

**cities
for better
health**

MOVE
FOR FUN



ARGENTINA 

Physical activity in a community setting

Move For Fun is a global pilot programme funded by Novo Nordisk and developed in partnership with the International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA) and Danish sports association DGI, alongside other partner organisations in pilot countries. Move For Fun is designed for children between the ages of six and 12 who would benefit from being more physically active, with a focus on working in vulnerable communities.



Reaching vulnerable children

A successful Move For Fun pilot programme has been implemented in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to engage children from highly vulnerable neighbourhoods.

The disparities between neighbourhoods in Buenos Aires are a prominent example of the inequality in Argentina's capital city.

The country's economy has faced challenges recently, including high inflation, currency devaluation, and rising poverty and unemployment rates.¹ Stark economic disparities exist, and in some neighbourhoods, residents struggle to access affordable housing and live in informal settlements on the city's perimeter.

Valores Y Deporte, the Move For Fun implementing partner in Argentina, says that physical inactivity is a particular problem among children in these vulnerable communities. Providing children with access and encouragement to participate in fun physical activities appropriate to their ability is important to support their health, well-being and academic performance. In addition to health benefits, physical activity is considered crucial to improved self-esteem and social interaction skills in children.²



Implementing partner Valores Y Deporte

Valores Y Deporte (*Values and Sport*), a non-profit society established in 2012, is the implementing partner for Move For Fun in Argentina. Its main focus is to promote socially inclusive sports programmes developed by the Claudio Marangoni Sports Academy. By leveraging the coaches, facilities and volunteers of the Claudio Marangoni Sports Academy in Buenos Aires, Valores Y Deporte can effectively carry out its mission. With decades of experience in community outreach projects, the academy successfully engages 7,000 vulnerable individuals, including boys, girls, young people, adults and senior citizens, in a wide range of social development initiatives each year.

Pilot approach

The principal objective of the Move For Fun programme in Buenos Aires was to extend the opportunity to participate in physical activity to children from vulnerable inner-city communities and neighbourhoods.

The target neighbourhoods were located mainly, but not exclusively, in the southern part of the city. The programme designed various sports and activity-based sessions to help girls and boys from these communities become physically active and, as a result, more self-confident, healthy and happy. The project set out with two distinct goals: to build local capacity in vulnerable communities and to deliver activities to vulnerable children.

Build local capacity in vulnerable communities

Valores Y Deporte prioritised enhancing the skills and capabilities of local leaders (volunteers) living in vulnerable communities and urban settlements.

The objective was to identify and empower individuals actively involved in sports for development initiatives targeting children and young people. This was achieved by establishing strong connections with willing locals and equipping them with the necessary training and resources to successfully facilitate a Move For Fun class.

Deliver activities to vulnerable children

Neighbourhood and context-appropriate activities were selected and delivered to children between the ages of six and 12. Valores Y Deporte tailored sport or activity selection to maximise uptake and participation, and larger-scale activities were incorporated.



Community selection

The programme approached communities where children face significant vulnerability.

Districts on the outskirts of the city feature densely packed communities, where some residents struggle to get by, living in poorly maintained, multi-family dwellings. Children from these districts experience poverty, and not all have access to school every day or adequate nutrition, either at home or at school.

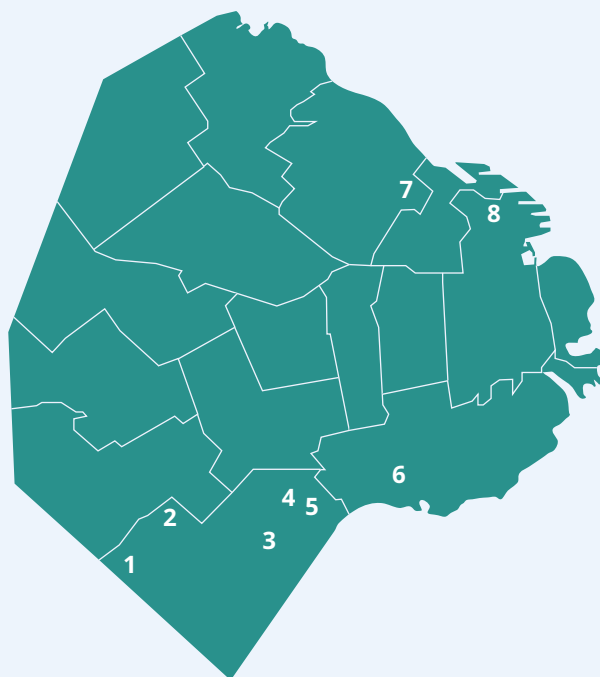
It is not uncommon for the residents of these districts to experience violence in their communities. There may be no specific physical activity sessions for those who regularly attend school.

Valores Y Deporte contacted communities where children are exposed to considerable vulnerabilities. A personal approach was used by engaging directly with local representatives.

Eight sites were chosen for programmes across the city of Buenos Aires. The spaces for implementing the Move For Fun methodology were chosen because they expected a consistent participant turnout. The majority of the Move For Fun sessions were run in community settings using available spaces.

Figure 1: Eight sites were selected for Move For Fun programmes in Buenos Aires

1. Villa 15
2. Barrio Cildañez
3. Los Piletones
4. La Casa de Bajo Flores
5. Barrio Ricciadelli
6. Barrio Zavaleta
7. Parque Las Heras
8. Barrio 31



Programme design

The programme offered children secure and dependable spaces to participate in urban dance, skating and football-related physical activities.

A variety of sports were selected to engage boys and girls in the eight settings. Activities included football, mixed skating and urban dance. Classes for boys', girls' and mixed football were on offer. Sessions were run in neighbourhood settings and at sports academy facilities, to engage the maximum number of children. The neighbourhood settings required location and equipment planning, as the areas used for the activities were informal, available spaces.

For many of the children participating, this may be the only place they are taught structured physical education and good nutrition. The coaches and volunteers were

given training and provided with teaching materials in the form of cards to prompt conversations with the children about how to live and eat healthily. Cards were also included to encourage discussion regarding mental health issues. Initially, 12 volunteers were recruited, which grew to 16 in the second phase of the programme.

Valores Y Deporte conducted an analysis before implementing the activities, using representative samples of children from target groups. This analysis helped fine-tune the selection and variety of sports, skating and dance offered. Ongoing enquiries to ensure high attendance and engagement were also important.



Movement and fun, above all

The sessions aimed to generate the maximum movement and activity from the children.

Whilst the sessions were created with a particular activity in mind, for example football, the coaching was not technical or skill-rich in content. Coloured cards and advice on using them were made available to coaches, to help engage with the children and prompt feedback on mood and energy levels.

“This is not a skills masterclass. The aim is for every child to have a great session and, above all, have fun.”

Lucas Bojanich

Project leader, Valores Y Deporte

Spotlight on implementation

Local context research

Forming a trusted relationship, being dependable and committing to the children are essential to the programme. Before establishing a programme in a neighbourhood, it is necessary to conduct a proper analysis of the area and the situational context.

It is important to gain an understanding of the local context from the community before initiating a programme. Entering a neighbourhood and leaving after providing one class is counterproductive and disruptive for the children.



Spotlight on implementation

Tailored tools and resources

Two pedagogical resources were produced to assist the volunteers in session management. These were made available, with instructions on the programme website.

1. **Colour cards** – A simple resource to apply flexibly throughout sessions, the cards can be adapted to various activities.
2. **Evaluation sheets** – This tool aims to understand the reasons why girls and boys participate in the sessions. The sheets can be implemented in an easy and fun way and are used to gather feedback by letting participants choose a smiley face to show how they are feeling about an activity.

Results

630 children

participating in Move For Fun sessions in Buenos Aires

8 sites

with six in the southern portion of the city and two in the central zone

88% of classes were available to boys and girls

One football-themed class with a capacity of 50 was made available to girls only

100% sustained motivation

A survey with the implementing partner showed that all the children remained either motivated or very motivated to join in with sports and physical activity throughout the programme

*"The poverty and social exclusion here in Argentina is serious. **Some of the children are not meeting their basic needs of nutrition.** That's one of the most important things we can't do anything about. We try to get funding, implement the coaching, we try our best."*

Patricio Mascioli

Project manager, Valores Y Deporte



Challenges

The programme faced several significant challenges, mainly attributable to the setting.

The programme learned that attendance was unpredictable. While the children wanted to attend all of the sessions, not all of them had an adult or sibling to take them to every class. In addition, equipment and space were limited. Sessions in community settings lack on-site sports materials or enclosed spaces where the activities take place. Children could be emotional after sessions, and volunteers had limited pedagogical resources and didactic tools at their disposal.

There were safety concerns as well. While session volunteers could guarantee the children's safety during the activities, their journeys and the surrounding areas could be dangerous. Neighbourhood safety situations are fluid and constantly changing. At times, children may be unable to pass through the areas needed to attend their class. The Move For Fun volunteers responsible for the socio-sporting activities require additional support to address the complex situations in the community settings.

Adaptations

Volunteers were trained to responsibly care for and manage a range of reactions, and to teach the children emotional management strategies. The volunteers also received training and resources to address issues regarding nutrition and incorporating healthy habits into the children's daily lives.

By using the prompt cards and asking for regular feedback from the children, the volunteers continuously appraised the appropriateness of the activities and the fun factor, to ensure maximum enjoyment. However, challenges related to the setting were not within the scope of the programme to address. Volunteers would regularly assess the setting and the cooperation of community leaders.

Key learning

The didactic tools and prompt cards were important assets for session volunteers. A complete set of resources was produced, providing assistance and ensuring better organisation of training sessions. All materials were available to download from a dedicated website.



View the materials used in the pilot programme (in Spanish)

[Access the materials →](#)

Future direction

Valores Y Deporte is highly motivated to continue the Move For Fun programme beyond the pilot, and is looking to secure a sustainable future for the programme.



Highlight

*"A lot of the children from these neighbourhoods aren't having so much fun, and they face challenging circumstances every day, so **joy through movement is absolutely our main goal.**"*

Ramiro Marangoni

Chief financial officer, Valores Y Deporte



References

1. Miguel Lo Bianco and Jorge Otaola. Argentina inflation hits 124% as cost-of-living crisis sharpens. *Reuters*. 14 September 2023. Accessed October 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/markets/argentine-shoppers-face-daily-race-deals-inflation-soars-above-100-2023-09-13/> 2. Biddle SJ, Asare M. Physical activity and mental health in children and adolescents: a review of reviews. *British journal of sports medicine*. 2011;45(11):886-895.

About the partners



DGI

DGI is the biggest “sport for all” association in Denmark, focusing exclusively on strengthening and promoting physical activity and sport participation for all citizens through local clubs and communities. DGI collaborates with a wide range of partners to promote health and social well-being. The organisation has 6,600 member associations with 1.7 million volunteers. More than 30,000 volunteers, coaches and leaders attend courses at DGI every year.

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International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA)

International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA) is a global umbrella association with an active community of 3,669 MOVE Agents and a democratic backbone of 81 member organisations, all of which are national and local promoters of sport, play and physical activity. We develop and deploy concepts to empower organisations worldwide to get citizens from all walks of life more physically active.

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Novo Nordisk

Novo Nordisk is a leading global healthcare company, founded in 1923 and headquartered in Denmark. Our purpose is to drive change to defeat serious chronic diseases, built upon our heritage in diabetes. We do so by pioneering scientific breakthroughs, expanding access to our medicines, and working to prevent and ultimately cure disease. Novo Nordisk employs about 59,000 people in 80 countries and markets its products in around 170 countries.

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Cities for Better Health works alongside cities, researchers and community partners to advance opportunities for healthier eating and active living in underserved communities, especially for children.

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