

Pilot fiche O1.2

# Oostkapelle Village in Motion

## Part 1: The pilot

**Pilot name: Village in Motion**

Located: Oostkapelle, Zeeland



Figure 1: Map of region in which Oostkapelle is located

*Operational context*

Oostkapelle is a village in the Dutch province of Zeeland and part of the municipality of Veere. The total population of Veere is 21,900 and 45% of the population are over 50 years of age. Oostkapelle has around 2,350 inhabitants which given the known demographics of the municipality suggests the village is home to around 1050 people aged over 50. The village is centre is around 1.1 square Km and bordered by the North Sea coastline and rural countryside.

Research by NOC \* NSF and the state of Zeeland had indicated that the local population's sport and exercise behaviour was changing and a notable aspect of this was an increase in making use of the outdoors for exercise and leisure. The residents from the village of Oostkapelle had since 2014 been encouraged to increase their physically activity with a range of options being introduced to the community through the collaborative working of various sports providers.

*Pilot overview*

The community of Oostkapelle including older residents had through the Sportdorp initiative, started in 2014 already developed an enthusiasm for participation in sport and the intention was to use the opportunity presented by SAIL to work with the community to further increase the range of options available locally. On average the pilot manager spent 6 hours a week supporting the SAIL pilot and had additional ad hoc support from colleagues with specific expertise such as marketing.

Consultation with local stakeholders led to a list of suggestions which included:

- Guided walks to picking cooking ingredients which grew in the wild
- Obstacle run and mud races
- Bootcamp
- Walking Football for people over 60 years
- Mountain bike experiences including tours and kids' activities
- Family combifit
- Aqua gym
- Sea swimming sessions for inhabitants and tourists

Some of these activities were taken forward by the SAIL project but not all were successful within the area. For example, during October 2018 Walking Football was set up in Oostkapelle as well as in other parts of Veere. But despite several clubs being formed within Zeeland, the one in Oostkapelle did not take off. The most likely reason seemed to be the lack of a key person (participant) to encourage others to become involved.

On the other hand, Dynamic Tennis which was introduced in December 2017 was much more successful with more than 35 elderly people now participating once or twice per week. Other activities such as Boot camp sessions and Nordic walking groups were established activities within the area before SAIL, but it was beyond the scope of SAIL to review what impact SAIL had upon these groups. Therefore, it is not known if they flourished more due to the SAIL message to be more active or if membership of these groups transferred to SAIL activities.

One activity that began prior to SAIL was the Mountain Bike Tour but as a result of SAIL it has thrived and has become an annual event that in 2019 attracted 310 participants. Among these participants were many (older) residents (and tourists) from Oostkapelle, but also from other parts of Zeeland. However, this event has now been named after a deceased Sport Village Partner member and will continue to be held annually.

This pilot because of its geographical proximity also undertook an event collaboratively with the Vitality Boulevard pilot. The older residents from both pilot areas were offered health checks and made aware of the up-coming event at which stall holders could provide information on healthy eating and offer advice on the forms of exercise available locally.

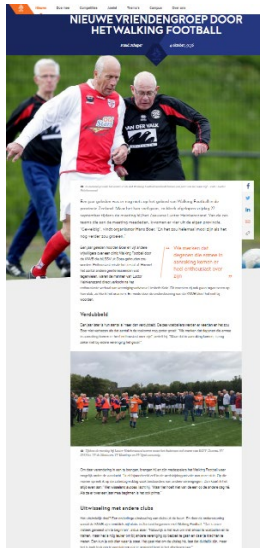
The Village in motion pilot also formed a partnership with primary care provider and patients in need of an increase in physical activity were directed to a walking group established as

part of the pilot called the 20-week challenge. All participants before and after each walk, had basic health checks and a note made of their progress in increasing their exercise levels. Although there is no available quantitative data it is thought that some participants made substantial gains in terms of fitness. Anecdotally, benefits were reported which included: less insulin intake, weight loss, lower BMI, participants reporting feeling fitter and less isolated as participation enable them to build a social network again.

#### *Key issues for the Pilot*

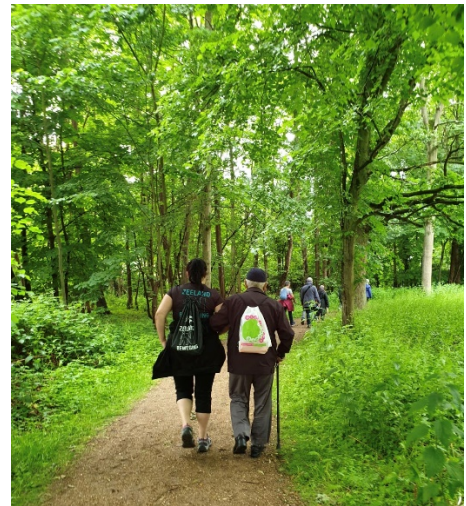
The Pilot manager reported that it was very difficult to attract tourists to the SAIL activities. However, an exception was the cycling event, and this was thought to be the case because it was arranged at a campsite where tourists were already present. It would seem that the joint participation by locals and tourists requires careful planning. It is suggested that irregular or one-off attendance by tourists can alter the group dynamics. The 'regulars' know each other and so seem to 'outsiders' strongly attached to each other which makes it difficult for occasional attendees to feel able to integrate into the group. Hence, there is the potential to make 'outsiders' feel more isolated because they perceive they will not 'fit in'.

There were also some identified dilemmas about introducing new activities which could be sustainable after SAIL as there was a need for their ownership to transfer to the community in the form of an individual or individuals organising the programme moving forward. Therefore, if the pilot manager became too strongly associated with driving the project which initially might boost group up-take the end result could be dependence on the pilot manager to lead activities meaning the initiative did not evolve into a community-led project.



Leaflet promoting the Walking Football sessions.

A nature walk offered by SAIL pilot at Oostkapelle



## Part 2: Evaluation

## PILOT 2 OOSTKAPELLE: VILLAGE IN MOTION

### *Introduction*

The goal of the project Village in Motion was to increase the general wellbeing of elderly residents and tourists by encouraging them to take part in any kind of sport activities organized by the Village in Motion. With this goal in mind several activities have been organized between 2017-2019 in which latent variables such as social isolation, independence and/or empowerment but also physical changes such as perceived health, BMI and/or eating habits have been addressed.

Between June 2017- October 2017 a sample of 83 residents and tourists in region Oostkapelle has taken part in a survey concerning their physical activity habits as well as their preferences with regard to sport activities they would be willing to attend. Based on the results of that study, several innovative suggestions as on how to engage elderly residents and tourists in sport events were identified during the stakeholders meeting in December 2017. The further developed and implemented ideas included: Walking Football, Vitality Market, Dynamic Tennis, Bootcamp, Nordic Walking and Mountainbike tour.

### *Results*

The project resulted in a formation of open communities with diverse number of active participants varying from around 30 (dynamic) tennis players to around 400 mountain bikers. The outcomes of the project show that bringing people together by means of sport activities resulted in bonding, strong relationship between members of a certain community. For instance, apart from doing sports together, the members of Nordic Walking group meet for a drink or to celebrate their birthday together. This kind of bonding is stimulated by a so called 'groups coach' or a person who takes the lead in initiating 'after-sport' activities but also in taking care of those participants who could not be present during the meeting. By contacting the absent members of the group and asking them how

they feel or what made them not being able to join the meeting, the members of the group feel they are an important part of the community, they are missed and needed in the group. This leads to increase in perceived empowerment and perceived wellbeing. The communities are therefore places where sport is just a means to socially connect with other people and to stay in close relationships with people of the same age and with similar interests. The communities created by the variety of activities in Oostkapelle are a great example of how strong the bonding between people can be formed by creating possibilities for them to meet and enjoy simple activities together. In this sense the communities prevent social isolation and decrease perceived feelings of loneliness.



Next to earlier mentioned psychological attributes, the measures of physical health contribute to the positive outcome of the project. The goal of majority of the events was to create structural changes in behavior such as regular active participation in sport activities. So, for instance '20-weeks Walking Challenge' organized in June 2019 was a walking program stimulating participants to take part in a group walk from one to several times per week. The challenge led to increased perceived health, better physical condition as well as weight loss and/or fat loss. What more, in particular for the type 2 diabetes the participation led to 60% reduce in medicine use, as well as significant weight loss. On the other hand, during the Vitality Market organized the same day, tourists and residents were inspired by lectures and participated in workshops about healthy food and healthy practices such as Mindful Run and tai chi. Yet another possibility of introducing existing opportunities for healthy behavior in an interactive and inspiring manner.

### *Sustainability*

The many activities initiated by the Village in Motion have caused behavioral and attitudinal changes among participants. Apart from better physical condition and /or weight loss, participants perceived well-being and empowerment are boosted by the appreciation they get from the fellow community members. The continuation of these good practices will ensure the durability of resulting positive effects. Opportunely, according to the project manager of the Village in Motion many of these activities are continuing after the end date of the project. An important aspect here is regular and open communication with the participants, who give honest feedback on the activities and help in deciding which events might be more successful in the future. Moreover, the concept of Village in Motion in Oostkapelle has received much of publicity in the area, resulting in local municipalities initiating similar activities in their region (e.g. Terneuzen, Tholen, Veere, Hulst and other). The success of the project lies thus in the strength of the of bond between community members (facilitated by a sport coach) as well as in the co-operation between local organizations and / or between different municipalities that enforce the changes obtained and keep people motivated in preserving the change.