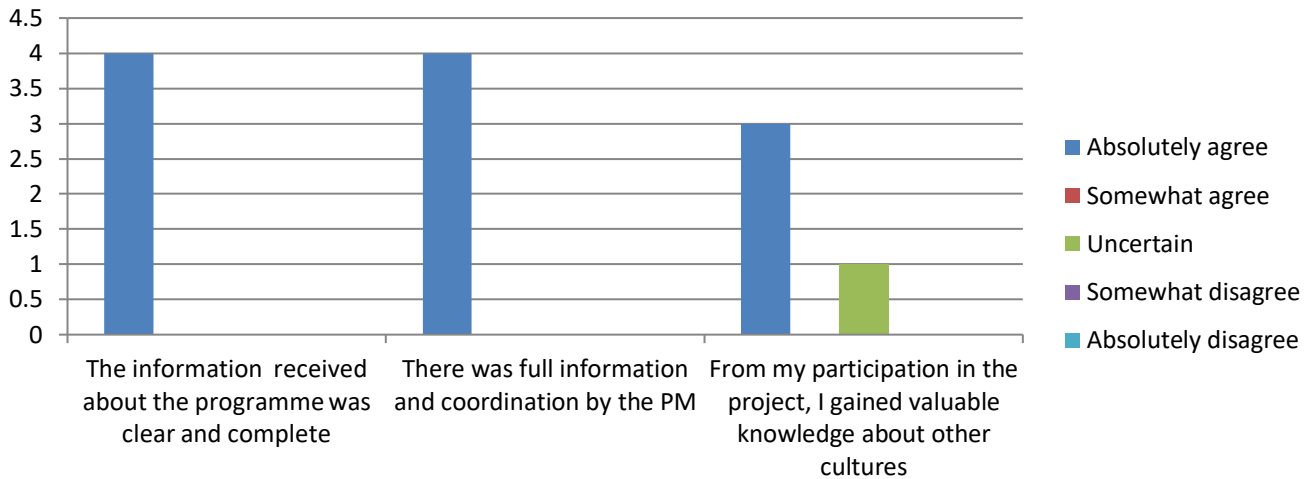
How clearly were your tasks clarified by the Project Manager (PM) of the project?
4 responses



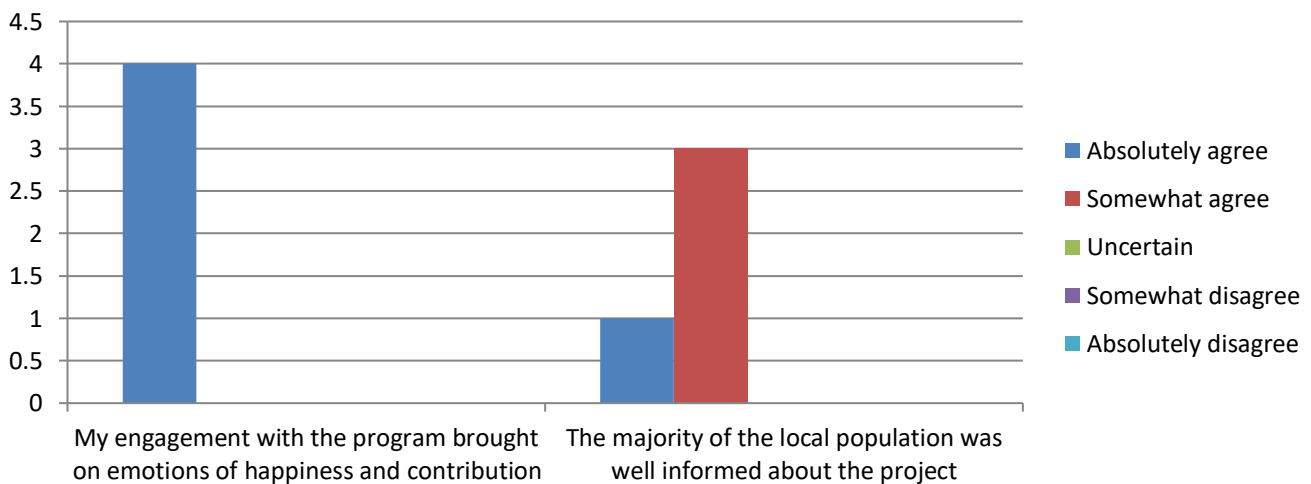
How satisfied were you with your role in the project?
4 responses



- ❖ All partners absolute agreed that **the information received about the project was clear and complete** and that there was full coordination with the PM.
- ❖ Three team members (75%) also revealed that from their participation in the project, **they gained valuable knowledge about other cultures**. One partner feels uncertain about this statement as he/she had previous experience with other cultures and the specific project did not give him/her an added value towards that end.
- ❖ Two partners stated that the project helped them understand better the needs of minors.



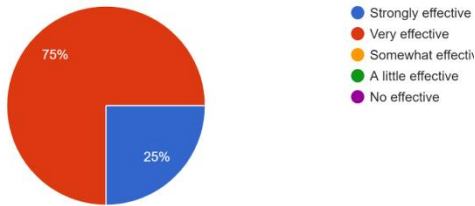
- ❖ All partners (100%) also strongly agreed that their engagement with the project brought on them emotions of happiness and contribution to a good cause.
- ❖ All partners agreed that the majority of the local population was well informed about the project; however, some team members reported that a better communication strategy could have been developed in order to reach more children.



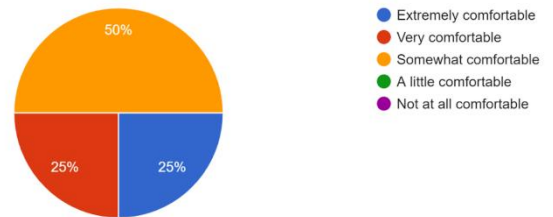
- ❖ 75% of the partners also referred that the **quality of the communication among the team is very effective and the other 25%** characterized the quality as strongly effective.
- ❖ 1 team member feels extremely comfortable with the way decisions made for the project, 1 very comfortable and the other 2 somewhat comfortable. In addition, 50% of the team members feel that they are always included in

the decision making process, 25% said most of the time are included in the decision process and the rest 25% sometimes.

The quality of your communication with the rest of the project team was:
4 responses



How comfortable are you with the way decisions were made?
4 responses



- ❖ **All team members (100%) strongly believe that the project is extremely beneficial for the target population.** In addition, the majority of team members (75%) had participated in projects in similar thematic areas in the past, gaining valuable experience to respond better in the “Together in Sport” project.

Recommendations & Take-aways

“Together in Sport” project in Attika was very successful, taking into account the particular characteristics of the region.

The following list presents some take-aways and recommendations derived from the various interviews and project data analysis:

- ❖ **The coordination among the team in Athens is excellent** as the segregation of roles, duties and responsibilities is clear and understood by all.
- ❖ The fact that some members of **METAdrasi are highly experienced** in the relevant sector helped the whole team to respond to potential challenges.
- ❖ The services offered by the Open Facility of Temporary Reception in Shisto Attikis are all in-site and it was essential for all stakeholders to develop a project implemented out of the structure; The “Together in Sport” project covered this gap and helped the children to be integrated smoother in the local community.
- ❖ In reference to the events developed in the region of Attika, the project included more sporting activities than recreational ones; both activities had equally high participation, indicating the children's strong interest participating in activities outside the structure.
- ❖ A more strategic communication plan could be developed, including on-site visits and outreach within the schools in the region, ideally during the first month of schools’ operation in order to disseminate further the project.
- ❖ Most of the partners characterized the project as creative, inspiring and that it supported the children in an experience-based way.
- ❖ Many sport activities carried out at the same time; a re-planning of the regular activities is suggested to allow local coordinators to stay on site during regular activities.