

**cities
for better
health**

MOVE
FOR FUN

Enabling a healthy start in life through physical activity

A playbook to help get you started with
implementing a Move For Fun programme
for children in vulnerable settings

Children participating in a Move For Fun
pilot programme, Buenos Aires, Argentina



ISCA



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Wroclaw, Poland



Foreword

Every child should be able to enjoy the benefits of physical activity, establishing a solid base for a life filled with energy, happiness and good health. Extensive research has consistently shown that regular physical activity improves a child's physical, mental and social well-being and enhances their ability to learn and think. Maintaining an active lifestyle from an early age into adulthood is widely recognised to be crucial in improving brain health and weight management, reducing the risk of disease, and strengthening bones and muscles.

Despite this, physical activity levels have decreased, making it the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality. Concerningly, physical inactivity among children and adolescents is soaring.

Too many children live in communities that lack safe spaces for walking and cycling, have limited access to public open spaces, and face financial barriers for participating in exercise or sports programmes.

Children living in vulnerable communities and neighbourhoods face additional challenges in achieving enjoyable, sociable and accessible physical activity.

Move For Fun is a response that seeks to address some of these health inequities.

Move For Fun is an international programme funded by Novo Nordisk and implemented in collaboration with the International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA) and Danish sports association, DGI, as well as other partner organisations in countries which have piloted the programme between 2020 and 2023.

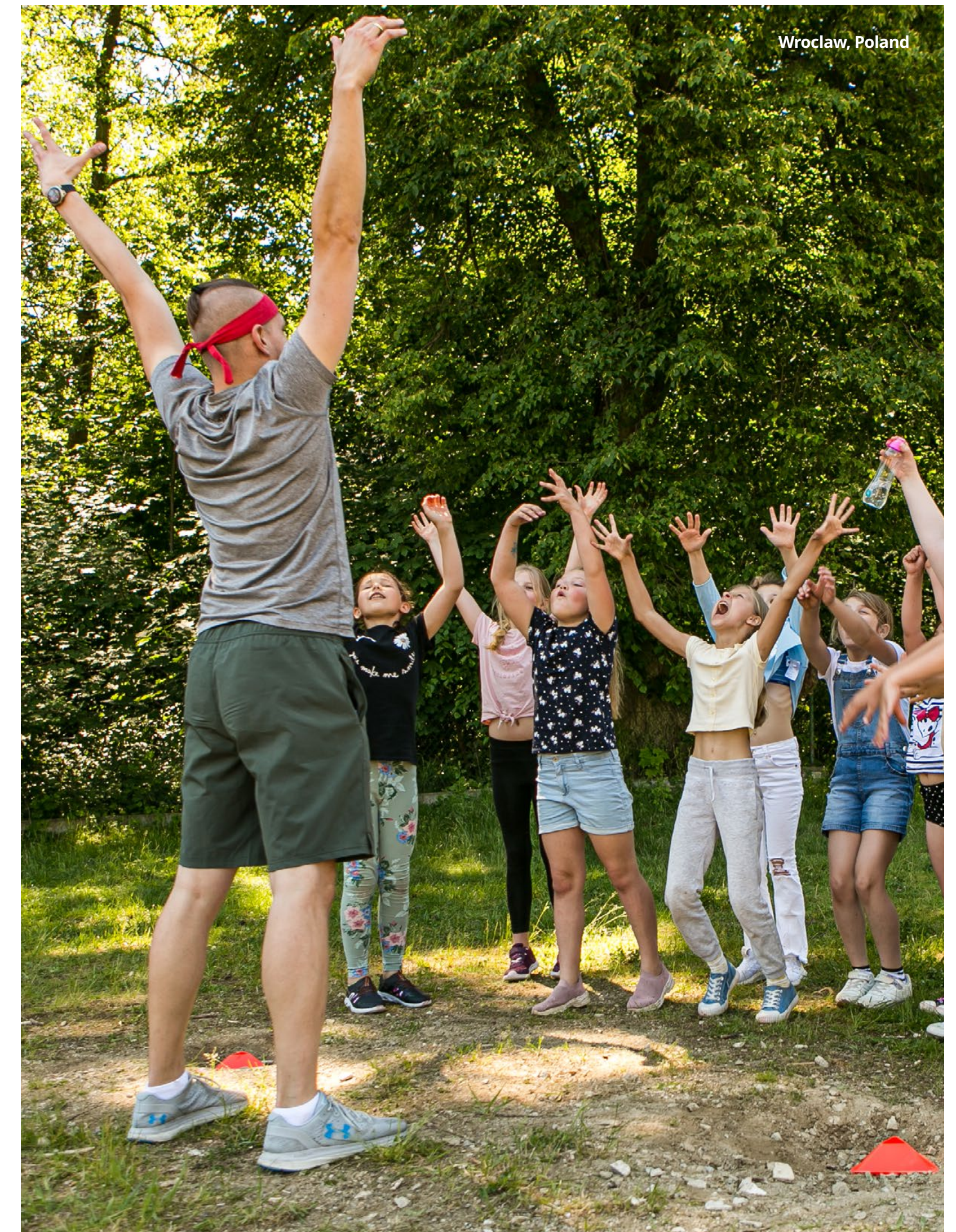
By targeting fixed groups of children in disadvantaged areas, Move For Fun aspires to positively impact the long-term active lifestyles of participants. This playbook sets out the principles that underpin Move For Fun and profiles three pilot case studies from Argentina, Poland and the United Kingdom. We hope it inspires anyone looking to introduce more physical activity, better health and well-being into the lives of children everywhere.

On behalf of the partners, we encourage you to get in touch if you want to find out more. We are passionate about exploring opportunities and implementing practical and diverse initiatives to encourage children to be physically active in an integrated, enjoyable and inclusive manner.

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General Manager, DGI

Jacob Schouenborg
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Director, Cities for Better Health & Head of Obesity Health Equity, Global Health Equity, Novo Nordisk



Active lifestyles from an early age

Engaging in physical activity has numerous benefits in terms of social, mental and physical health and well-being for children and adolescents.¹

Sadly, three out of four children and eight out of 10 adolescents worldwide fail to meet recommended guidelines.

Girls are more likely to be inactive than boys.²⁻⁴

Regular physical activity is effective at preventing and managing several non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

In addition, physical activity plays a crucial role in preventing hypertension and maintaining a healthy body weight.⁵

Physical activity also has the potential to enhance mental health, overall quality of life and general well-being.⁵

In children and adolescents, physical activity improves:⁶

- Social well-being
 - Social interaction and building friendships
 - Confidence and self-esteem
 - Conflict resolution
- Physical well-being
 - Physical fitness (cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness)
 - Cardiometabolic health (blood pressure, dyslipidaemia, glucose and insulin resistance)
 - Bone health and healthy growth
 - Reduced adiposity
- Mental well-being
 - Cognitive outcomes (academic performance, executive function)
 - Emotional health (reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety)
 - Better sleep

Physical activity and health equity

Unfortunately, many children face unequal chances to lead physically active lives. This inequity can take various forms and is influenced by factors such as socioeconomic status, access to resources and societal norms. Some key examples include:⁷

Access to safe recreational spaces: In disadvantaged communities, children may face barriers to accessing safe and well-maintained parks, playgrounds or recreational facilities, which restricts their chances for physical activity.

Physical education in schools: Disparities exist in the quality and availability of physical education programmes across schools. Those in economically challenged areas often have limited resources for physical education, diminishing opportunities for physical activity within the school day.

Extracurricular activities: Engaging in organised sports and extracurricular pursuits frequently demands financial resources that many low-income families lack. Children from such backgrounds may experience reduced opportunities to participate in such activities.

These intersecting social identities, along with historical contexts, can impact feelings of safety, belonging and inclusion in the local environment.⁸



The Move For Fun concept

Move For Fun is designed to be adaptable and inclusive while ensuring the success and sustainability of local activities.

The Move For Fun concept expands the successful Jump4Fun model already effectively implemented in 39 municipalities across Denmark by DGI. This concept has been further developed by incorporating valuable insights and advice from similar programmes worldwide, thanks to the network of ISCA members, experts and partners.

The underlying principle of the model is rooted in the didactic relationship approach.* It is designed to be adaptable to local circumstances while providing ample guidance, resources and capacity-building support to ensure the success and sustainability of activities by the local delivery organisation.

*The didactic relationship model refers to a specific approach to teaching and learning that emphasises structured and systematic interaction between the teacher and the learner. This model is commonly used in educational settings, particularly in traditional classroom environments. The teacher's primary responsibility is to transmit knowledge and skills to the learners, who are seen as passive recipients of information.



Core principles of Move For Fun



Inclusion

Activities are carefully designed to ensure that all team members feel included and can fully appreciate their participation. There is a strong emphasis on fostering engagement amongst all the children involved.



Involvement

The specific activities are co-designed with the children, allowing them to have a say and actively participate in decision-making. They contribute their ideas and have a shared responsibility in implementing these activities.



Enjoyment

First and foremost, activities should be fun! There is respect for other motivations among the participating children, but the intrinsic enjoyment of playing is core to the programme.



Evaluation

Children, even those in preschool years, actively take part in age-appropriate assessments of the sessions. They also express their thoughts and feelings about the activities during and after the sessions.

Move For Fun does not focus on sport-specific activities

In essence, Move For Fun operates on the belief that the simple fact of being active matters more than the specific activity itself. As a result, Move For Fun does not focus on sport-specific activities. Although children can suggest specific sports, they must align with the programme's core principles and avoid overly competitive elements. The main objective is to make participation accessible to all children by removing barriers.

A typical session for the weekly activities follows a structured approach, consisting of engaging, warming up, playing, and finally cooling down and evaluating in an inclusive and gentle manner.

Who is Move For Fun for?

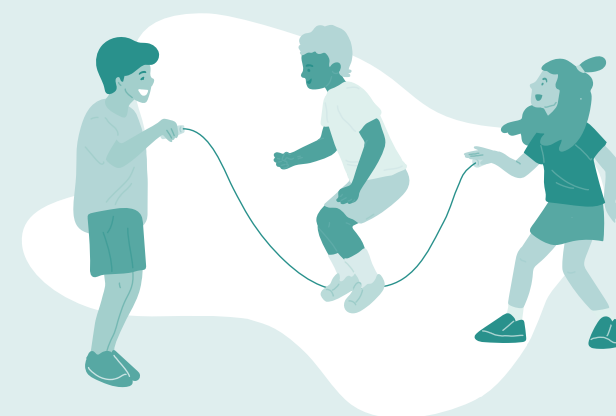
Move For Fun aims to encourage physical activity in children between the ages of six and 12. It is designed specifically for children living in underprivileged communities who would benefit from increased physical activity.

Flexibility in different settings

Move For Fun is flexible enough to be implemented for different age groups, in different settings and in different cultural contexts.

Key organisational recommendations

There are three key organisational recommendations for implementing Move For Fun, based on the pilot experiences:



Partnerships

Working together with partners, such as the local municipality, associations, community leaders, equipment sponsors and the media, can significantly enhance and maintain a more effective and long-lasting programme. While building and nurturing these partnerships may require time and effort, the benefits they bring are certainly worth it!



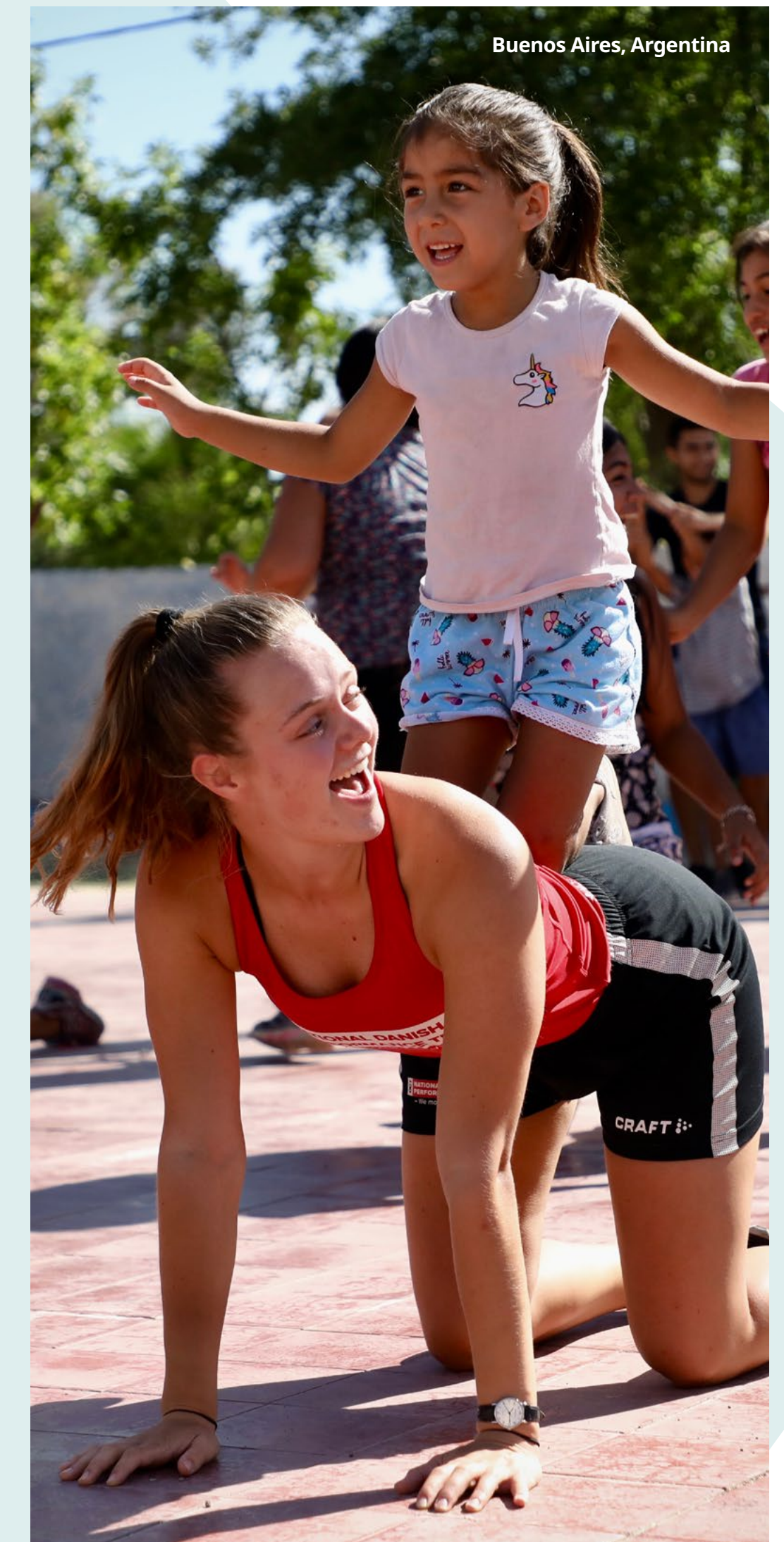
Incentives

Providing activity cards, ensuring high-quality equipment and organising team trips are just a few of the small incentives that foster long-term engagement and appreciation among children.



Adaptation

Listening to local community leaders, involving teachers and trainers in the design process, and understanding the specific needs of the children are all critical to a successful project. Be prepared to adapt and refine the Move For Fun concept and its implementation as changes arise, and remember that Move For Fun is a flexible framework and guiding principles, not a rigid set of rules.



The GO! principles

Understanding what motivates children can help steer programme development.

All Move For Fun activities are created with the principal of “joy at the centre” of everything. Founding partner DGI has developed an understanding of children’s motivation when engaged in physical activity sessions, and this forms the basis of a toolkit and a set of resources to help practitioners generate and maintain motivation.

The basic behavioural drivers have been categorised as **health, challenge, community and joy of movement**. Building on academic research from the past four decades, DGI has refined its principles and works on the assumption that four basic drivers play a role in motivation, albeit to varying degrees and in all conceivable combinations. The study of motivation has largely been carried out among adult athletes^{9,10} and translated into applicability to children by DGI.

The cornerstones of motivation

The following four benchmarks have been used as a basis for feedback, tools and resources:



Go Fit (health)

Motivation comes from obtaining an increased health, aesthetic or well-being benefit from participating. It may be that participation is a means of achieving something else that is not closely linked to the activity itself.



Go Pro (challenge)

Motivation comes from wanting to improve purposefully, achieve results and perform. Participants benchmark ability in comparison with and against themselves or others. Choices are aimed at developing certain skills and a degree of specialisation.



Go Fun (joy)

Motivation comes from the fact that the activity is full of pleasure and associated with the experience of (movement) joy – simply described as “I do it because it’s fun”. Participation here has value in itself and is independent of utility gains that may result from participating.



Go Together (community)

Motivation comes from being with others. The feeling of belonging is a central driving force. Relationships with others can play a role in the choice of activity, and the community aspect is independently prioritised.

How to use the principles to maintain engagement

Each individual has their own unique motivational profile, which will be influenced by the participant's previous experiences with sports and exercise.

The GO! principles can help coaches, instructors and teachers work out two crucial insights from the children:

- **Where are we now?**
How do children feel about current activities, energy levels and motivation?
- **Where do we want to go?**
What would be a positive change? Would the child or children like to switch activity, swap groups or take a rest?

How can GO! principles help?

GO! can **strengthen the dialogue** between children, coaches, teachers and others who are involved in motivating or creating physical activity programmes.

GO! can help **inspire development and adaptation of activities** so that they meet the expectations of current and potential participants.

GO! can play a role in both **attracting new members and retaining members**, and in creating continuity among those already active.



More information about GO! and five downloadable exercises to explore motivation, training ideas, evaluation and adaptation are available on DGI's website (in Danish).

Go to website →



Buenos Aires, Argentina

Pilot case studies

The Move For Fun initiative was successfully implemented and tested in four cities in three countries over a period of 18 months.

Move For Fun pilot programmes were tested in Wrocław, Poland; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Leicester and Manchester, United Kingdom. These pilots demonstrated the versatility of the programme, as it was adapted and successfully implemented in diverse contexts.

To further illustrate the effectiveness, flexibility and potential of Move For Fun in different settings, three case studies from Poland, the United Kingdom and Argentina are presented on the following pages. In each location, coaches underwent similar training in the Move For Fun concept, but the implementation of the intervention varied according to the unique circumstances of each case.

Buenos Aires, Argentina

Argentina →

Reaching children in vulnerable neighbourhoods

Wrocław, Poland

Poland →

Traditional games given a fresh twist

Manchester, UK

United Kingdom →

Innovative and inclusive sessions in primary schools

Results and future directions

Three pilot programmes were undertaken, incorporating a mix of school activations and Move For Fun sessions in community settings. The cases are summarised on the following pages, and more in-depth cases can be accessed and downloaded using the links provided.

The pilot studies in Argentina, Poland and the UK have shown promising results. The Move For Fun programme's emphasis on locally driven activities, promoting active movement, fun and social connections demonstrated high feasibility and the potential for long-term sustainability through local partnerships. The studies revealed success in fostering inclusion, with a substantial proportion of children expressing motivation, primarily driven by the enjoyment of activities.

These findings underscore the potential of tailored, inclusive and enjoyable physical activities to enhance the well-being of children in vulnerable communities. Further detailed evaluation is needed to establish more robust evidence to establish the programme's impact on physical health, social cohesion, and overall happiness. Policymakers and practitioners are encouraged to consider investing in accessible and enjoyable physical activities tailored to local contexts to address health disparities among children.

Country	Partner	City	Setting	Participating children
Argentina	Valores Y Deporte	Buenos Aires	Community	630
Poland	V4 Sport Foundation	Wroclaw	Primary school	1,192
United Kingdom	Youth Sport Trust International	Leicester, Manchester	Primary school	300

100%

of partner feedback from all three countries has been positive, and all partners had a strong desire to continue with the programme at the end of the pilot phase.

3

Countries where pilot programme took place

67%

More than two-thirds of children reported that fun was the primary motivating factor

94%

of participating children felt either motivated or very motivated to join in with sports and physical activity.

32

Separate locations where programmes took place

2,122

Children activated in weekly Move For Fun sessions

COUNTRY PILOT / ARGENTINA 

Reaching children in vulnerable neighbourhoods

In Buenos Aires, Argentina, children from vulnerable communities were provided with football-, urban dance- and skating-themed physical activity classes in their neighbourhood settings.

Implementing partner

The implementing partner for Move For Fun in Argentina is **Valores Y Deporte** (*Values and Sport*), a non-profit society set up in 2012 focusing on advancing socially inclusive sports programmes developed by the Claudio Marangoni Sports Academy.

Go to website →

Results

630 children participating in Move For Fun sessions for a total of around 60 minutes per week

8 sites participating by August 2023

16 teacher volunteers onboarded into the programme



All pictures from Buenos Aires, Argentina

Local context

Children between the ages of six and 12 living in economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods on the outskirts of Buenos Aires have limited access to sports and leisure facilities and no mandated physical education in schools. In order to reach these children and provide a programme of regular physical activity, Move For Fun trained volunteers to implement sessions in neighbourhood settings.

Activity requirements

- ✓ **Motivate and encourage** regular participation in a range of activities in the most vulnerable neighbourhoods.
- ✓ **Facilities and equipment provision** will be limited by the nature of running the programme in the community setting rather than in a dedicated facility.
- ✓ **Leverage the opportunity** to speak to the children about healthy living and mental health issues, and teach them about good nutrition.



*“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



All pictures from Buenos Aires, Argentina



Programme output

The programme developed a training programme to give the volunteers the necessary skills and tools to teach the children about health and trained them to manage conversations about emotions, feelings and mental health with the children.

Football-anchored classes were the largest single sport offering. Mixed skating and urban dance classes were also provided. Sessions were loosely organised around a theme, but movement and fun were prioritised over skill or technical training.

Key learning

Conversation-starting prompt cards were useful in engaging the children in discussions about nutrition, living healthily and mental health. Training the volunteers in how to deal with emotional responses was a contributing factor to the programme’s success.



Learn more about the Move For Fun pilot programme in Argentina.

Access the full case →

COUNTRY PILOT / **POLAND** 

Traditional games given a fresh twist

In Wroclaw, western Poland, a Move For Fun pilot programme reached more than 1,100 children and increased physical activity by around 60 minutes per week.



Local context

Children between the ages of five and 10 have faced considerable obstacles to achieving adequate levels of physical activity due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown measures. To generate more physical movement amongst children, the Move For Fun pilot project was launched in city schools in Wroclaw.

Implementing partner

V4 Sport Foundation develops and implements comprehensive programmes based on cooperation between the private, public and non-governmental sectors in Poland and abroad. Headquartered in Wroclaw, the foundation works with domestic programmes that combat sedentary lives and partners with several refugee integration programmes supported by the European Union.

Go to website →

Results

1,192 children participating in Move For Fun sessions for a total of around 60 minutes per week

12 schools participating by August 2023

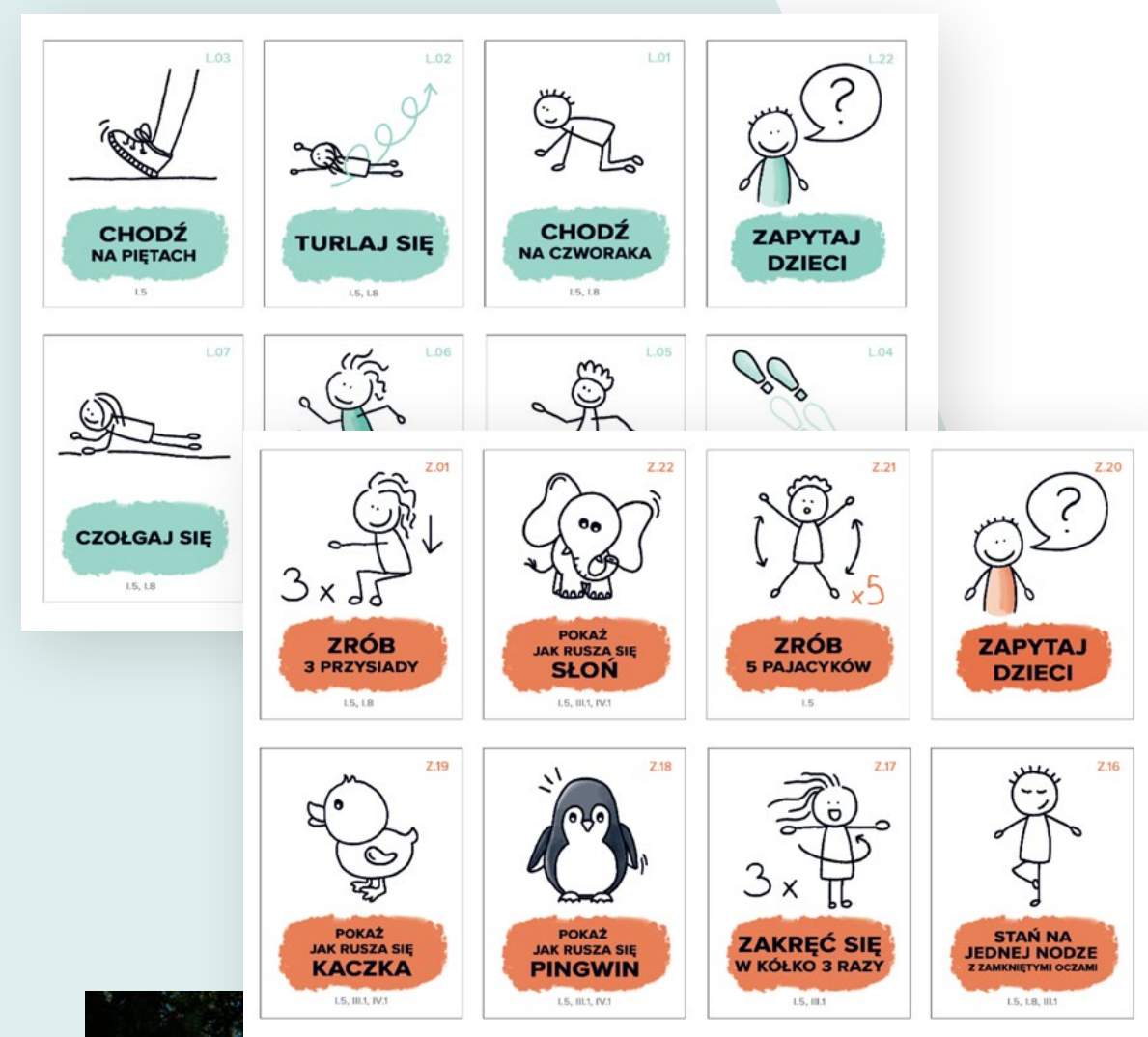
47 classes and teachers onboarded into the programme



All pictures from Wroclaw, Poland

Activity requirements

- ✓ **Create simple games** that could be easily organised without the need for expensive equipment or facilities
- ✓ Must be able to be **overseen by a single staff member**
- ✓ **Revitalise traditional children's games** and turn them into engaging triggers for physical activity



Programme output

The programme developed a deck of Active Cards designed to empower the children and give them more influence over the game. The cards are accompanied by a companion manual to guide the teachers or facilitators, and demonstration lessons were carried out by V4 Sport Foundation to motivate teachers.



“Some of these children have very challenging circumstances to deal with, and yet when their mind is in the game and they get moving, they can still have extreme levels of fun. What could be better than that?”



Piotr Sitkowski,
Chief operating officer, V4 Sport Foundation

Key learning

Video footage of the demonstration lessons gave the implementing team the opportunity to review and examine what was weak and what worked best in terms of activating the children and generating the most movement and fun. The video footage was also useful in helping to motivate and onboard new teachers.



Learn more about the Move For Fun pilot programme in Poland.

Access the full case →

COUNTRY PILOT / UNITED KINGDOM 

Innovative and inclusive sessions in primary schools

A strategic and flexible approach that empowered children to choose activities ensured high engagement in two UK cities.



Local context

Manchester and Leicester are cities in the North West and the Midlands of England, respectively. Both cities are home to large, diverse populations from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, and many different languages are commonly spoken across communities. Areas of Manchester and Leicester experience levels of social, economic and health deprivation, and the proportion of children living in poverty is higher than the national average for England.^{11,12} The prevalence of overweight or obesity among children leaving primary school (age 10–11) in both cities exceeds the national average.^{11,12}

Implementing partner

The Move for Fun pilot in the UK is being delivered with support from **Youth Sport Trust International** (YST-I). YST-I is a UK-based sport for development charity working globally to improve the lives of children and young people through play, physical activity, physical education and sport. YST-I has more than 25 years' experience of running inclusive and innovative programmes.

[Go to website →](#)

Results

300 children participating in weekly Move For Fun sessions

12 schools by August 2023, up from seven schools the year before

80% of children reported being either motivated or very motivated to join in with sport and physical activity at the end of the programme. None reported not being motivated.



All pictures from Manchester, UK

Activity requirements

- ✓ **Introduce physical activity** to children who other city programmes and interventions do not reach
- ✓ **Emphasise togetherness and community** to mitigate post-COVID-19 disruption and anxiety
- ✓ **Allow children a high degree of influence** over the activities and sports chosen

*“Move For Fun clubs have been helping children after the COVID-19 pandemic by **providing a safe place for them to play and promoting socialisation again.**”*



Helen Vost
Managing director, YST-I



All pictures from Manchester, UK



Programme output

YST-I initially collaborated with seven primary and secondary schools, providing teacher training and support for implementing Move For Fun in school lessons, at break times and after school. Activities included flag football, water polo, movement and skills games, and cardiovascular activation and team activities. Seven schools were engaged in the first phase.

Key learning

Taking a strategic view of what kind of offering to launch in each school and avoiding duplication was key. Furthermore, allowing the children a large amount of influence over what sports and activities were to be scheduled encouraged highly motivated participation.



Learn more about the Move For Fun pilot programme in the UK.

Access the full case →

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.

Go to website →



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.

Go to website →



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 61,400 people in 80 countries and markets its products in around 170 countries.

Go to website →

This playbook and the corresponding case studies have been developed by Cities for Better Health.

cities for better health

Cities for Better Health

Cities for Better Health is a global network focused on driving systematic change by working through local partnerships. The programme aims to put health high on city government agendas by working across departments to integrate health into all policies and co-creating initiatives that demonstrate what can be achieved.

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.

Go to website →



Contact

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