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SPOR 10

Evaluation report

Health promotion initiatives in Jernbanebyen (the Railway District) for families with children in surrounding residential areas

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Abstract

This report evaluates the Spor10 project, a social and health promotion initiative that ran in Jernbanebyen (the Railway District) from December 2024 to September 2025. The aim of the project was to engage families with children from deprived and social housing areas in activities promoting wellbeing, exercise and social cohesion. Spor10 functioned as a temporary activity and culture hub where community-oriented and movement-based activities were combined with digital incentives in the form of the Civic Dollars app.

The evaluation is based on qualitative methods, including participant observations, semistructured interviews and logbook notes. The results show that participation by families in vulnerable life situations largely depends on safe and familiar settings, stable relationships and clear structure. The children's engagement proved to be an important driver of the parents' participation, while volunteers and local role models – including from Neighbourhood Mothers (Bydelsmødre) and the Single Mother (Solomor) network – helped to break down linguistic, social and cultural barriers.

The closed, target group-specific activities created safe social spaces, while the physical environment at Spor10 was generally perceived to be motivating and inclusive. On the down side, some families found the project's marketing and visibility to be inaccessible for them because the communications did not adequately match their perspectives and needs.

The Civic Dollars app showed potential to strengthen participation, physical activity and community attachment, especially when it combined specific activities with a financial incentive. However, technical issues and the need for digital support were identified as barriers to use. The experiences emphasise that digital solutions such as Civic Dollars should not be deployed alone or as a precondition for participation, but rather should function as a supplementary tool that can support – but not replace – the social and relational initiatives.

The Spor10 project contributed to families with children establishing new routines, experiencing increased wellbeing and participating in strengthened social communities. The experiences indicate that meaningful participation requires a combination of relational work, structured activities, a flexible physical environment, practical support and motivating incentives.

The evaluation highlights the need for continued focus on relationships and designated contact persons, use of closed activities as a bridge to open communities, recognition of the children's role as a motivating factor, a flexible and inclusive physical environment, increased digital inclusion and continued use of Civic Dollars or other reward systems to reduce financial barriers and promote participation.

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Introduction

This report evaluates the Spor10 project, a social and health promotion initiative in Jernbanebyen (the Railway District) – a new urban development area in Copenhagen. The vision for Jernbanebyen incorporates creating an inclusive district with a focus on community, exercise and wellbeing. Before the permanent urban development work begins, Spor10 is functioning as an activity and culture hub in the initial phase with a focus on local activities and communities. The Spor10 project emerged from this as a specific initiative to promote wellbeing and community ties.

The Spor10 project ran from December 2024 to September 2025 with the aim of engaging families with children from deprived and social housing areas in meaningful activities promoting wellbeing, exercise and social cohesion. Focusing in particular on families with children from Sydhavnen, Folehaven and parts of Amager, the project sought to create safe and familiar settings for participation. A parallel goal was to generate understanding of how social and digital approaches can promote health equality and local embeddedness.

The evaluation is based on participant observations, semistructured interviews and logbook notes. It looks at how the Spor10 project's initiatives were received, the factors that influenced participation and wellbeing, and how relational support and target group-specific activities can help create sustainable communities in an urban development process.

Jernbanebyen: a new sustainable district under development

Jernbanebyen is a new urban development area in the centre of Copenhagen covering approximately 365,000 m2 of previous railway land between Vesterbro and Sydhavnen. In the next 10 to 15 years, it is anticipated that the area will become home to around 8,000 people as well as public, recreational and health promotion functions (Bøje-Kovács et al. 2023)[1].

The development, which is being undertaken as a collaboration between the landowners, is part of the City of Copenhagen's strategy for sustainable urban development. The ambition is to establish a lively, inclusive and climate-friendly district where architecture, green spaces and social infrastructure combine to promote exercise, community ties and wellbeing across ages, cultures and social backgrounds.

Spor10: initial activity and culture hub

Jernbanebyen represents the overall vision for a new sustainable district. Spor10 is located in a former customs building that has been converted into a multifunctional activity and culture hub.

The aim of Spor10 is to generate life and community ties in Jernbanebyen before the permanent urban development work begins. By activating the area early,

[1]Boje-Kovacs, B., Greve, J. & Weatherall, C.D. (2024). Ethnic networks in neighborhoods affect mental health: Evidence from a quasi-random assignment of applicants in the public social housing system. *Social Science & Medicine*, 345, Article 116669.

the aspiration is to avoid urban life only emerging after the buildings and infrastructure are in place. Spor10 functions as an open and inclusive gathering point where everyone – regardless of age, background and physical fitness – can participate in activities that promote wellbeing, exercise and social cohesion.

The Spor10 project: a social and health promotion initiative in Jernbanebyen

The Spor10 project was a targeted social and health promotion initiative that aimed to engage families with children from nearby residential areas in communities and activities promoting wellbeing and exercise. The project focused primarily on families with children from deprived residential areas, including Sydhavnen, Folehaven and parts of Amager. At the same time, there was particular focus on families that were not part of established communities and leisure offerings. The Spor10 project thus sought to generate understanding of how social and digital approaches can promote the participation of families with children in health promotion communities, strengthen local embeddedness of initiatives and build sustainable communities in and around Jernbanebyen.

The Spor10 project's target group and activities

The Spor10 project's target group comprised families with children under 18 from deprived and social housing areas around Jernbanebyen characterised by low socioeconomic status, high unemployment, low education level and limited access to organised leisure activities. The project's activities were organised with a focus on safety, accessibility and familiarity, with the purpose of strengthening physical, mental and social health as well as creating inclusive communities.

The core activities were boxing, dance and gymnastics, which took place at Spor10's flexible and spacious facilities, making it possible to tailor the activities' pace, noise level and participation to the individual family. Participation was flexible so that families could opt in or out as needed. Each round of activity concluded with communal dining, involving healthy meals prepared by volunteer young persons and fathers, which helped strengthen social relationships and promote healthy eating habits. The project also incorporated special events such as Spor10 Wednesday and the spring Spor10 festival, which created settings for exercise, creative unwinding and socialising across families.

As a supplement, the Civic Dollars app was introduced as a digital incentive where families could earn virtual currency by spending time in local earn zones and use it to pay for Spor10 activities. The experiences showed that although the app was able to support participation and engagement, digital incentives should not be deployed alone or as a precondition for participation, but rather function as a supplement to the social and relational initiatives.

Recruitment and retention of families was carried out in close collaboration with local actors — including Save the Children Denmark, Neighbourhood Mothers in Sydhavnen and the Single Mothers network — through verbal invitations, local events and regular personal follow-up, which proved key to the success of the project.

Project initiatives

The project comprised two complementary initiatives:

- **Social:** Physical activities and communal dining, which took place as closed programmes specifically targeted at families with children. Structure and familiarity gave the families a feeling of safety, while the communal dining supported the development of new social relationships.
- **Digital:** The Civic Dollars app rewarded participation in activities in the local area, creating a link between community, wellbeing and healthy habits on a day-to-day basis.

Both initiatives were developed and evaluated based on a realistic evaluation approach focused on what worked, for whom and under what circumstances (Pawson & Tilley, 1997)[2].

Project partners

The project was implemented in partnership between public, private and civil actors with competences in health promotion, urban development and local community organisation. The partnership ensured a general focus on creating good, sustainable settings, environments and communities for social and health promotion development among citizens in deprived residential areas and local communities. The project's research-based strategies and methods aimed to support development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the initiatives in close collaboration with citizens and local actors.

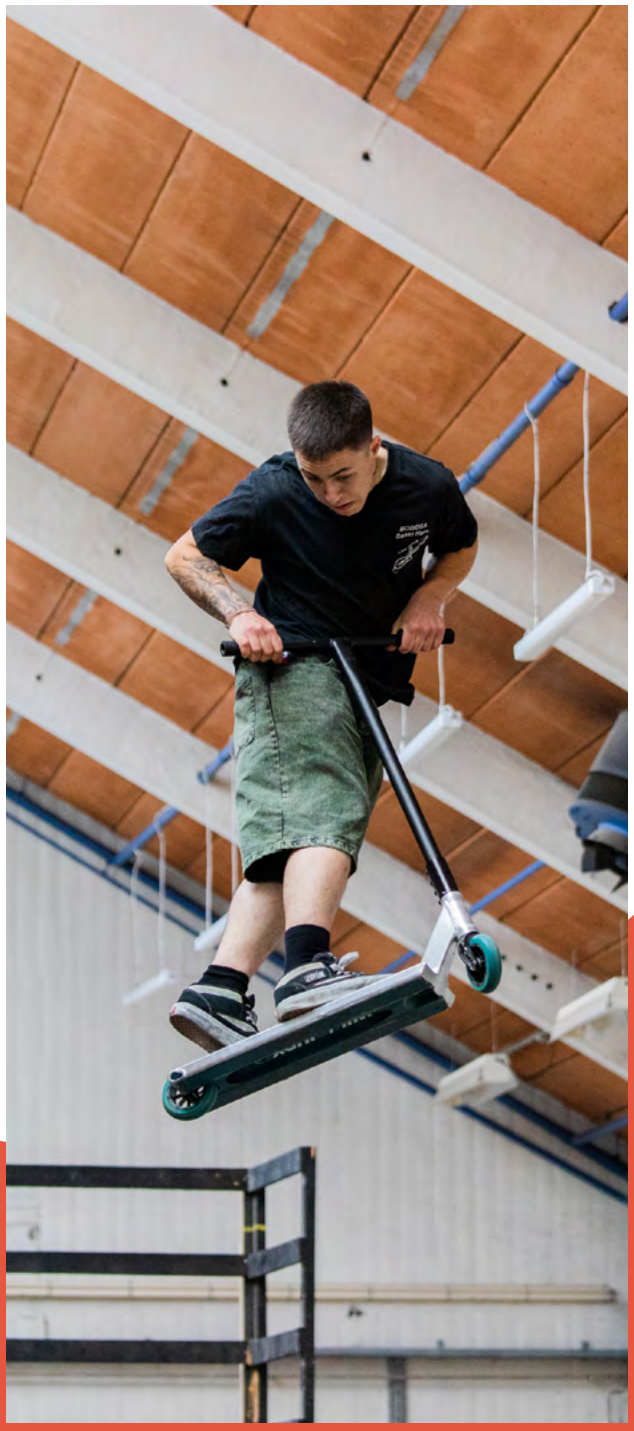
[1]Pawson, R., & Tilley, N. (1997). Realistic evaluation. Sage Publications, Inc

Key partners

- Steno Diabetes Center Copenhagen (SDCC): Contributed health promotion strategies, data collection, evaluation, reporting and communications.
- Cities for Better Health – Novo Nordisk: Contributed know-how and resources within health promotion and coordination with the Civic Dollars app.
- KAB (Copenhagen's non-profit housing association): Contributed experience of neighbourhood relations, local embeddedness and operating in social housing areas.
- Urban Partners: Delivered strategic urban development perspectives and planning competences as well as know-how and resources within sustainable urban development and health promotion.
- Spor10: Provided the facilities and local platform for activities.
- Save the Children Denmark, Neighbourhood Mothers in Sydhavnen and the Single Mothers network: Key actors in the recruitment of participants and local embeddedness.

The project was organised with a project group, a project leader and an evaluation coordinator, with a steering group ensuring strategic direction and quality. The project group assumed responsibility for day-to-day implementation of the project's activities, coordinated by the project leader. The evaluation coordinator undertook the design and implementation of the evaluation activities. The steering group had overall responsibility for strategic direction, professional sparring and quality assurance across the project.







Design and methodology of the evaluation

Design and intervention period

Evaluation of the Spor10 project was carried out as a qualitative evaluation. The intervention ran from December 2024 to September 2025 and comprised both social and digital initiatives targeting families with children in deprived residential areas.

The qualitative data collection mainly took place from February to May 2025, following 10 families to gain insight into their experiences, motivation and participation in the activities. The evaluation pursued a realistic approach, with the programme theory serving as an analytical framework for understanding what works, for whom and under what circumstances.

The project's initiatives comprised:

- **Social activities:** Dance, gymnastics, boxing and communal dining, held as closed events between 17:00 and 20:00 with familiar instructors and project workers.
- **Digital initiative in the form of the Civic Dollars app:** Families were able to earn digital currency by spending time in designated earn zones in the local area and using it to pay for activities at Spor10.

Programme theory

In collaboration with the project's partners, the programme theory was developed and operationalised in three central focus area:

1. **The Spor10 project's organisation and collaboration:** How partnerships, internal structures and communications influenced implementation and participation.
2. **The families' experience of and participation in the Spor10 project:** How the activities were used and perceived, including social relationships, wellbeing and engagement.
3. **The families' use of Civic Dollars:** How the app was used, understood and experienced by the participants, and what motivational and inhibitory mechanisms it created.

The programme theory served as the basis for the evaluation's interview and observation guides as well as the thematic analysis of data. The results in this report have been broken down into the second and third of the above focus areas concerning the families' experience of and participation in the Spor10 project and their experience of using Civic Dollars. This report does not consider organisation and collaboration in the Spor10 project and their importance for the project's implementation.



Methodology

Data collection

10 families with children were closely followed from February to May 2025. During the project period, three boxing programmes, four gymnastics programmes, three dance programmes and two taekwondo programmes were held. The activities comprised two evenings of boxing, gymnastics and dance, one evening of boxing, gymnastics and taekwondo, and a spring Spor10 festival in which all four activities were represented. The level of participation was high across the board; all families generally attended all activities, with the exception of two families who did not attend the round of boxing, gymnastics and taekwondo activities due to Ramadan. On average, around 65 persons attended each activity evening.

Data were collected by two project workers from SDCC using the following qualitative methods:

- **Participant observation:** Six activities were observed, focusing on forms of participation, interaction, feeling of safety, social dynamics and use of facilities. Field notes were used in the thematic analysis.
- **Semistructured interviews:** 10 interviews with families, primarily in their homes, focusing on perceptions, motivation, barriers, use of the Civic Dollars app and sense of community.
- **Logbook:** The project workers' notes supplemented observations and interviews with contextual information about participation and the activity programmes.

The Spor10 project group assumed a central role in both planning and implementing activities and building relationships, while the project workers were responsible for collecting data.

Data analysis

Semistructured interviews, observations and logbooks were analysed thematically using NVivo, where patterns and meaningful codes were identified and interpreted in relation to the programme theory. The analysis covered key themes such as wellbeing and perceived motivation and barriers to participation. Observations and logbook notes were used to triangulate data and thereby refine and validate interview data. This strengthens the credibility of the analysis.

Ethical and methodological reflections

The participants' anonymity and confidentiality were ensured through voluntary informed consent and data anonymisation. The whole process, from transcribing to coding and analysis, was quality-assured internally to ensure analytical rigour and validity. The evaluation covered a limited number of families, which may affect generalisability. At the same time, the accessibility of certain qualitative and quantitative data was limited due to technical issues with the Civic Dollars app and language barriers with some participants. Despite these limitations, the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data helped provide a robust insight into the project's impact on participation, wellbeing and engagement.



PART 1

The families' experience of and participation in the Spor10 project

Mechanisms for the families' participation in activities in the Spor10 project

Families with children that were experiencing various forms of vulnerability were a key target group in the Spor10 project. The project's activities therefore aimed to provide a safe, manageable and meaningful setting. This section shows how trust, stable relationships and a clear structure were crucial for supporting the families' participation and continued involvement. At the same time, it emphasises the children as being a key driver in the parents' engagement as well as the importance of the physical environment and flexible activities. Overall, the experiences show how the Spor10 project succeeded in creating participation opportunities and communities that strengthened wellbeing and cohesion among the families.

Trust-building and relational work as a foundation for participation in the Spor10 project

Trust, predictability and continuity proved key factors in getting the families to participate in the Spor10 project. In support of this, each family was assigned a designated contact person to follow up with weekly phone calls. These conversations served both as a practical reminder and a trust-building action.

A clear structure and predictable settings proved especially important for a target group characterised by vulnerability, insecurity and limited experience of organised communities. The activities were also planned with clear communications and predictability, which helped reduce the parents' insecurity and increased their motivation to participate.

"I have some diagnoses that I can't really talk to anyone about, but for the first time I actually sat down with other parents where we didn't have anything in common other than being parents and was open and felt understood. That must mean it's a very safe place."

- Interview with a mother from Sydhavnen

A number of parents described how participating in the Spor10 project created a safe space where they experienced understanding, a feeling of safety and community with other families with children in similar life situations. Some observed that the weekly meetings were a regular point of reference in day-to-day life and contributed to the family's general wellbeing. Over time, participation became more regular for many of the families, and in turn the growing familiarity with the surroundings supported consistent engagement. The experiences from the Spor10 project thus suggest that safe and

familiar settings reduced barriers to families with children participating in association activities and strengthened the feeling of trust.

Another key approach for supporting participation of the families was to bring on board engaged volunteers, especially from Neighbourhood Mothers, to act as cultural and social bridge-builders. They assisted with translation, interpreting social norms and creating a feeling of safety for persons facing linguistic or social challenges. This work also strengthened the participation of the families in the Spor10 project's activities and inspired some of them to take on minor roles in the local community, such as inviting neighbours and other families to events. Observations from the Spor10 project suggest that the work of establishing and maintaining close relationships strengthened the mutual trust in the group.

Overall, the experiences show that this close relational work in the Spor10 project built the platform for families with children to participate and remain involved. Close relational work, clear communications and stable points of contact served as key mechanisms for building trust with the families. At the same time, this supported continued engagement for many of the families.

Closed events as safe and meaningful spaces

The experiences from the project period show that open activities, where the participants are able to freely come and go, were often perceived as unmanageable and overwhelming for many of the families with children. In order to address this, four closed activities were arranged with regular participants and familiar settings. This created a sense of safety, structure and predictability, as well as making it easier for the families to engage actively.

Observations from the Spor10 project show that the closed events were perceived as more inclusive and manageable. When the activities were conducted in closed rooms with familiar instructors, it gave rise to a feeling of familiarity and a shared starting point, which made it easier for the participants to contribute and participate on their terms. According to the participants, it was crucial that their existing capabilities were accepted.

A key question in the programme of closed activities was whether over time the participants would feel ready to participate in open activities together with other users of Spor10. The experiences suggest that the transition from a target group-specific and closed environment to an open community requires a longer time and closer support than first assumed. For the participant group, which often faces complex social and health challenges, it is not sufficient for the activities to simply be accessible. Rather, they must also be perceived as meaningful and socially safe.

The results highlight that closed activities can serve as an important intermediate space for participation. They create a first point of contact where families feel included and acknowledged, which can provide a platform for gradual bridging to more open communities.

Children as a driver for engaging parents in association life

The children's wishes and needs were a key motivating factor for parents participating in the Spor10 project's activities. A number of parents commented that it was often the children's desire for play and social contact that got the whole family out of the door, especially when the adults were short on energy or not originally motivated.

"(...) My [son] is really keen. Although I'm extremely tired some days. But I do it for his sake because he needs to have a positive experience."

- Interview with a mother from Sydhavnen

Through attending the activities, many of the parents were either actively engaged with their younger children or socialised with other parents. Some mentioned that they saw an opportunity to get involved with association activities themselves in parallel with the children's activities.

"I'm on a disability pension and can't physically manage the activities at Spor10. But I'm delighted that my son is doing boxing with other children while I'm sitting talking to other parents. If there was something like yoga at the same time as the boxing, I'm sure that myself and other parents would take part. Yoga is good for the body and mind, and a lot of people from our area need to work on their minds."

- Interview with a mother at boxing

Especially in families with weak ties to organised communities, the children can function as a bridge to association life and open up new social communities for their parents.

Spor10 as a framework for a good leisure life

A number of parents stressed that participation in the Spor10 project was not just about socialising, but also about improving their physical and mental health. The activities provided energy, respite and an opportunity to spend time actively with the children.

"At home we're always arguing because there are six of us in a 65 m2 apartment. At Spor10 there's room to laugh, mess around and stretch out without knocking down shelves."

- Interview with a mother from Sydhavnen

Spor10 was thus perceived as a place where there were good opportunities to create positive and active everyday routines. At the same time, the families experienced an increased feeling of being more healthy in the project period. Eight out of 10 of the families being followed pointed to screen use as the biggest obstacle to the family's health, and half believed the screen was the main barrier to exercising. For persons with chronic conditions, participation in Spor10 was perceived as a clear improvement in their wellbeing compared to normal everyday life.

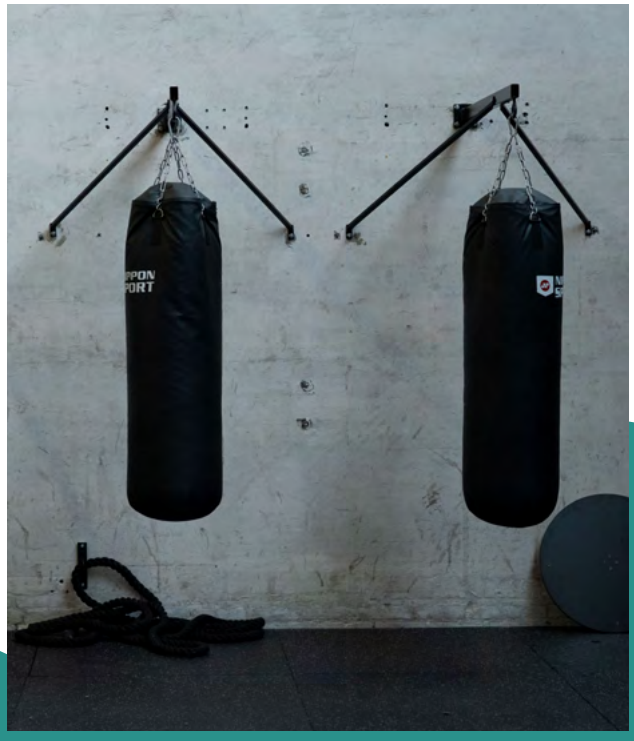
"I have PCO [follicles in the ovaries] and some of the other women have diabetes. It's beneficial for our health walking those kilometres to and from Spor10. We might just be sitting and chatting while our children exercise, but there's also a health aspect to it."

- Interview with a mother from Sydhavnen

All the families also stressed the benefits of being part of meaningful relationships and communities. The Spor10 project provided an opportunity to meet other families in similar life situations, share experiences and create social ties that strengthened wellbeing and quality of life. Although a few of the parents felt they were participating in parallel with everyone else and found it difficult getting involved socially in the community of other families, many said the community reduced the isolation they were experiencing and increased the feeling of belonging. At the same time, their children had the opportunity to play and be active with other children.

"I would say that if we weren't at Spor10, we would all be sitting at home with our screens, so just getting us out is extremely healthy in every way."

- Interview with a mother from Amager





Many parents also stressed that the food at Spor10 is healthy and appealing. The meals were rated as more nutritious and of higher quality than the families could normally offer at home, which was regarded as a major benefit for both children and adults.

"I dare say that the food we eat over there is real food. It's really healthy. I can't afford to cook food like that for my children at home."

- Interview with a mother from Amager

Observations and interviews also showed that Spor10 created an environment where parents and children could spend time together in new ways that provided a break from their everyday practical routines. The activities provided room for play, discussion and shared experiences, which strengthened the mutual contact and sense of belonging. Many parents described how the children's need for play and social contact was the main driver for participating in the Spor10 project, even when they themselves lacked the energy. The Spor10 project was thus perceived as a safe space where families could strengthen relationships and create more quality time.

"I feel healthier coming to Spor10 because I feel less stressed than normal. I feel happy, and I forget all the thoughts I normally have."

- Interview with a mother from Amager

At the same time, the parents found that the Spor10 project strengthened the connection between their own and other local areas, as well as creating ties across neighbourhoods. The Spor10 project thus served as a common platform where families from Sydhavnen, Amager and other residential areas met, took part in activities and shared experiences. This form of cross-area community was perceived to be especially valuable because it built bridges between areas that are usually considered separate.

"The people I've got to know from other areas such as Valby and Vesterbro ask if there are other activities in Sydhavn, and I tell them what we have. There's a poster here about a visit to water park Lalandia that I got them to ask to join me on. So we also get that experience together."

- Interview with a mother from Sydhavnen

Many families with children also found that the Spor10 project helped create new communities across cultures and local areas, as well as expanding their networks and giving them new opportunities to participate in different activities. At the same time, the experiences show that there is a need to provide more intensive support for the children and parents who find it hard joining the closed social communities.

Engagement of young people in leisure life through flexible settings and good role models

As the Spor10 project progressed, it became clear that there were special circumstances around young people's engagement in leisure life. Many parents found it difficult engaging them in leisure activities generally, but the presence of specialist role models increased participation in the Spor10 project for many people. The boxing instructor, in particular, motivated more young people to participate in his boxing sessions and come to Spor10. The instructors' short introductions to the activities were also highlighted as reassuring and motivating.

"If [the boxing instructor] is there and doing the training, I can persuade my 14-year-old son to go to the boxing. Otherwise there's nothing that will drag him away from the computer."

- Interview with a mother from Amager

At the same time, parents found it was often hard for teenagers to engage in an overly narrow range of activities. Many highlighted the need for a more flexible and broad offering that could satisfy different interests and create a meeting place for young people.

"I'd really like to help crack the code for keeping our teenagers engaged in a good leisure life. But it's hard. You offer boxing, taekwondo and gymnastics, which are extremely specific. That's not what teenagers want. You need to think more generally. Things like creative space, crochet/knitting club, graffiti art, cooking: or letting them help define what's going to be created."

- Interview with a mother from Sydhavnen

Overall, the experiences from the Spor10 project indicate that successful inclusion of young people requires both inspiring role models and a flexible and broad framework that young people themselves can influence or that is inclusive and tailored to different needs.

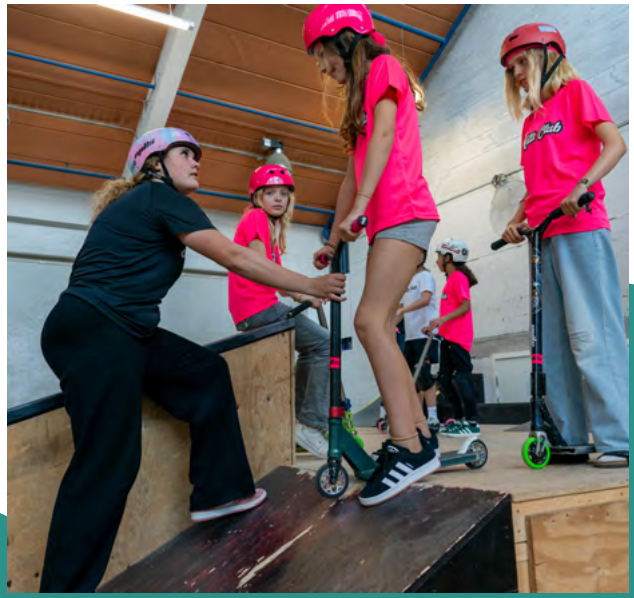
The physical environment as a motivating factor

The participating families repeatedly emphasised the physical environments at Spor10 as an important motivating factor. The spacious and bright facilities were perceived as appealing and very different to the small and confined facilities that many families were familiar with from association leisure activities. A number of the families described how the size and welcoming atmosphere of the environment created space for a larger community and more exercise, which was often lacking in other associations.

"In my family we're used to doing a lot of recreational activities in associations. But they usually take place in dark, small and cramped premises, and we usually come across staff who are under pressure and we feel like a number in the queue. Then we go to Spor10, which is bright and huge and has staff with energy and drive. I was so overwhelmed the first time I went in."

- Interview with a mother from Sydhavnen

Parents also pointed to the need for activities to be differentiated according to the child's age, energy level and need for stimulation. Experiences from the project's creative station and spring festival show that varying tempo, noise level and form of activity makes it easier for a lot of children to find their own way of participating. This emphasises that tailored physical environments can increase the likelihood of more children being included in activities.



"I also think it's important to have an area where there's no noise and crashing and banging. Because there are lots of people who can't tolerate that. I know about destressing from my 11-year-old. They also have that in school, being able to withdraw, and Spor10 should incorporate things like that. How they can have low arousal for children and young people."

- Interview with a mother from Sydhavnen

Overall, the experiences from the Spor10 project show that participation by families with children in vulnerable positions is not just about access to activities, but also very much about a framework around safety, relationships and familiarity. Three key mechanisms seem to be crucial: trusting relationships with clear points of contact; a closed and structured setting that creates a socially safe space; and a physical environment that motivates people to participate and engage in communities. The interplay between these factors has been central to breaking down the diverse barriers that the families experience in respect of participating in association life, and can support a gradual attachment to the communities around Spor10.





PART 2

The families' use of Civic Dollars

The Civic Dollars app, a central element of the Spor10 project, was designed to motivate families with children to exercise more in their local areas. By spending time in designated earn zones, the families were able to earn digital currency – Civic Dollars – that could be spent on communal dining, activities and other offerings at Spor10. The aim was to promote exercise, strengthen local communities and give families access to new experiences.

Although there was a high level of interest in the app, the experiences showed that participation and continued involvement required more than just access to the technology. This section describes the mechanisms that supported use of the app by the families with children – as well as the limitations and challenges that characterised the use.

The Civic Dollars app as a tool for local engagement and new routines

For some parents, the motivation for using the Civic Dollars app was rooted in a desire for their children to have access to association life with opportunities to acquire more healthy exercise habits. The parents experienced the app as an opportunity to support their children's wellbeing by breaking patterns of isolation and inactivity.

"I grew up not being allowed to participate in sport because my parents didn't speak Danish and felt they were outside association life. (...) I'm doing everything I can to give my children a life that includes associations, and they should be able to try anything they want to. Using and supporting something like Civic Dollars would be very close to my heart."

- Interview with a mother from Sydhavnen

The app enabled some families to explore new places and facilities in the local area. A number said that the app allowed them to use green spaces and local facilities they did not use previously. Through earning and spending Civic Dollars at Spor10, the families found themselves enjoying new routines and experiences that strengthened both physical activity and the sense of belonging to the community.

"When I start using the app, it can make me aware of new areas in my local community. I've never been down to the cemetery, even though I've always lived here. But now I've seen on the map that there's an earn zone there. Maybe in the summer I'll take a walk down there with the children. We're getting to know places that are new to us, even though we've always lived here [laughs]."

- Interview with a mother from Sydhavnen

The experiences show that the earn zones required the families to actively seek out the opportunities and find the capacity to participate. For families with limited time, energy or familiarity with the local area, it was therefore difficult to convert the app's opportunities into specific activities. This suggests that the Civic Dollars app can strengthen connection and participation, but only if support, clear communications and activities are provided that match the families' life situation.

For many families the possibility of spending earned Civic Dollars on food and activities at Spor10 was a key motivating factor. The specific reward for every 30 minutes' stay in an earn zone made the app attractive, and six out of 10 families cited money as the main driver. One parent described how Civic Dollars can give hard-up families with children the possibility of participating in the city's activities and achieving a sense of normality and community.

"If Civic Dollars wasn't there, I would find Spor10 just as fantastic because it's the feeling of community that's important for me. But Civic Dollars means we can participate in the activities like other 'normal' families without just sitting in the free areas with our own packed lunches. It feels really good to be a 'normal' family."

- Interview with a mother from Amager

Technical and practical issues for families with children when using the Civic Dollars app

The introduction to the Civic Dollars app was perceived to be understandable and user-friendly by most of the families, but they still encountered practical and technical issues. Many forgot to activate the app in the earn zones or had difficulty understanding how the currency had to be used, and some had phones that did not support the app.

When the app worked, it motivated the families to exercise more, strengthened relationships between children and parents, and created new experiences in the local area. The experiences indicate the need for increased digital inclusion and clearer communications if the app's full potential is to be utilised.

"Sometimes I forget to activate. So you remember when you're already out of the zone. Oh my God, I forgot. As long as I remember and if it was like automatic, you know, like when I enter the zone and it would automatically start instead of me remembering I have to do it. Actually I thought it would do that."

- Interview with a father from Amager

Some families had older or basic smartphones that did not support the app, which was a particular issue for vulnerable families and increased the risk of digital exclusion. The earn zones also required the families to actively seek out the places, which became a barrier for those with a lack of time, energy or familiarity with the local area. The app's effectiveness therefore depends on having relevant activities, financial incentives and good technical abilities – and participation will only increase if this is accompanied by clear communications, practical support and safe environments.





Conclusion and summary of the evaluation

Part 1: The families' experience of and participation in the Spor10 project

Families with children – many of them in vulnerable life situations – were the core target group for the Spor10 project. The project's activities were organised with a focus on safe, manageable and meaningful settings that could promote participation, engagement and continued involvement.

A key finding is that the target group has to be clearly defined if the aim is to include citizens in vulnerable positions. Participation requires more than just access; it also requires structured support, trusting relationships and activities that take into account social, linguistic and digital barriers. In particular, digital exclusion and technological uncertainty can inhibit participation and should be considered already in the design phase of any similar initiatives.

The evaluation identifies three central mechanisms that supported participant engagement:

1. Trusting relationships and stable points of contact

- Each family had a designated contact person who followed up with weekly calls and contributed to continuity and a feeling of safety.
- Volunteers – especially from Neighbourhood Mothers – served as bridge-builders, creating trust, interpreting social codes and reducing language barriers.
- The relational work was vital for building trust and ensuring continued participation.

2. Closed and structured activities

- Closed events with regular participants and familiar instructors contributed to manageability and a feeling of safety.
- The transition to open activities required longer-term support, especially for families facing complex social or health challenges.
- Familiar settings and designated contact persons were important for families being able to engage on their own terms.

3. Children and the physical environment as drivers

- The children's desire for play and social relationships served as a strong motivating factor for the parents' participation.
- Spacious, bright and flexible facilities made the activities more appealing and inclusive.
- Variation in activity type, tempo and noise level increased the likelihood of all children being able to participate.

Impact on wellbeing and leisure life

The Spor10 project contributed to the establishment of positive everyday routines, increased physical activity and respite for the families. Parents reported improved mental wellbeing, reduced social isolation and greater community attachment, while the children gained access to play, exercise and new social communities. Communal eating and socialising were emphasised as important, and flexible offerings and role models emerged as particularly important for engaging teenagers in leisure life.

The project succeeded in engaging families with children by offering activities tailored to the need for safety, familiarity and predictability. Spor10 was perceived as a safe space where both children and adults could participate meaningfully and experience increased wellbeing and community belonging. The activities created joy, togetherness and relationships – both internally within the families and across the participant group.

Recruitment and continued involvement were best achieved through local relationships and peer support. Neighbourhood Mothers and Single Mothers played a key role as bridge-builders, contributing to trust and local embeddedness. The evaluation also points to the transition from closed to open communities requiring time, support and a gradual approach. Many participants feel vulnerable being "let go" after an initiative, and long-term embeddedness is considered necessary for maintaining the positive effects.

Part 2: The families' use of Civic Dollars

Technical and practical issues
Some families experienced difficulties using the Civic Dollars app due to forgetting to activate it, having older phones or finding it hard understanding the functions. Digital inclusion and clear communications emerged as vital for effective use of the app.

Motivation and effectiveness
The app helped increase physical activity, strengthen social relationships and promote engagement in the local area, especially when the earning and spending of points was perceived as manageable and meaningful. Civic Dollars served as a financial incentive that made the activities more accessible for families with limited resources and strengthened the feeling of participation and normality. Six out of 10 families emphasised money as the main motivation for using the app. At the same time, the experiences show that digital incentives should not be deployed alone or as a precondition for participation, but rather as a supplement to the social and relational efforts.

Preconditions for effectiveness
The app's effectiveness was closely linked to the activities' relevance and accessibility in the local area, and to clear communications and technical functionality. The interplay between motivation, financial incentives and a safe environment supported the families in being able to use the app and experience value in day-to-day life.

The Civic Dollars app had clear potential as a tool for strengthening participation, but required improved technical functionality and communications to work optimally. The app should therefore be regarded as a support tool – not as a replacement for the social initiative.

Conclusion

The evaluation shows that the Spor10 project was successful in engaging families with children in vulnerable positions in leisure activities, exercise and social communities when the initiative combined:

- trusting relationships and close contact
- structured and closed settings
- a flexible and appealing physical environment, and
- children's motivation as a driver.

The Civic Dollars app has potential to strengthen participation and community attachment, but its use requires clear communications, practical support and technical access.

Overall, the evaluation suggests that the interplay between relational support, a safe environment and motivational incentives is vital for promoting wellbeing, social integration and access to meaningful communities among families with children in deprived residential areas.

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