

Empowering Homeless Women Through Football: A Survey Analysis



This report consists of a survey related to the participation of 60 women in the “Solid’HER” football tournament, which took place in Grenoble, France in May 2024. The survey focuses on the participants experiences, challenges, and perceptions around their participation in this 2-day women only tournament. It encompasses several questions and responses, shedding light on the participants' feelings, challenges and the impact of the tournament on their confidence, autonomy, and personal development.

Content

- Introduction
- Section 1: Participant sentiments and expectations
- Section 2: Impact and challenges
- Section 3: Societal perceptions and recommendations
- Conclusion

Introduction

On May 11th and 12th, 2024, Grenoble, France, hosted an international street football tournament dedicated to women from vulnerable backgrounds, including those experiencing homelessness. The event brought together participants from ten countries—Belgium, Spain, Greece, Switzerland, Finland, Sweden, Poland, Mexico, Hungary, and France. Sixty women competed in nearly 40 matches, supported by 20 volunteers, and cheered on by hundreds of spectators. This tournament marked the first time such an international event was held in France, outside of the Homeless World Cup in Paris in 2011. It was also one of the rare occasions where a street football tournament was exclusively dedicated to women.

Given the rarity of tournaments exclusively dedicated to women, we recognised the unique opportunity this event presented to better understand its social impact. To capture the experiences and perspectives of the participants, we conducted a survey among them. All answers (41) were collected between 18th and 26th of May. Our aim was to explore how organising such a tournament could influence their lives, foster community, and promote empowerment among women from vulnerable backgrounds. By gathering this valuable feedback, we hope to gain insights that will help us shape future initiatives and amplify the positive effects of similar events.

The survey begins by gauging the participants' sentiments toward joining a football tournament designed specifically for women, with options ranging from extremely enthusiastic to hesitant and uncomfortable. It also delves into whether the tournament met their expectations and the impact of their participation on their confidence and autonomy. Moreover, it explores the challenges faced during preparation and participation, such as lack of access to adequate training facilities, financial constraints, transportation issues, health problems, lack of support from family/friends, and childcare responsibilities. The survey also examines the potential societal impact of such events in changing perceptions about homelessness, women's participation in sports, and do inclusivity and support mean. It also explores the personal benefits gained and delves into the participants' willingness to recommend similar events to other vulnerable women and their likelihood of participating in such events in the future.

Overall, the survey captures the participants' experiences, challenges, and the positive impact of the tournament on their confidence, autonomy, and personal development. It also highlights the potential societal impact of such events and the inclusivity and support experienced by the participants. The expressions of gratitude and positive experiences at the end of the survey illustrates the significance of such events in fostering empowerment and well-being among vulnerable women. Some recommendations are shared at the end.



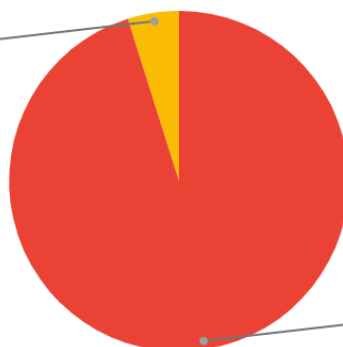
Section 1: Participant sentiments and expectations

1.1: Initial sentiments

How did you feel about participating in a women only tournament ?

Moderately positive

4,9%



Extremely excited and empowered
95,1%

- **Enthusiastic participation:** The survey revealed that many participants were extremely enthusiastic and positive about joining a football tournament designed for women, showcasing their eagerness to engage in such empowering events. The overwhelmingly enthusiastic response from participants highlights the significant demand and appreciation for sports events that are tailored specifically for women, particularly those from vulnerable backgrounds. This enthusiasm suggests that women in these communities are eager for opportunities to engage in activities that foster empowerment, connection, and personal growth. Additionally, none of the respondents selected a negative option ("neutral", "slightly hesitant" or "very hesitant and uncomfortable"). The absence of any negative or hesitant feedback further proves the importance of creating safe and supportive environments where women can freely express themselves and build confidence.



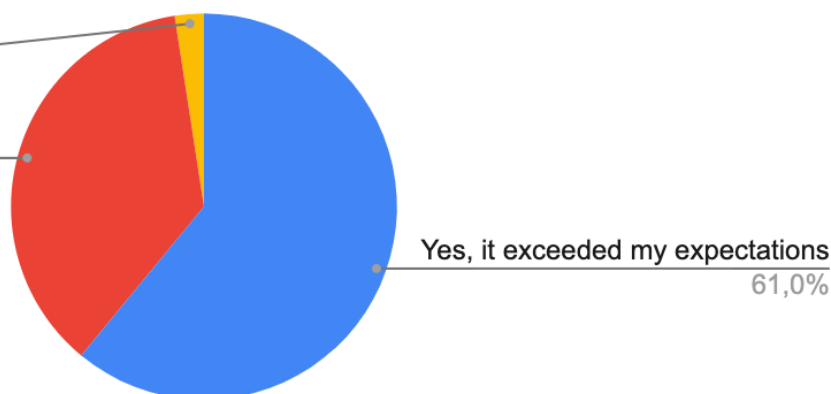
Did this tournament meet your expectations?

No, it fell short of my expectations

2,4%

Yes, it met my expectations

36,6%



- **Meeting expectations:** A significant number of participants expressed that the tournament not only met but exceeded their expectations, indicating the positive impact of the event on their experiences. The fact that a significant number of participants felt the tournament exceeded their expectations underscores the event's success in providing more than just a sports competition. It highlights the tournament's role in creating a memorable and impactful experience that resonated deeply with the participants. This suggests that the event not only fulfilled their basic needs for inclusion and engagement but also offered them unexpected opportunities for personal growth, empowerment, and connection.

1.2: Confidence and autonomy

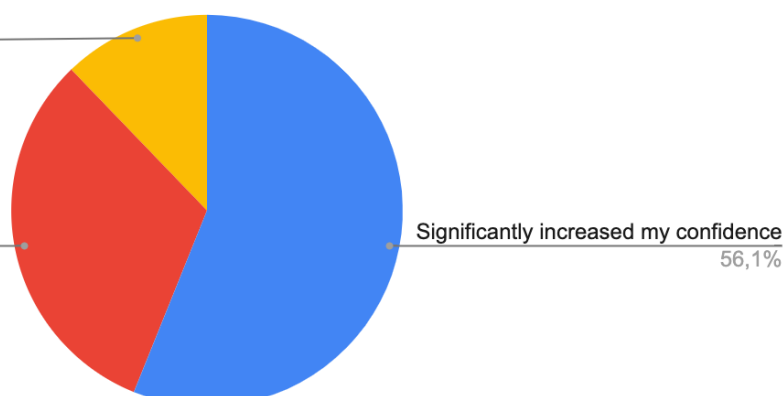
How has participating in this tournament impacted your confidence and sense of empowerment?

No significant impact

12,2%

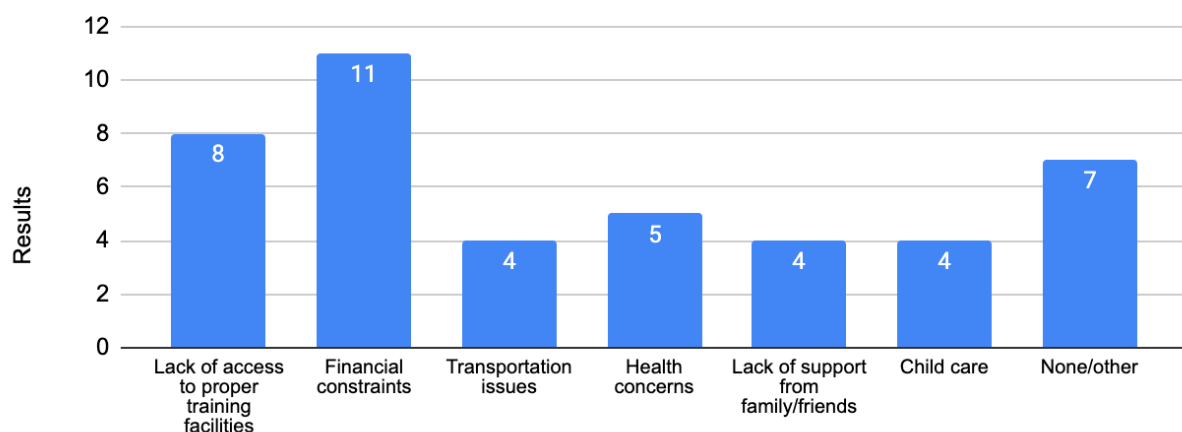
Increased my confidence somewhat

31,7%



- **Increased confidence:** The survey highlighted that the participation in the tournament had a considerable impact on the confidence and autonomy of the participants, contributing to their personal development and empowerment. The survey's findings that participation in the tournament significantly boosted the confidence and autonomy of the participants demonstrate the transformative power of such events. It highlights the crucial role that inclusive and empowering activities, like this tournament, play in fostering personal development among women from vulnerable backgrounds. By providing a platform where they can challenge themselves, connect with others, and achieve goals, the event has contributed to enhancing their self-esteem and independence. Additionally, the tournament provided a unique opportunity for women to share experiences and best practices that are often known only to them. This exchange of knowledge and personal insights not only fostered a sense of solidarity but also enriched the participants' understanding of how to navigate their challenges.

What challenges, if any, did you face in preparing for and participating in the tournament?



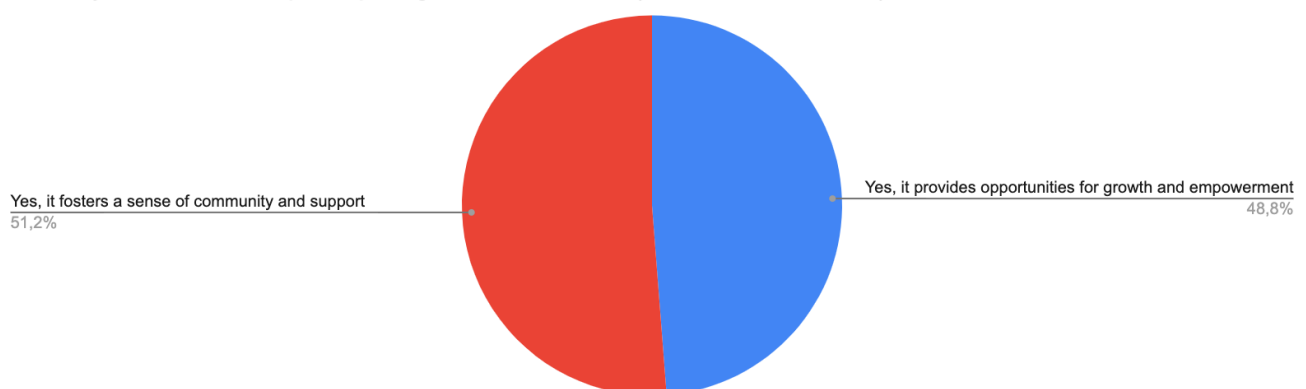
- **Challenges faced:** Participants encountered various challenges during preparation and participation, including financial constraints, transportation issues, and lack of support from family and friends, underscoring the hurdles faced by vulnerable women in accessing such opportunities. These difficulties illustrate the complex realities that many women from vulnerable backgrounds face, where even participating in a positive event requires overcoming substantial obstacles. The fact that Mexican players specifically identified the lack of support from family and friends as their most difficult challenge emphasizes the critical role of social support systems in enabling participation. This disparity in responses suggests that while logistical and financial barriers are common, emotional, and social support—or the lack thereof—can be an even more profound obstacle for some, particularly in contexts where family and community ties play a crucial role in a woman's ability



to engage in such activities. This highlights the need for tailored support mechanisms that address not only the practical challenges but also the social and emotional needs of participants, ensuring that all women have the opportunity to benefit fully from such events.

1.3: Willingness to participate

Would you recommend participating in similar events (dedicated to women) to other vulnerable women?

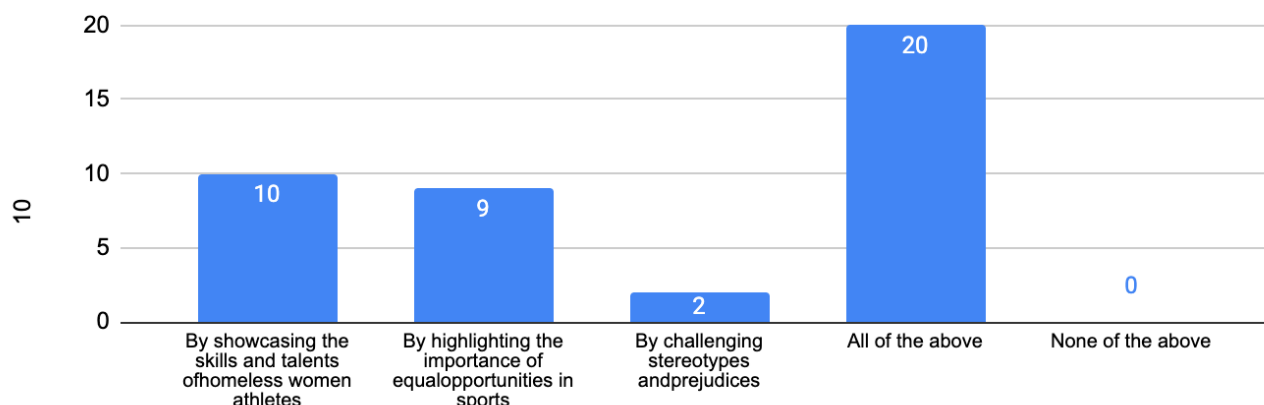


- **Likelihood of future participation:** A high percentage of participants expressed a strong likelihood of participating in similar events in the future, emphasizing the positive influence and significance of such tournaments in their lives. The high percentage of participants expressing a strong likelihood of participating in similar events in the future shows the powerful and positive impact these tournaments. The fact that none of the respondents chose the negative options, such as "No, because it may not be suitable for everyone's circumstances" or "No, because there are better ways to address homelessness," highlights the participants' overwhelming belief in the value and effectiveness of these events. It suggests that they view the tournaments not just as enjoyable activities, but as meaningful opportunities that address their unique needs and circumstances, offering benefits that extend beyond what traditional approaches might provide. This unanimity in positive feedback reinforces the importance of continuing to organise such events, as they are clearly seen as vital, empowering experiences that resonate deeply with those involved.

Section 2: Impact and challenges

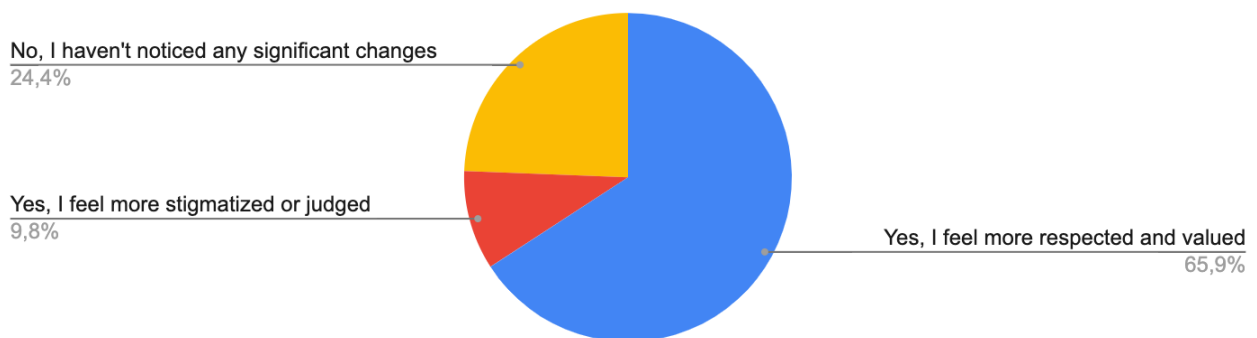
2.1: Societal perceptions

How do you think such events can contribute to changing societal perceptions about homelessness and women's participation in sports?



- **Changing societal perceptions:** The survey indicated that the tournament played a pivotal role in challenging stereotypes and prejudices, highlighting the importance of equality of opportunity in sports and emphasizing the skills and talents of the participating women. It seems that these tournaments can play a pivotal role in challenging stereotypes and prejudices, which exemplifies the powerful potential of such events to reshape societal perceptions about homelessness and women's participation in sports and contribute to shape policymaking for the better. This shows the importance of equality of opportunity, demonstrating that when given the chance, women from all backgrounds can showcase their skills and talents on a public stage. By emphasizing their capabilities and determination, the tournament not only breaks down existing biases but also promotes a more inclusive and equitable view of both sports and society. This demonstrates the broader impact of these events beyond the immediate participants, as they contribute to a cultural shift toward recognising and valuing the contributions of all women, regardless of their circumstances.

Have you noticed any changes in how you are perceived by others after participating in this tournament?



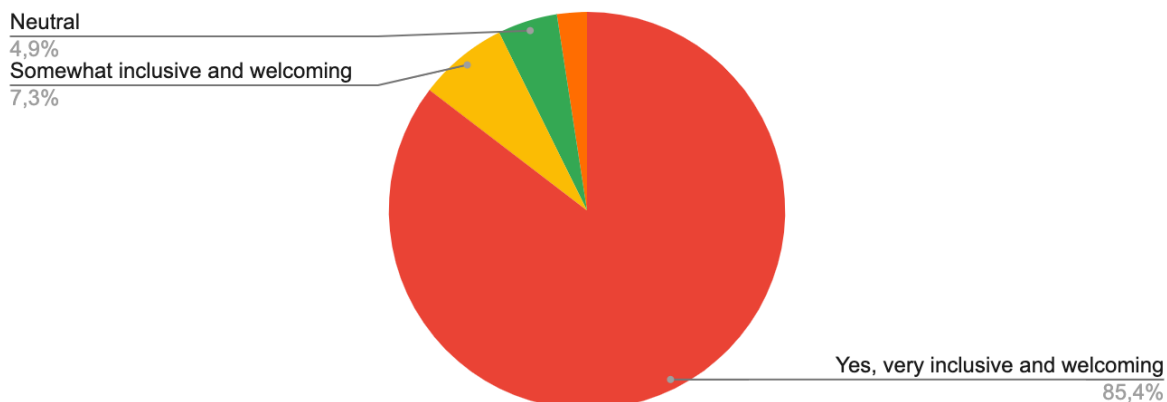
- **Measuring societal impact:** These results reveal a mixed but overall positive impact on how participants perceive they are viewed by others following the tournament. The fact that 66% of participants felt more respected and valued indicates that the event successfully enhanced their social standing and contributed to a greater sense of dignity and self-worth. This suggests that participation in such tournaments can have a meaningful and affirming effect on how homeless women and those from vulnerable backgrounds are perceived by their communities.

However, the 9% who reported feeling more stigmatized or judged highlights that there are still societal challenges and prejudices that need to be addressed, indicating that not all reactions were positive. This underscores the importance of continuing efforts to educate and shift societal attitudes toward greater acceptance and understanding, as well as working with the participants after they return from such events. The 24% who noticed no significant change suggests that while the tournament had a positive impact for many, it may not be enough on its own to alter deeply ingrained perceptions for everyone. There is a need for sustained and multifaceted approaches to changing societal views on homelessness and women in sports, combining events like these with broader advocacy and education efforts.



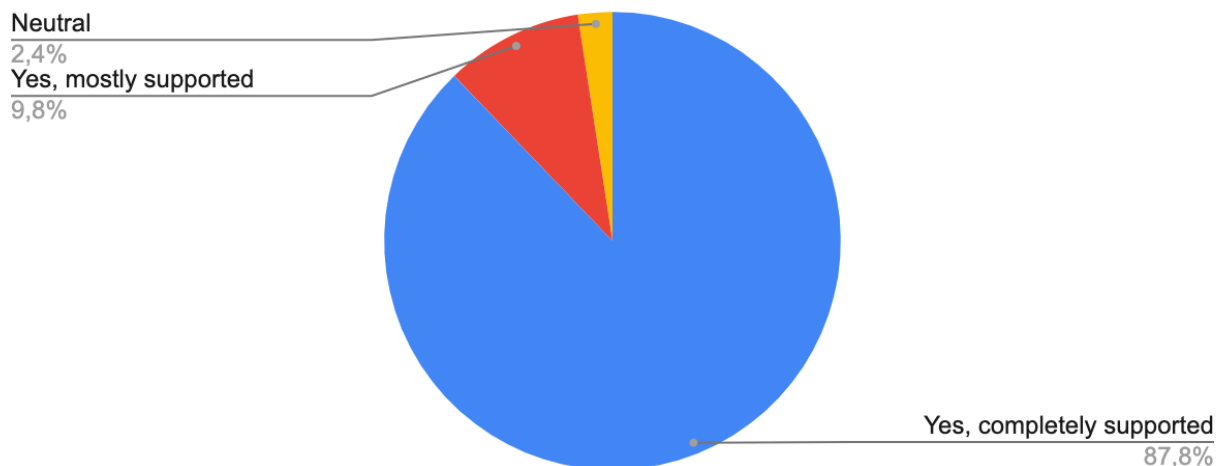
2.2: Inclusivity and support

Did you find the tournament to be inclusive and welcoming?



- **Inclusive environment:** The majority of participants finding the tournament to be inclusive and welcoming reveals the success of the event in creating a positive and supportive environment. This reflects the organisers' efforts to ensure that every participant, regardless of their background or circumstances, felt valued and accepted. It highlights the importance of fostering an atmosphere where all women, particularly those from vulnerable situations, can feel safe, respected, and encouraged to participate fully. This inclusivity not only enhances the immediate experience of the event but also contributes to the participants' sense of belonging and community, which can have lasting positive effects on their confidence and social connections. This outcome reveals the need for continued emphasis on inclusivity in similar events, as it is crucial for creating empowering experiences that resonate deeply with those involved.

Did you feel supported by the organizers and fellow participants throughout the tournament?

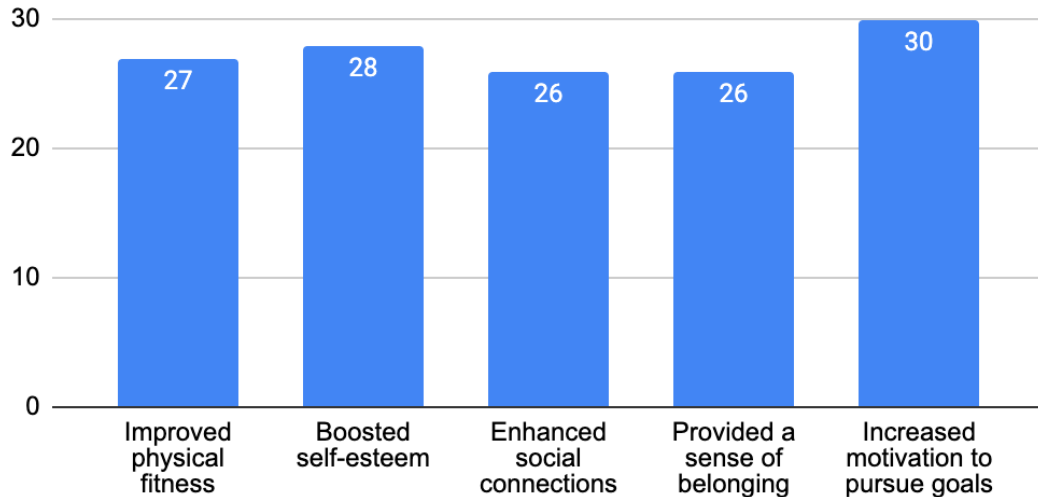


- **Organisational support:** Participants felt supported by the organisers (both men and women) and other participants throughout the tournament, emphasizing the crucial role of support in empowering vulnerable women. The fact that two participants responded "neutral" and one participant found the tournament "somewhat exclusive and unwelcoming" suggests that, while the majority had a positive experience, there were a few who did not fully share this sentiment. This highlights that, despite overall success, there is room for improvement in ensuring that the event is truly inclusive and welcoming for all participants.

These responses might indicate that certain aspects of the tournament—such as communication, cultural sensitivity, or the way support was provided—may not have fully resonated with everyone. It could also suggest that some participants might have felt overlooked, disconnected, or faced barriers that others did not. These barriers could be as broad as language and communication difficulties, cultural differences, group dynamics, logistical challenges, weather, unmet physical or mental health needs, or lack of social support. This feedback is valuable as it emphasizes the importance of continuously assessing and addressing the diverse needs of all participants to ensure that future events can be even more inclusive and supportive. By taking these responses into account, we can work towards refining our approach, ensuring that every individual feels equally welcomed and included.

2.3: Personal Benefits

In what ways do you think this tournament has benefited you personally, both on and off the field?



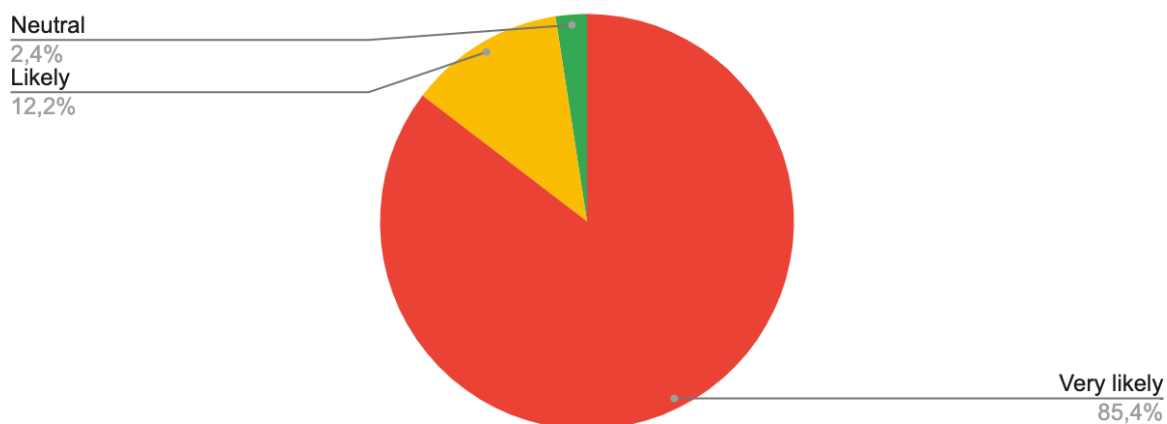
- **Physical and emotional well-being:** The survey reveals that the tournament brought about personal benefits such as improved physical fitness, enhanced self-esteem, and a sense of belonging to a collective, highlighting the holistic impact of the event on the participants. The close distribution of responses in this multiple choice question, with all options receiving between 26 and 30 selections, highlights that the tournament had a broad and multifaceted impact on the participants, with many experiencing a range of personal benefits. This suggests that the event effectively addressed diverse needs and goals, providing participants with improvements in physical fitness, self-esteem, and a sense of belonging. The holistic impact reflects the comprehensive value of such tournaments in enhancing the well-being of women from vulnerable backgrounds.



Section 3: Societal perceptions and recommendations

3.1: Advocacy and recommendations

How likely are you to participate in similar events in the future?



- **Advocacy for vulnerable women:** Participants generally expressed a willingness to recommend similar events to other vulnerable women, showcasing their belief in the positive impact of such initiatives in empowering and uplifting marginalized communities. The overwhelmingly positive responses, with 35 participants saying they were "very likely" and 5 saying "likely" to recommend similar events, indicate a strong endorsement of the tournament's impact. This suggests that the participants not only valued their own experiences but also believed in the potential of such events to empower and uplift other vulnerable women. The absence of negative responses ("unlikely" or "very unlikely") further highlights the participants' confidence in the event's benefits and their desire to share these opportunities with others in similar situations. The single "neutral" response may reflect a personal hesitation or unique perspective but does not diminish the overall positive sentiment.

3.2: Gratitude and positive experiences

The survey concluded with statements expressing gratitude and positive experiences from the participants, illustrating the transformative impact of the tournament on their own lives and well-being:



"Thank you for motivating, believing in and supporting women's sports, without a doubt it has been a dream come true for the team in general."

"I felt very happy and included in this event and in life in general. I find it easier to speak up."

"I loved the opportunity because at that age I wouldn't believe in my dream of playing in a major football tournament."

"This was my first introduction to this tournament, and I hope to continue to be involved in future events. Whether it's through playing, watching, or even helping."



3.3: Societal impact: empowerment and well-being

The survey findings highlighted the significant societal impact of such events in fostering empowerment, well-being, and inclusivity among vulnerable women. It emphasizes the importance of continued support for similar initiatives. The societal impacts of a football tournament dedicated to vulnerable women can be profound and far-reaching. First, the visibility of the event, amplified by media coverage and the presence of prominent figures like the mayor and the captain of the city's major football club helps to challenge and change societal perceptions of both homelessness and women's participation in sports. By showcasing the talents and resilience of these women, the event confronts stereotypes and encourages a broader dialogue about inclusivity, gender equality, and social justice.

Additionally, the support of hundreds of spectators signals a community-wide engagement, fostering a sense of solidarity and empathy towards marginalised groups. This collective experience can inspire further community action and support for vulnerable women, potentially leading to increased resources, opportunities, and policy changes that address their needs (both at local and international levels).

Moreover, the event's success can serve as a model for future initiatives, encouraging other organisations and cities to host similar events, thereby expanding the reach and impact of such empowering opportunities. The involvement of the press ensures that the conversation extends beyond the immediate community, raising awareness on a larger scale and potentially influencing public opinion and policy at regional or national levels.



Conclusion

While the personal circumstances of the participants were not directly inquired about, we can imagine a range of challenging situations that these vulnerable women might be facing. Many could be experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, possibly living in shelters, temporary accommodations, or even on the streets. Others might be survivors of domestic violence, struggling to rebuild their lives in the face of trauma or addictions. Some may be dealing with financial instability, unemployment, or underemployment, making it difficult to meet basic needs. Additionally, these women could be facing social isolation, lacking strong support networks, or experiencing stigma and discrimination due to their circumstances. Mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, or the effects of prolonged stress, might also be prevalent among them. These potential situations underline the resilience of the participants and the importance of creating supportive and inclusive opportunities like the tournament, which offer not only a moment of respite and joy but also a chance to build confidence, community, and hope for the future.

The findings emphasize the need to continue organising such events, as they evidently have a powerful and positive impact on the participants. The positive impact goes beyond the physical activity, pointing to the importance of fostering environments that address the holistic well-being of individuals, especially those from vulnerable backgrounds. The event's positive impact measured through this survey highlights the importance of continuing to support initiatives that promote both immediate enjoyment and long-term growth, while also facilitating valuable peer-to-peer learning and connection among women from vulnerable backgrounds.

To enhance the inclusivity and impact of future events, we could provide translation services and multilingual communication to overcome language barriers, offer cultural sensitivity training for staff to better address diverse participant needs, and establish personalised support systems such as mental health resources or logistical assistance. Expanding outreach to involve a broader range of community members, including underrepresented groups, would foster a more diverse and supportive environment. Additionally, implementing continuous feedback mechanisms would allow for real-time improvements and ensure that participant experiences guide future event planning.

