

CRESTART -CReative rESilient leARning communiTies meeting COVID challenges
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COUNTRY REPORT ON 2ND SOCIAL IMPACT MEASUREMENT

COUNTRY – BULGARIA

MEASURING THE LEVEL OF SATISFACTION AND THE IMPACT ON SOCIETY
WITHIN THE CRESTART PROJECT
2023



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Introduction

The pandemic brought significant changes to our social and cultural life. In this and similar crisis situations, there is an increasing need for cooperation and communities helping each other.

In the framework of the “CRESTART - Creative rESilient leARning communiTies meeting COVID challenges” Erasmus + project we collected creative solutions and good practices that allows us in times of crisis to help and support each other. Our goal is to provide tools for local residents/individuals/citizens with which local people can help each other in difficult situations within their community.

What is social impact measurement?

Social impact measurement refers to the process of evaluating and quantifying the effects of social initiatives, programs, or interventions on individuals, communities, and society. It is a critical tool for organizations and stakeholders to understand the effectiveness and outcomes of their social investments.

Change:

- arising in the quality of life of the people benefiting from the project
- can be connected to the project activities
- planned and unplanned
- positive and negative
- measured systematically and regularly.

During the CRESTART project all the partners agreed to use the same methodology. The chosen social impact measurement is based on the so-called (Theory of Change, TOC). The project and the SIM followed the main principles and steps of TOC.

A theory of change is a description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected. It focuses on mapping or "filling in" it, what has been described as the "missing middle ground" of a programme or change initiative (its activities or interventions) and how these lead to the desired goals the desired outcomes. The steps to do this are to first identify the desired long-term goals and then identify the conditions (outcomes) that need to be met to be achieved in order for the objectives to be realised.

The outcomes then form the basis for determining the type of activities or interventions that lead to the achievement of the long-term goal as a precondition for achieving the objective. Through this approach, a better understanding of the activities and the achievement of the long-term objectives. It also leads to better evaluation, as progress towards longer-term goals becomes measurable, going beyond the definition of programme outputs.

As part of the methodology, a questionnaire survey was carried out, where the number of respondents was also indicator within the project. The questionnaire was used to identify age groups, municipalities and by gender, it can be used to draw conclusions from the original assumptions. As the pandemic has brought major changes in our social and cultural life, the questionnaire survey tool was used to gather the best local knowledge on the practices at

local level to share them and provide creative tools, to empower local citizens to support each other and their communities in times of crisis. We can also measure social impact by filling in the questionnaire.

Structure of the questionnaire



Results

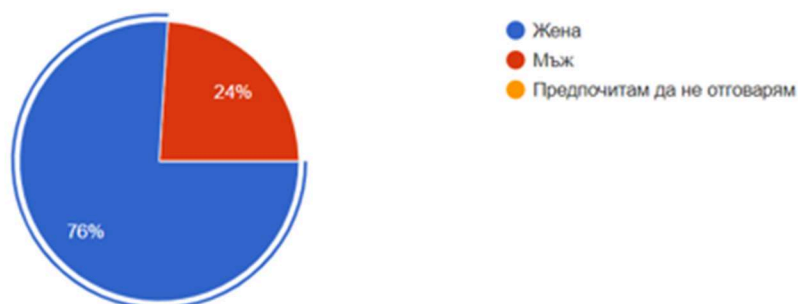
The questionnaire survey was conducted from February until April 2023. A link to the questionnaire was available on the CRESTART project's website. Several participants from previous surveys were invited to fill in the questionnaire and contacted either via telephone communication or via skype. A total of 25 valid responses were received.

Demographics:

1. What is your gender?

1. Какъв е вашият пол?

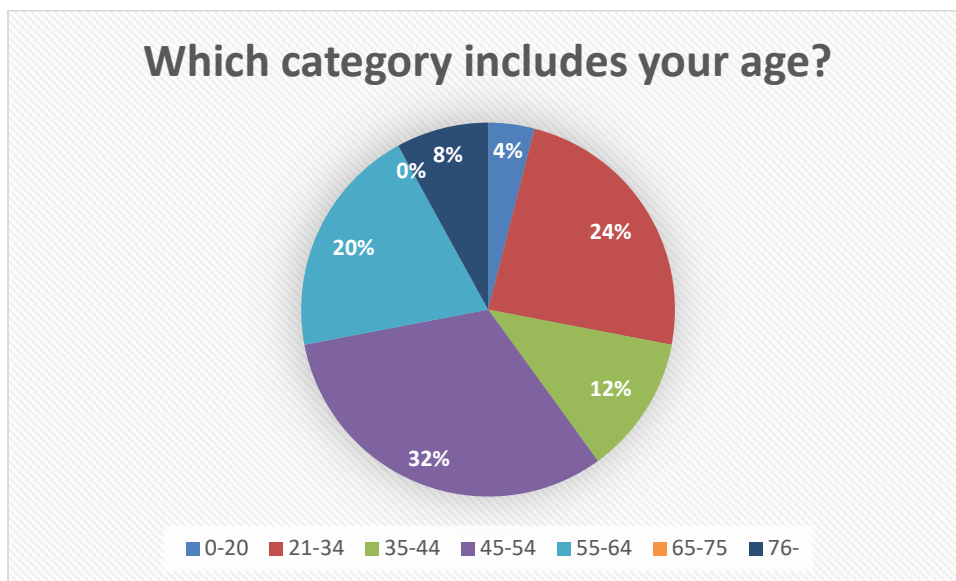
25 responses



In the Bulgarian survey, 76% of the respondents were women and 24% were men.

2. Which category includes your age?

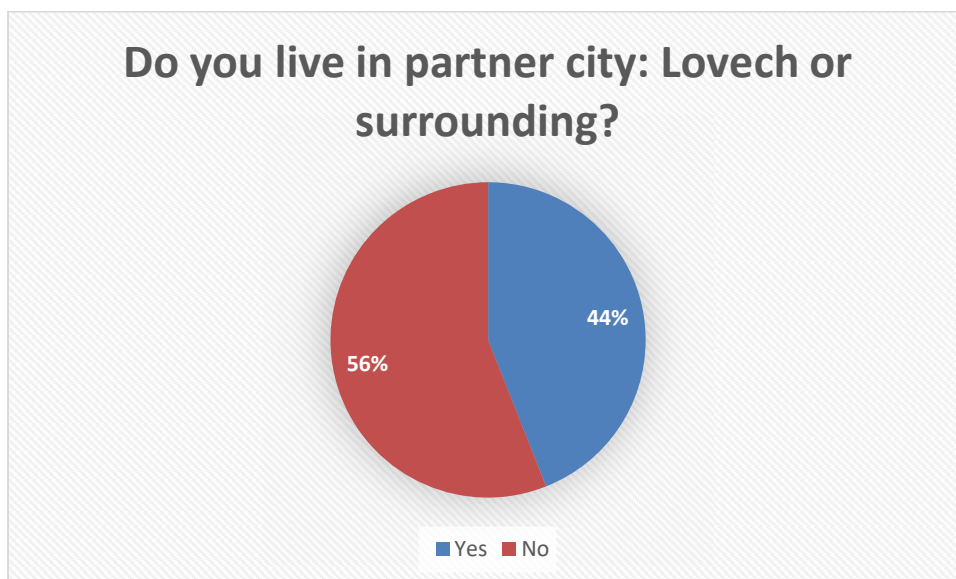
The majority of the respondents in Bulgaria were from the 45-54 age group (32%) and 21-34 years old (24%). The 55-64 age group was presented by 20% respondents, the 35-44 - by 12% and there were respondents who were further on in life age-wise (65-75 years old - 4% and 76+ years old, 8%).



3. In which country do you live?

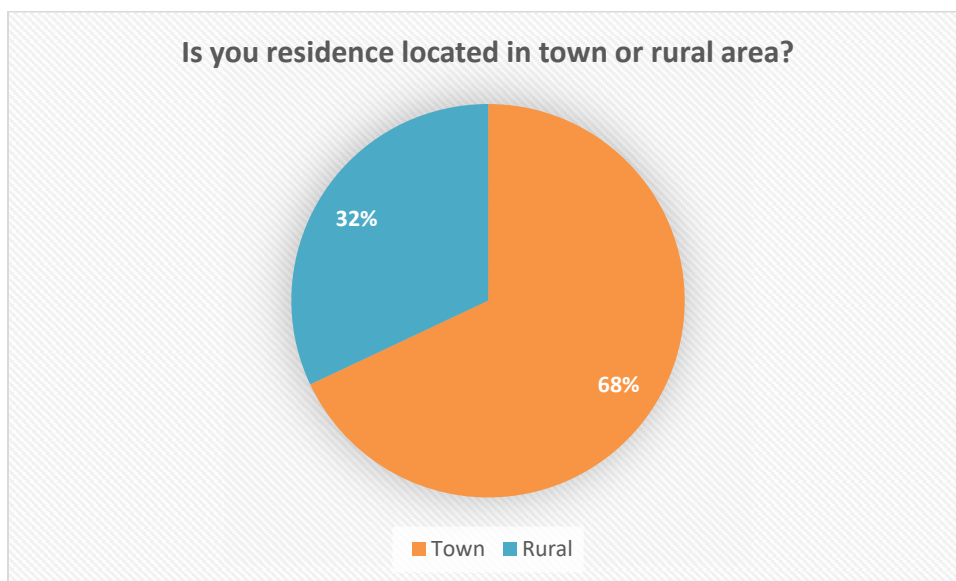
All 25 respondents live in Bulgaria, based on the received answers.

4. Do you live in partner city: Nicosia, Rotterdam, Erd, Lovech or surrounding?



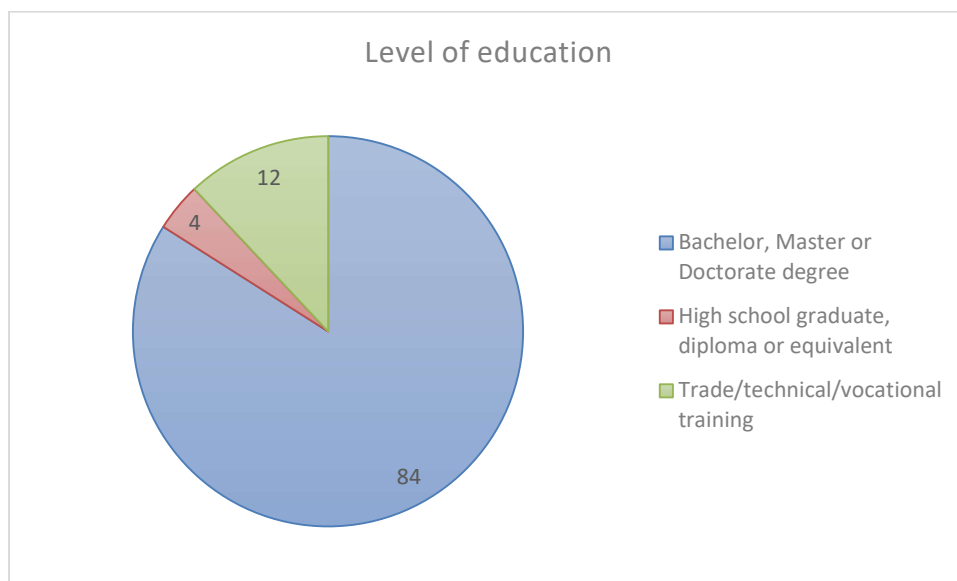
According to the respondents' answers, a high percentage (56%) live in other part of Bulgaria, and 44% live in the partner city of Lovech or surrounding.

5. Is your residence located in:



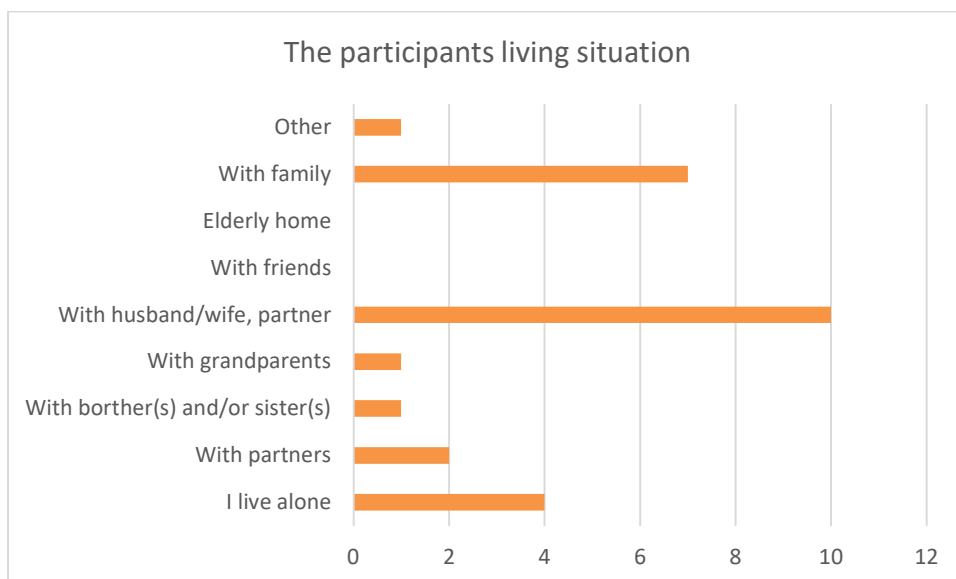
68% of the respondents involved in this survey live in urban areas and 32% live in villages.

6. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?



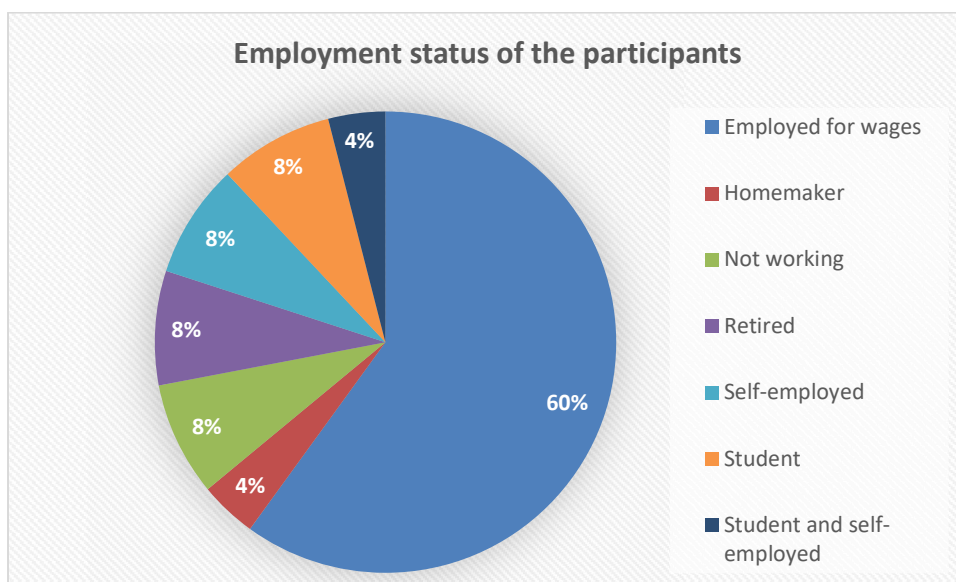
According to the level of education the Bulgarian respondents have, most of them have a Bachelor, Master or Doctorate degree - 84%.

7. What is your current living situation?



The majority of the respondents live with a husband or a wife (40%), with family (28%) or alone (16%).

8. Are you currently?



Most of the respondents (60%) are employed for wages, whereas the rest are a diverse group - 8% per group of self employed, retired and students.

Short evaluation question

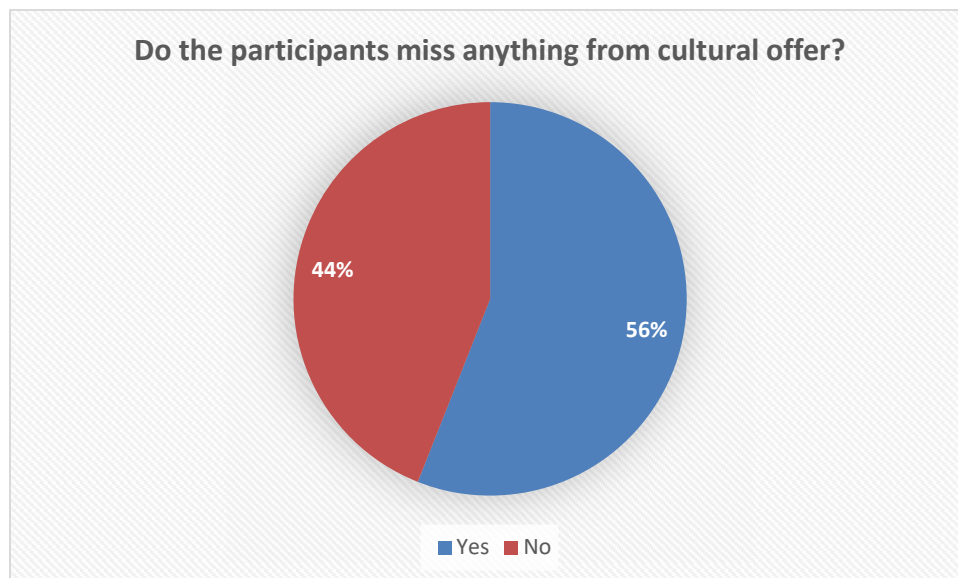
In this survey part, the Bulgarian respondents are mainly females (76%). The age groups are diverse, with representatives of nearly all - the majority were from the 45-54 age group (32%),

followed by 21-34 years old (24%) and the 55-64 age group (20%), the 35-44 y.o. (12%), 65-75 y.o. (4%) and 76+ y.o (8%), well educated, working professionals, living mainly with their spouses or families (68% in total) in urban areas - 68% and 32% in villages.

Local cultural life, activities, effect of the project on society

The next block of the questionnaire is focused on the cultural offerings available in the respondents' place of residence, activities and gaps.

15. Do you miss anything in the local cultural offering?



The majority of participants (56%) expressed that they miss something in the local cultural offering. Some of the respondents reported missing the following:

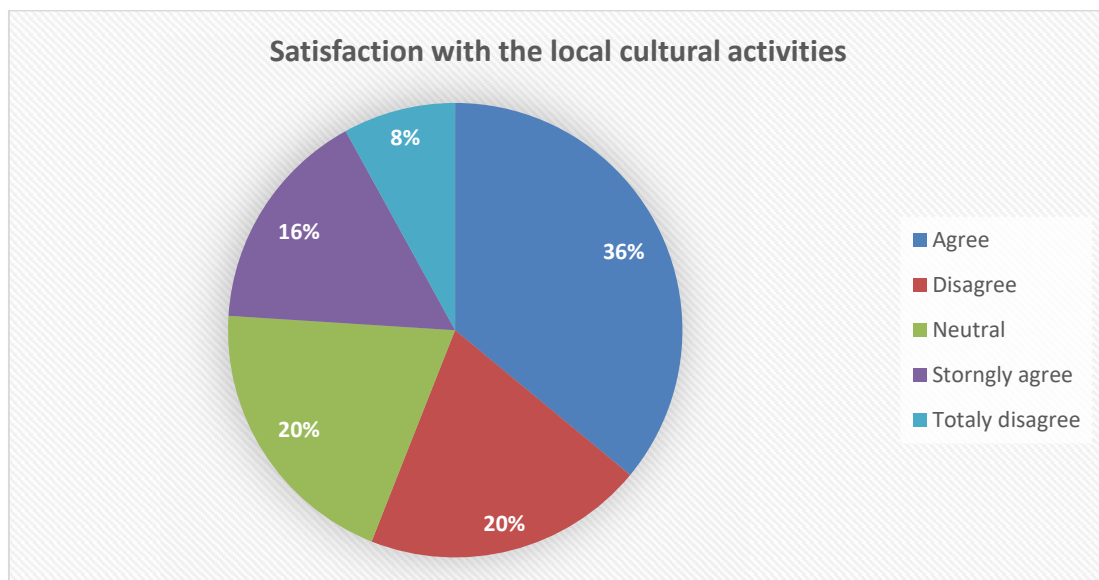
- Cultural events and activities for young people, sports
- Meetings in groups to sing and/or dance with. Dance opportunities for adults
- More social and cultural activities, opportunities to go to the cinema, theatre
- More exhibitions, cinema, outdoor concerts for example
- Social and other opportunities as the local cultural life is quite limited.
- Activities for pensioners and elderly
- More artistic activities to engage audiences over 20 years old. There are many options for children or families, but very few or none for adults in the village areas.
- Movie theaters are closed, DIY activities
- The social and cultural life in this area is very boring. There is almost nothing.
- For children outdoor activities
- Village activities for young children and young people

16. Do you participate in cultural activities in your living environment?



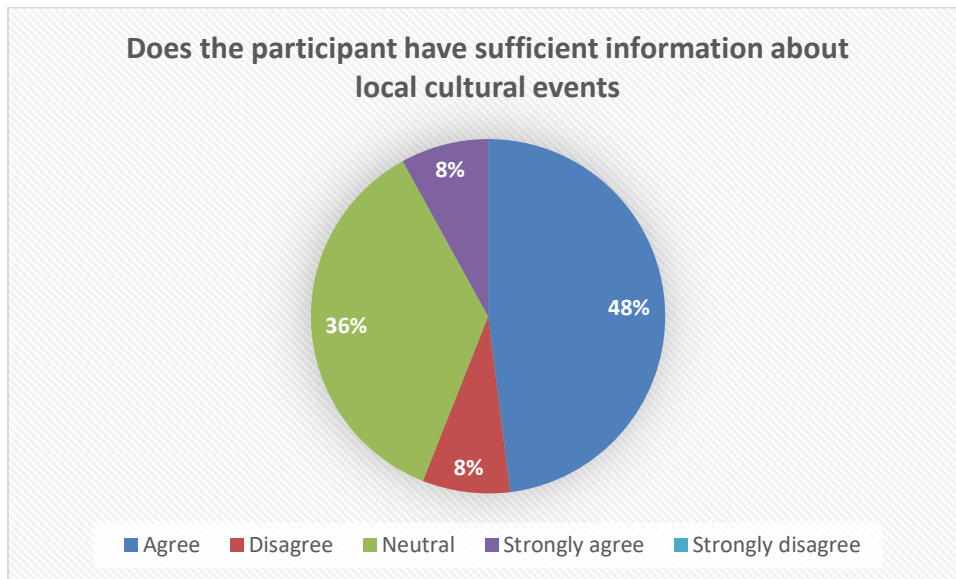
A high percentage of the respondents (84%) reported that they participate in cultural activities in their living environment.

17.1 I am satisfied with the local life and activities!



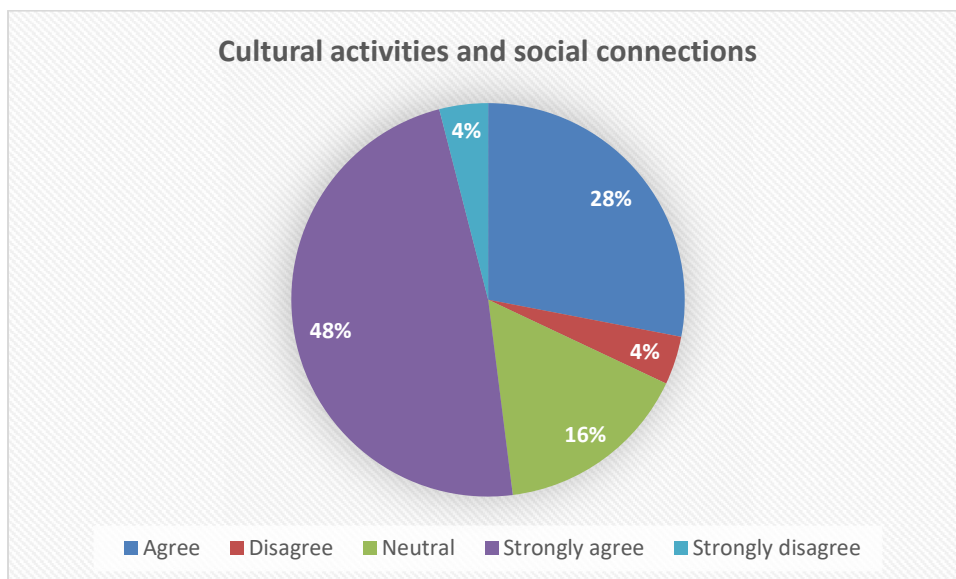
The answers of this question are quite diverse: 52% of the participants answered that they are satisfied with the local live activities (36% agree and 16% strongly agree), 20% are neutral as well as 20% disagree, and 8% strongly disagree.

18.1 I have sufficient information about local, social or cultural events/communities



Almost half of the survey participants expressed the opinion that they have sufficient information about local, social or cultural events/communities - 56%. 36% were neutral and 8% reported that they do not have adequate information.

19 The cultural activities create social connections within my living environment.



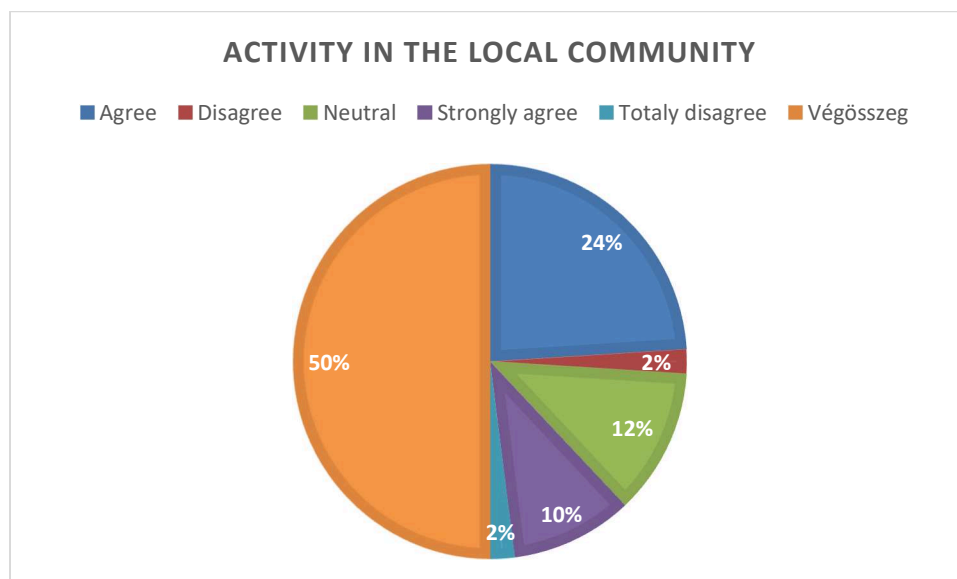
To a high percentage participants believe that the cultural activities create social connections within their living environment (76% in total of strongly agree and agree). Surprisingly, 24% remain neutral or disagree/strongly disagree.

Short evaluation questionnaire

In this survey part, most of the Bulgarian respondents express opinion that they miss **cultural offerings** although 84% reported that they participate in cultural activities in their living environment. The majority of respondents are satisfied with the cultural events, however, 48% of the respondents are neutral, unsatisfied or even strongly unsatisfied. The provision of information about the activities being organised is good according to the answers. More than half of the respondents indicated that cultural activities enhanced togetherness in the community. However, it is interesting to notice that 24% of respondents were neutral or disagreed with this statement.

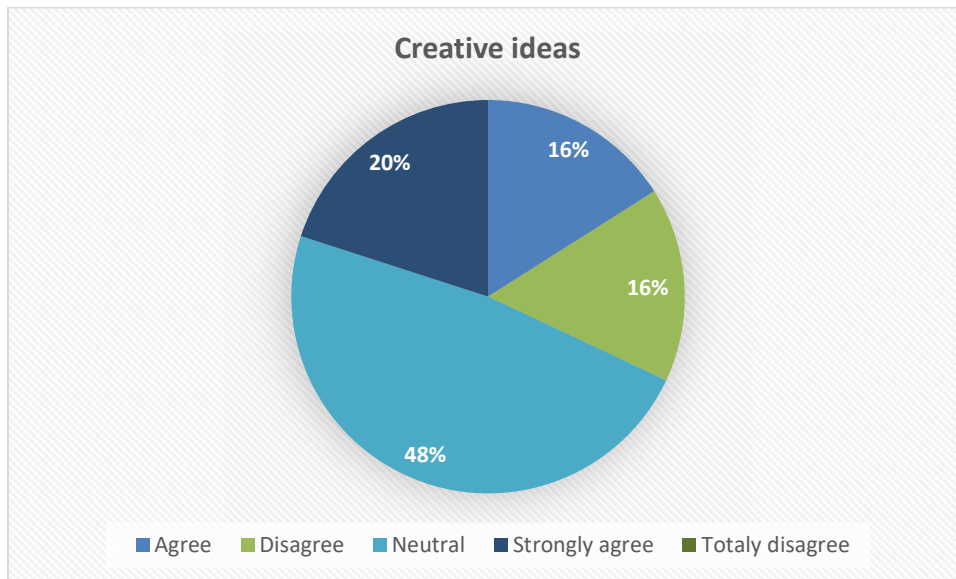
Participation of the responders in local cultural activities

20. I am active in the local community.



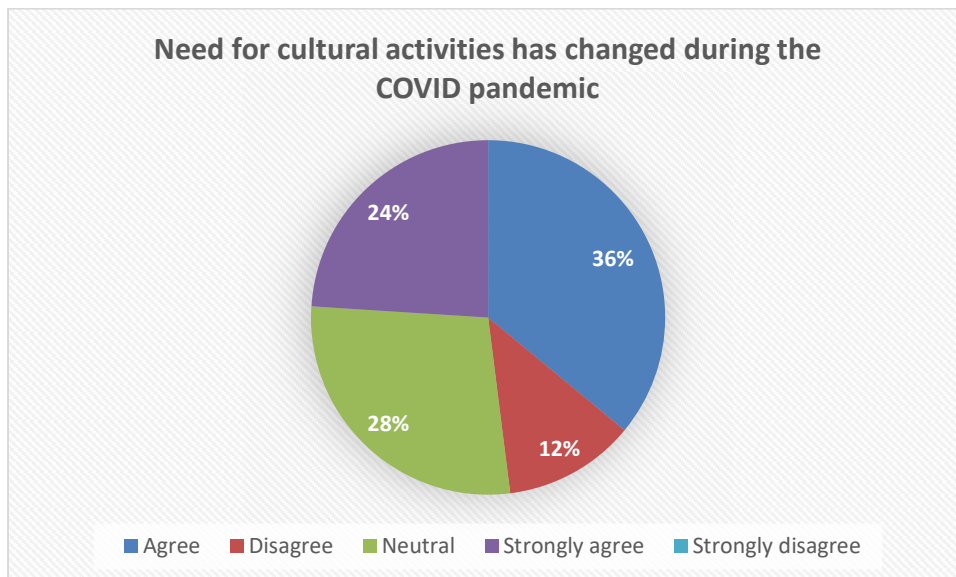
68% of the participants are active in their local communities, 24% remain neutral and 8% are inactive.

21. I have enough creative ideas, tools to form the local cultural or social life.



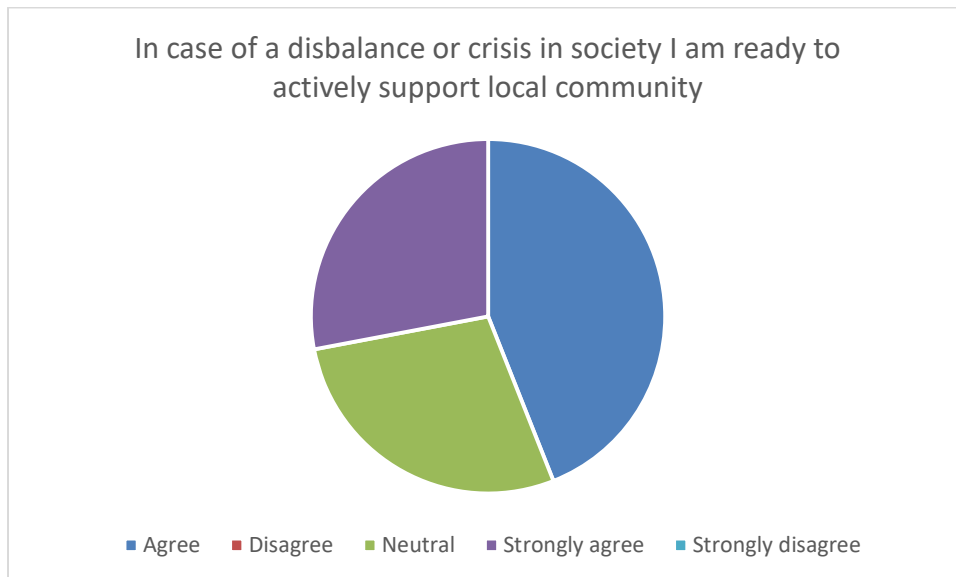
Surprisingly, about 48% of the participants answer neutral and 16% disagree that they have enough creative ideas, tools to form the local cultural or social life, and only 36% express the opinion that they can form the local cultural and social life by their creative ideas and tools.

29. My need for cultural activities has changed during the COVID epidemic?



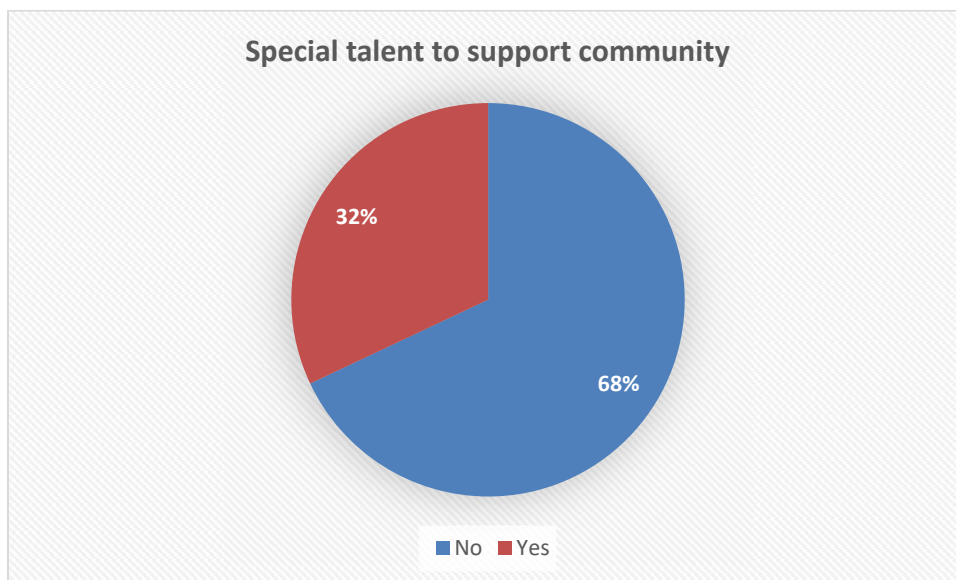
More than half of the respondents reported that their need for cultural activities has changed during the COVID epidemic, 28% remain neutral and about 12% disagree that their needs for cultural activities have changed during the pandemic period.

30. In case of a disbalance or crisis in society I am ready to actively support the local community.



A high percentage of respondents - 72% - report that in case of a disbalance or crisis in society they are ready to actively support their local community while 28% remain neutral.

22. Do you have specific talents that could contribute to cultural activities?



A bigger part of the respondents (68%) report that they do not have specific talents that could contribute to cultural activities.

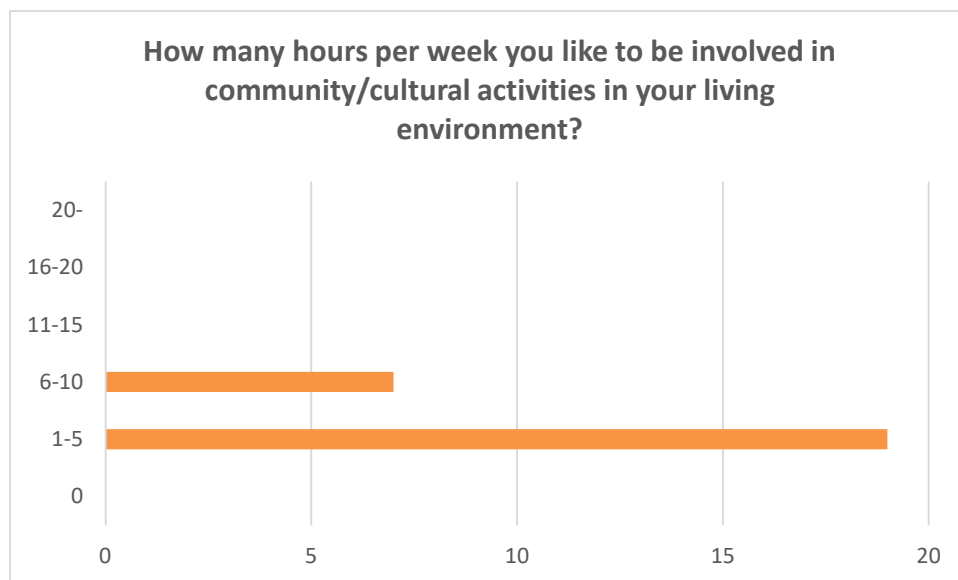
22.1 Please describe your talents

In describing their talents, participants report the following:

- Good organiser

- Manager of cultural events
- Photography
- Creative skills
- Yoga
- Event planning
- Singing
- Drawing
- Crafts
- Art

23. How many hours per week you like to be involved in community/cultural activities in your living environment?



There are only two groups of respondents according to their answers:

- a high percentage of participants are willing to be involved in community/cultural activities in their living environment 1-5 hours (76%)
- 24% are happy to contribute 6-10 hours.

Short evaluation questionnaire part 3

A bigger part of the respondents - nearly 70% - reported to be active in their local communities. Nearly the same percentage - 72% are ready to actively support their local community in case of a disbalance or crisis in society. Surprisingly, about 48% of the participants answer neutral and 16% disagree that they have enough creative ideas, tools to form the local cultural or social life, and 68% of the respondents report that they do not have specific talents that could contribute to cultural activities.

Good examples

Good practices

One of the aims of the project is to identify and showcase local examples of good practice. To learn about these good practices, the questionnaire also included a question to bring to surface these ideas and share as widely as possible. The project partners would like to disseminate as wide as possible the good practices in crisis management, which can work at local level.

LIST OF GOOD PRACTICES FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

31. Do you have any good examples and creative solution of existing and new cultural activities that connected people in your living environment during a crisis situation (e.g.: COVID pandemic, war refugees, etc.)?

As for some good examples the following may be listed, based on participants responses in Bulgaria:

- Inclusion of young people from the Roma community in Sliven in various activities.
- Online concerts - amateur and professional
- Virtual tours of galleries and libraries. In a sense, we have become one big online community.
- Creating a publicly available electronic catalogue of works by people engaged in fiction writing and publishing the best of them in a book.
- Baba (Grandma) Residence
- Local outdoor gatherings for exhibitions from the garden, contests for the best grown fruits and vegetables, village festival, cleaning public areas, etc.
- Mutual aid network - the community center was revived
- Exchanging culinary recipes
- Many online events and interest groups were organised, people self-organised locally which was unique, volunteerism flourished and many local volunteer networks emerged, borders were blurred - they were gone, people from all over the world were together in their efforts to protect "normal" life against Covid.
- Preparation of local folk calendar - traditions which were not affected by the various crisis situations.
- Digital visits of cities and museums.
- The library started more active work with children

Conclusions

The analysis of the survey results shows some interesting conclusions for Bulgaria:

- There are needs as well as demand of more cultural activities organised in or by the local communities

Most of the respondents express the opinion that they miss cultural offerings and 48% of the survey participants are neutral, unsatisfied or even strongly unsatisfied by the cultural events.



84% from different age groups reported that they participate in cultural activities in their living environment.

- Most of the respondents indicate that cultural activities enhanced togetherness in the community.

Nearly 70% reported to be active in their local communities. 72% are ready to actively support their local community in case of a disbalance or crisis in society.

70% of them would like to be involved in community cultural activities in their living environment and most of the respondents are ready to devote from 1-10 hours per week.

- Most of the respondents do not believe they have specific talents that could or enough creative ideas, tools to contribute to the local cultural activities or to form the local cultural or social life

There is a need for more creative solutions to make local people feel more comfortable and proactive which will foster higher interest, engagements and participation as well as even more alternative cultural opportunities in Bulgaria.

- The pandemic has shown a difference in the chances for involvement in cultural and social activities between the urban and the rural areas. In opposite of the “common sense”, some of the respondents find much more opportunities for creative solutions in the smaller communities in rural areas.

“In a sense, we have become one big online community. In the big city, the local communities are not particularly cohesive and organised. There are objective reasons for this - people are scattered, live in one place, work in another, get involved in the cultural life of a third. The pandemic has closed us to our homes, severed all these connections and left us virtually, cut off from our usual environment and community. This was not the case in the small settlements where local communities are permanent and much more cohesive, having survived more than one local or national crisis. I'm sure such creative solutions can be found there - in the small communities.”