

- **Name of the study:** A companion evaluation study to the pilot "Zuzu" - together for a healthy life.
- **Year:** 2023
- **Type of research:** Evaluation research
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- **Research Authority:** 'Michlol' unit, Shalem Fund.

### Abstract

#### **This study was carried out by 'Michlol'- the Evaluation and Measurement Unit of the Shalem Fund**

In recent years, public and personal awareness of the change in the sedentary lifestyle and the introduction of physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle has been increasing. In protected settings there is a lack of awareness of incorporating physical activity as part of the daily routine. At the same time, there is difficulty in locating and paying a professional from the field of physical education, with expertise in the field of special education, who will conduct the activities in the frameworks. The goals of the Zozo project are to make sports activities accessible to populations with special needs, assimilation as part of the daily routine, increasing awareness and control of the body, adopting an active lifestyle, improving mood and possibly even having a positive effect on behavior. This is through the database of the training videos produced for the benefit of the project, which are an internal tool for activating the recipients of the service by the instructors in the frameworks. [The database is on the "Zuzu" website](#), under the website of Keren Shalem.

The current evaluation comes to examine the degree of success of the project in making physical activity a part of the daily routine in the frameworks, while examining the point of view of the service recipients, the instructors/referents and the managers of the frameworks. Specifically, the indicators formulated for the pilot evaluation are: a. The frequency of performing physical activity during the week, and the degree of stability of this frequency over time, b. The degree of participation of the service recipients in the activity, c. The degree of motivation of the service recipients for sports activities during the day, d. The degree of satisfaction and enjoyment from the sports activity - in the eyes of the recipients of the service, e. The degree of satisfaction of the service recipients as perceived by the framework team.

### **The research method**

The assessment combined quantitative and qualitative data to examine various parameters of the process and the project's contribution. The evaluation was carried out over about 4-6 months. The population chosen to participate in this assessment is the population of service recipients in protected day care facilities for people with disabilities aged 21+, as well as the service providers within the framework (referents and administrators of the facilities). Assessment tools were developed for the benefit of the assessment and included: 1. A form for ongoing reporting of activity within the "Zuzu" project , 2. Three questionnaires built by the Makshul team for the purpose of evaluation: a questionnaire to assess satisfaction with the project - in the eyes of the service recipients (when the questionnaire was delivered with the help of a staff member who asked them and wrote down their answers), and questionnaires to assess the satisfaction and impact of the project - in the eyes of the instructors/referents And in the eyes of the managers of the frameworks.

This evaluation study included six different frameworks, each with its own unique characteristics. These frameworks presented an equal gender distribution among the managers, with three male and three female managers. Among the referents, four were women and two were men, with the majority being instructors without expertise in physical education, while one of the six is a physical education teacher. 45 service recipients responded to the questionnaires, where 42% are men and 58% women.

### **main findings**

The findings showed that during the project period, 5 out of 6 frameworks carried out the activity for 4-5 consecutive months. On average, there were 6.3 activities per month, with some activities being canceled due to factors such as the Passover holiday, security tensions in the south, and the absence of instructors or participants for medical reasons.

Each framework designed for itself a slightly different format of activity, both in terms of the instructors who deliver the activity, both in terms of the location where the activity takes place and in terms of the number of participating service recipients. The activity has become a routine and regular part of the weekly program of the service recipients.

Regarding the general satisfaction with the project, in the eyes of the managers of the frameworks, the distribution of the answers indicated a very high general satisfaction. Also, the three target audiences (service recipients, referents, managers) stated that the activity was successful and very enjoyable, and that the motivation to participate in the activity was high, and usually remained high throughout the months of activity in the project. Another contribution was observed in the context of promoting a healthy lifestyle and raising awareness of the issue. Also, the referents and the service recipients themselves reported an improvement in mood following the exercise, and a good feeling at the end of the activity.

In assessing the number of attendees, the number of actual participants and the duration of the activity (for all the settings), the findings indicated a consistent level of involvement and presence in various activities, and that the number of participants varied from activity to activity and from setting to setting, but ranged in most settings between 4 and 10 participants. Very few (if any) of the service recipients who took part in the project did not participate in the activity (sat on the sidelines). That is, the vast majority of the project participants did participate in the activities themselves throughout the activity. When the duration of the activity that took place in most of the frameworks is between 11-20 minutes and 31-40 minutes.

In the measure of the change over time in the degree of cooperation, the findings showed that there is no trend of increase or decrease in the degree of cooperation over time, as it remained high throughout the entire period of the activity, from beginning to end.

The findings indicate that the managers greatly appreciated the referents' connection to the project and its thinking, while successfully integrating it into the daily routine of the service recipients within the framework and maintaining the safety rules when performing the activity.

It can be learned from the findings that establishing regularities and organizing time and space constituted the main challenges and difficulties faced by the frameworks themselves. The findings show that most of the service recipients did not report difficulties or unpleasant things. The few who did report difficulties mentioned the physical-motor effort required during the activity, the fatigue and the pains they sometimes felt during the activity.

When the instructors were asked to express their opinion about the length of the videos, the six instructors replied that they were exactly the desired length. Also, it can be learned from the findings that the site itself is accessible and convenient, and that the length of the videos was adjusted and understandable. It can be seen that although most of the recipients of the service do not watch the videos at home, a large part of them are interested in it.

When the managers were asked if they would like to expand the number of service recipients who take part in the project's activities - all the managers answered yes. When the referents were asked whether it would be worthwhile for additional instructors and additional frameworks to adopt the activity of the "Zuzu" project, the six referents answered yes. Both the managers and the referents are interested in and recommend expanding the project, and it is clear that they strongly believe in it and its contribution. However, the managers indicated that this move would require additional resources (time, personnel, means). The managers and instructors praised the project and some of them made a number of specific recommendations for improvement (which appear in this report). Also from the answers of most of the recipients of the service you can see the great contribution of the project - both to the body and to the soul.

### **Recommendations and insights**

In accordance with this program rationale and on the basis of the very positive evaluation findings, it can be said that the program as it was designed and implemented in the pilot, can continue to exist and can even be expanded to additional settings, and to additional populations (Arab and ultra-Orthodox society). However, it was decided to thicken the program with a number of proposed channels: a. Development of additional content around the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, for the referents of 'Zuzu', b. Conducting tutorials/trainings for instructors/representatives of 'Zuzu', as well as a group of colleagues from other frameworks that operate the program and accompanied by a chaperone throughout the year of activity, c. Development of an accessible online learning environment for people with cognitive disabilities, which deals with health promotion.

### **Keywords**

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The "Zozo" Project, physical activity, healthy lifestyle, videos, developmental intellectual disability, evaluation research.

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