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RECETAS



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Survey on Improving Health and Well-Being Through Social Prescribing and Nature

RECETAS Aggregate Report

Winter 2022



This report for the Survey on Improving Health and Well-Being Through Social Prescribing and Nature was produced by **VISIBLE NETWORK LABS** in collaboration with the **RECETAS** Project using **PARTNER** (Platform to Analyze, Record & Track Networks to Enhance Relationships).

VISIBLE NETWORK LABS is a data science company developing tools and technology to help people measure, understand and evolve the personal and professional networks that influence the communities where they live.

PARTNER is a social network analysis data tracking and learning tool designed to measure and monitor collaboration among people/organizations. It is a new, scientifically validated way to design data-driven network strategies that generate social impact.

PARTNER is a registered product of Visible Network Labs.

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Project Background

About the RECETAS project

RECETAS is a five-year research project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program. RECETAS stands for "Re-imagining Environments for Connection and Engagement: Testing Actions for Social Prescribing in Natural Spaces." The goal of the social network analysis was to better understand how stakeholder organizations across six cities (Helsinki, Melbourne, Marseille, Cuenca, Prague, and Barcelona) are currently working to address mental health and well-being, through social prescribing and nature-based activities. These organizations were sent a network survey using Visible Network Labs' PARTNER platform (www.partnertool.net), apart from organizations located in Marseille. Marseille organizations were sent a link to the network survey via email from the project site contact.

PARTNER Survey

In October and November 2021, 639 organizations across six cities were invited to participate in a Social Network Analysis of their current organizational partnerships as part of the RECETAS research project. 226 organizations responded to the survey, for a 35% response rate. The RECETAS project will use this PARTNER data to better understand how stakeholders across the six cities are working to address mental health, well-being, and loneliness through social prescribing and nature-based activities with the ultimate goal to systematically improve mental health and well-being, reduce loneliness, promote vibrant socially-connected communities, contribute to the sustainability of cities, and reduce health inequities by connecting diverse populations to nature in meaningful ways.

What is a Network?

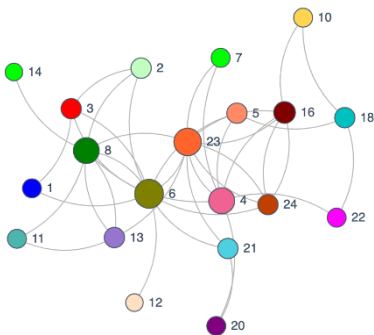
A **network** is a formal partnership created between three or more organizations. Social Network Analysis (SNA) measures the number and quality of connections and increases the visibility of these connections. Using SNA to understand how a network functions can help leaders, members, funders and other stakeholders:

- ❖ Identify ways to improve ways of working to achieve common goals;
- ❖ Plan and implement relationship building and resource leveraging among network partners;
- ❖ Assess the quality, content, and outcomes of connections;
- ❖ Monitor change in networks over time;
- ❖ Develop strategies and action steps to fill gaps and leverage strengths in networks.

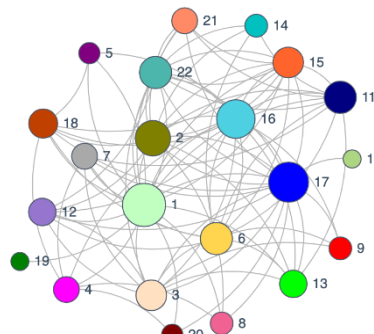
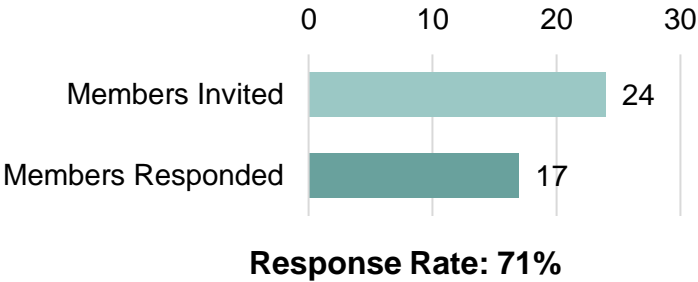
Network Structure and Members

Below are network maps of organizations that are currently working to address mental health, well-being, through social prescribing and nature-based activities in the six sites.

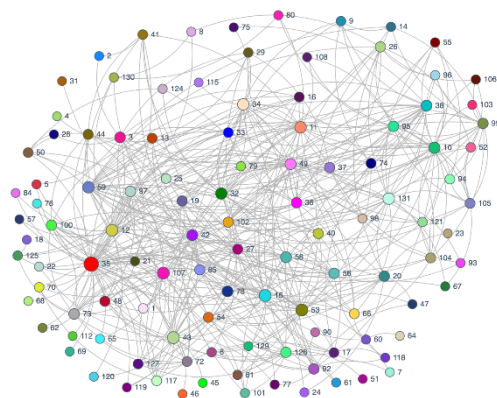
- ❖ This map shows each organization represented as a circle (node). The lines among the nodes represent all relationships that were reported by respondents.
- ❖ The size of the node shows which organizations have the greatest number of connections (they are larger).



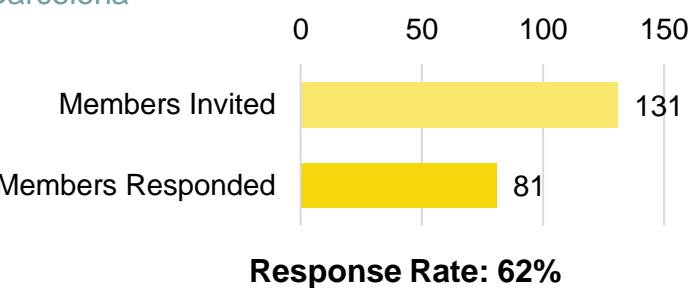
Melbourne



Helsinki

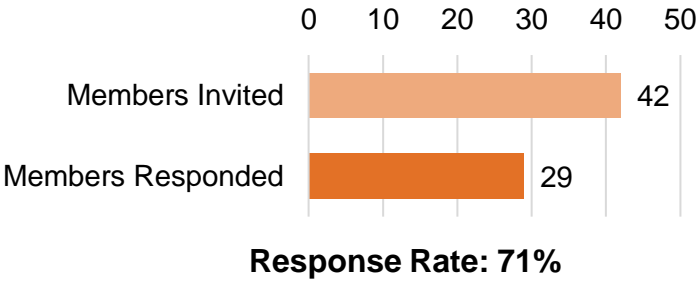
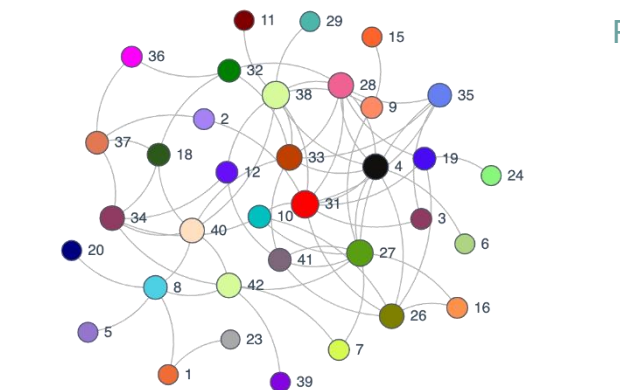


Barcelona

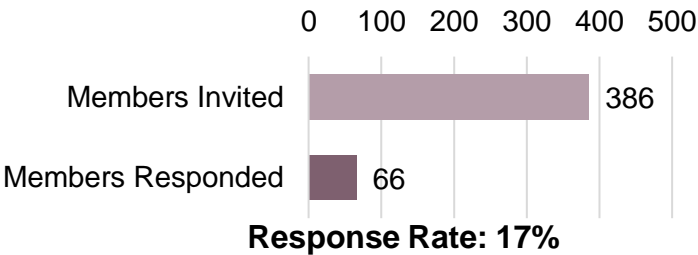
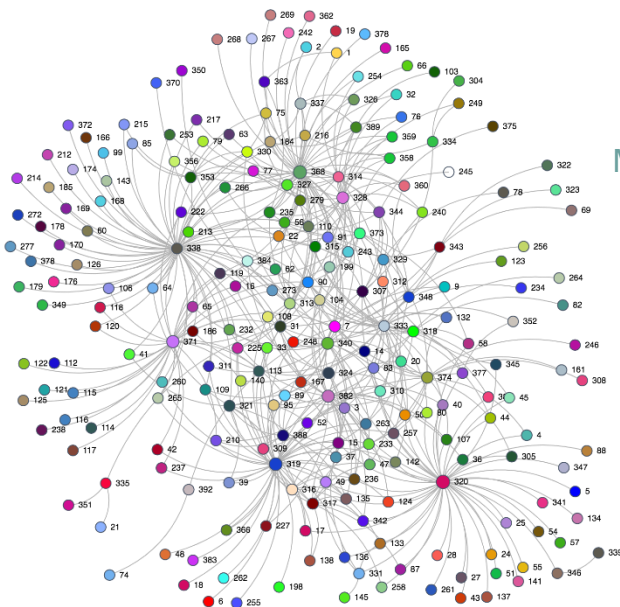


Network Structure and Members

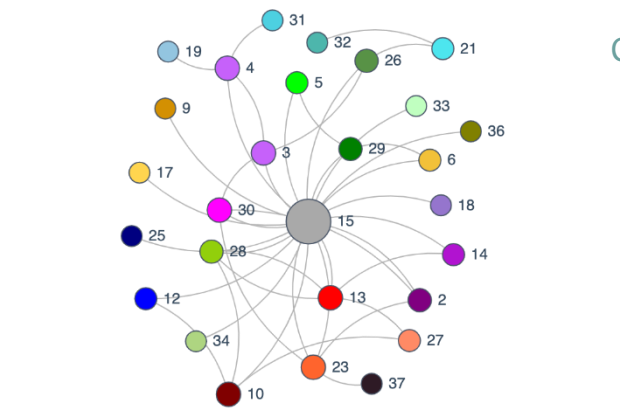
Prague



Marseille

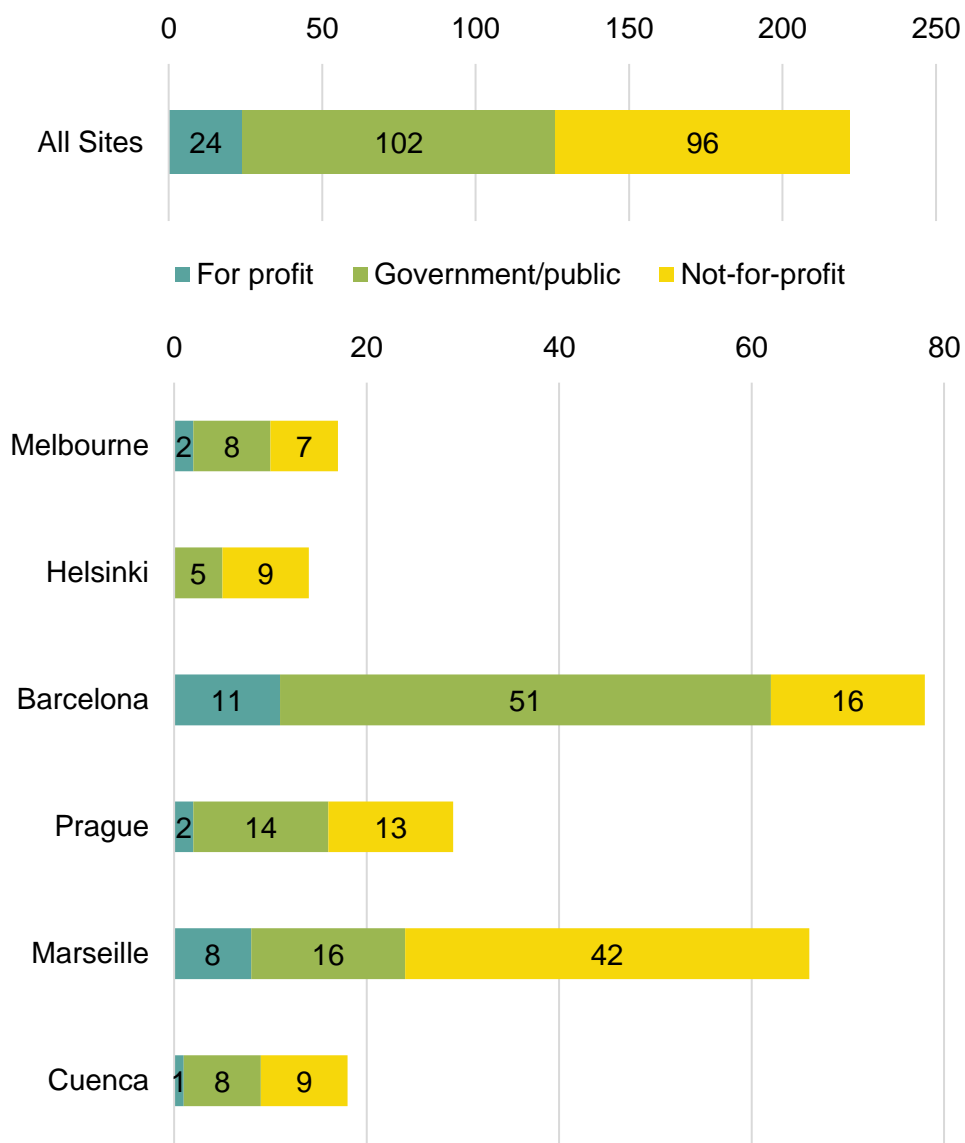


Cuenca



Network Composition – Sector and Industry

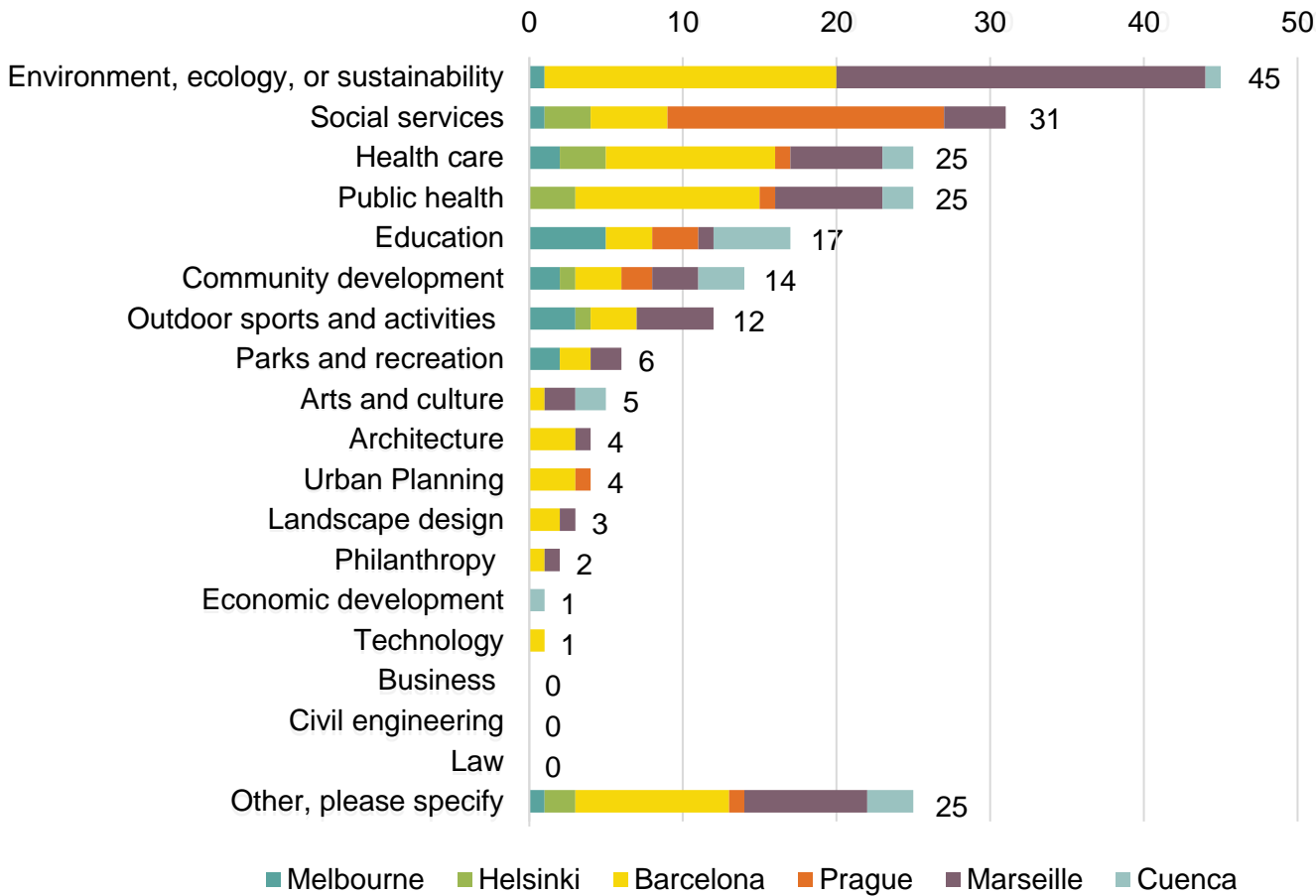
Q1: Which of the following best describes the sector in which you work? (Choose only one)
n = 222 responses



Network Composition – Sector and Industry (Cont.)

Q2: Which of the following best describes the industry or field in which you work? (Choose only one)

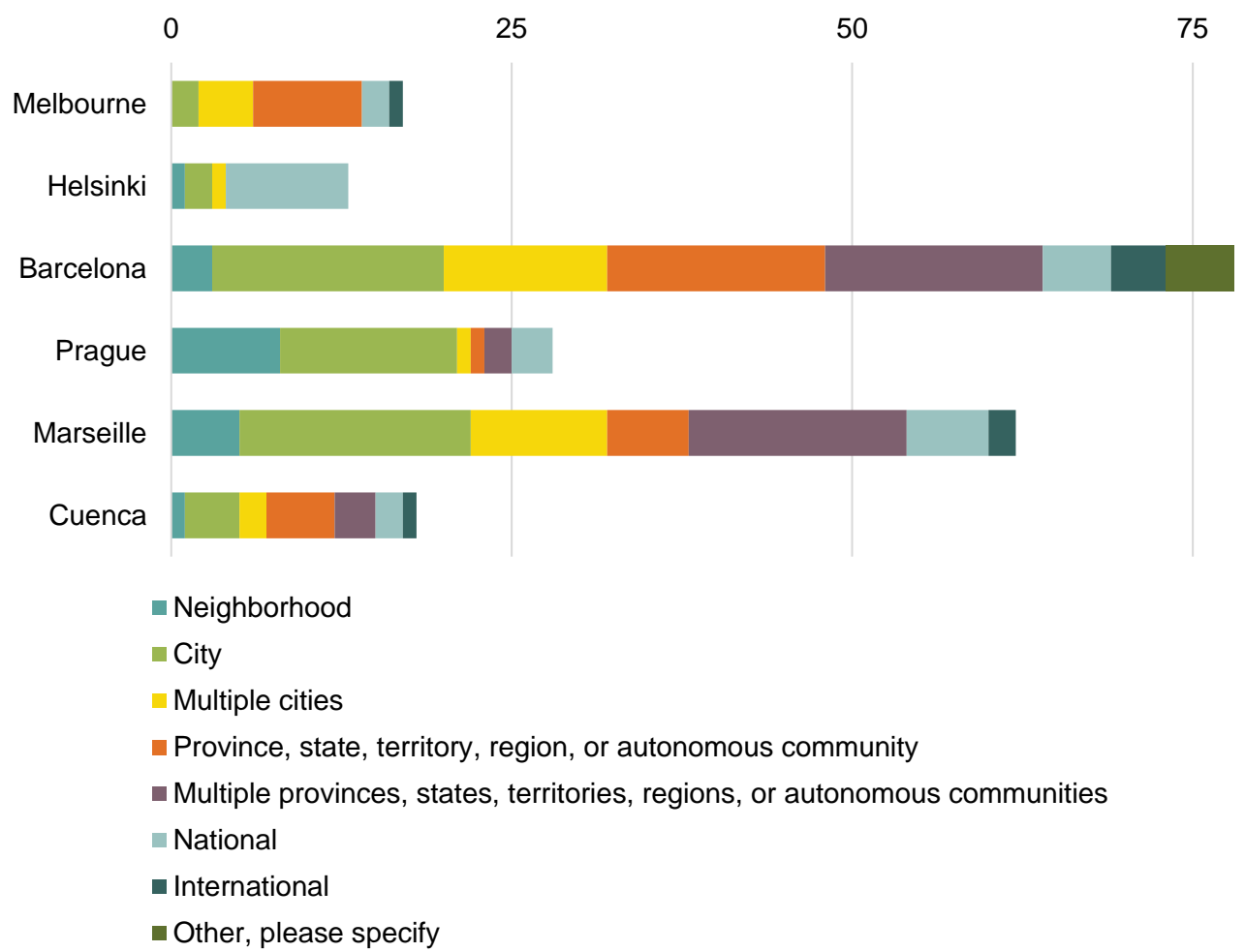
n = 220 responses



Network Composition – Populations Served

Q3: Which of the following best describes the geographic scope of the populations that your organization serves? (Choose only one)

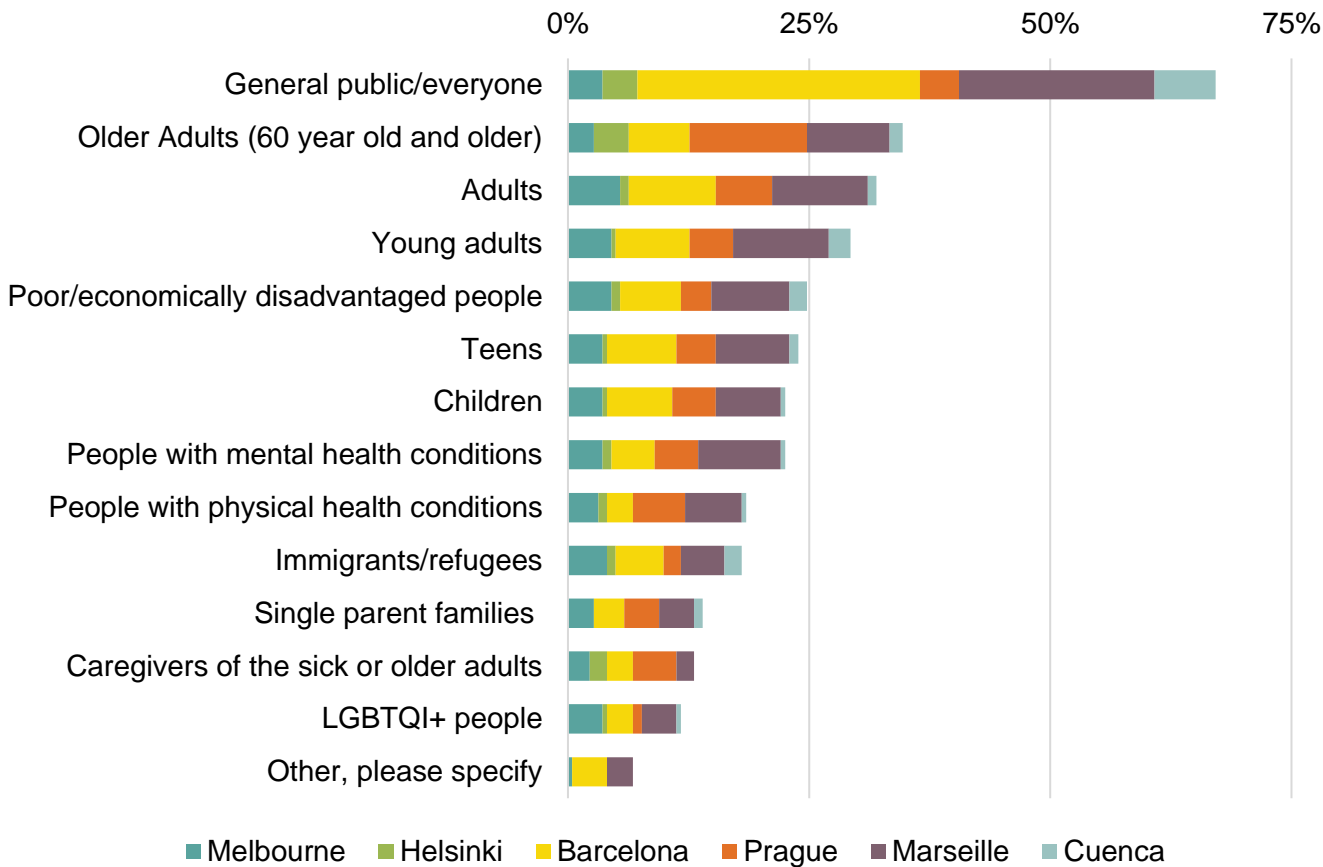
n = 216 responses



Network Composition – Populations Served (Cont.)

Q4: Which populations does your organization serve? (Choose all that apply)

n = 222 responses

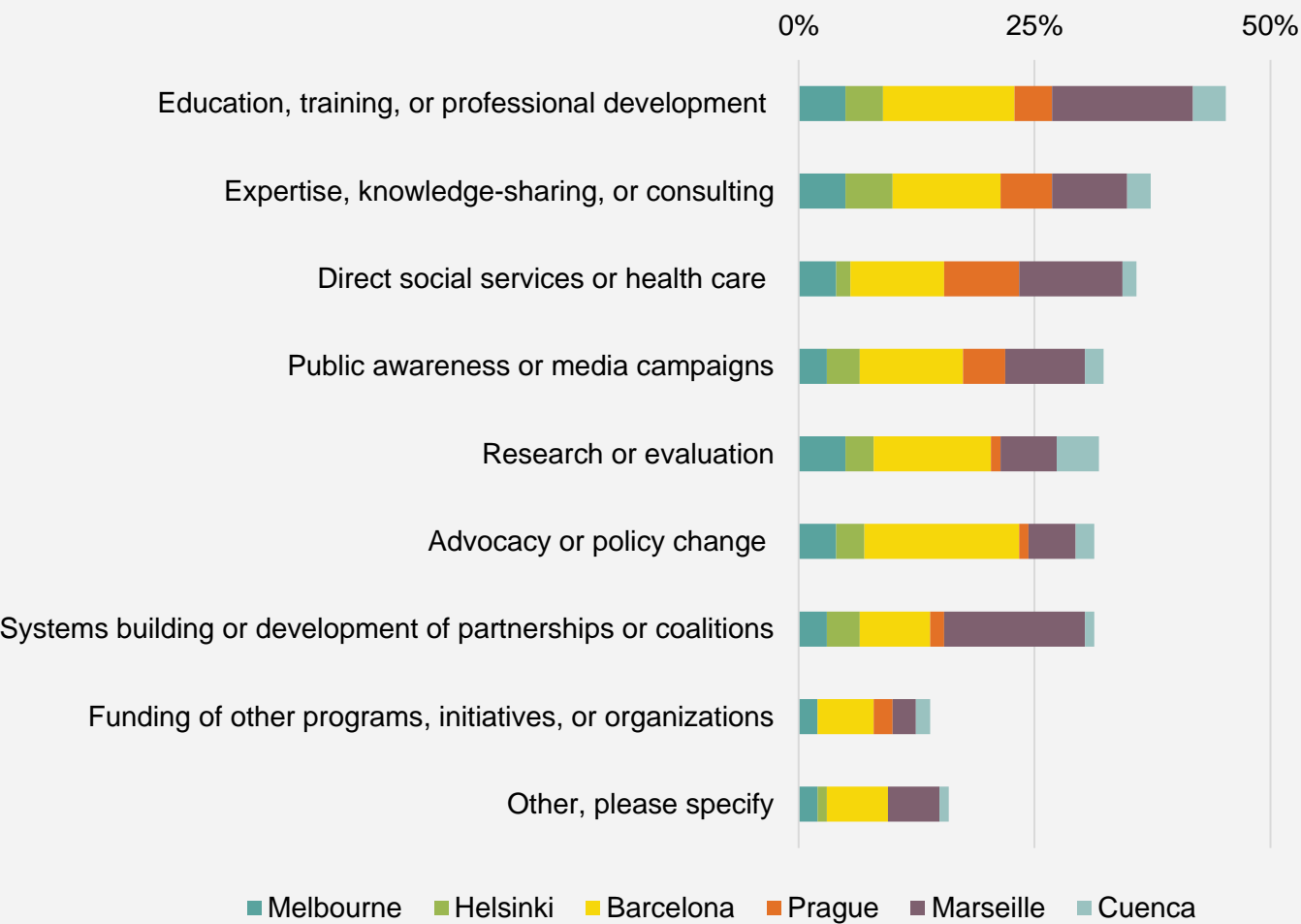


Programs and Services

The types of programs or services that the most organizations engage in include education, training, or professional development (45%), expertise, knowledge-sharing, or consulting (37%), and direct social services or health care (36%).

Q5: Which of the following types of programs or services does your organization engage in to address mental health, well-being, or loneliness, if any? (Choose all that apply)

n = 201 responses

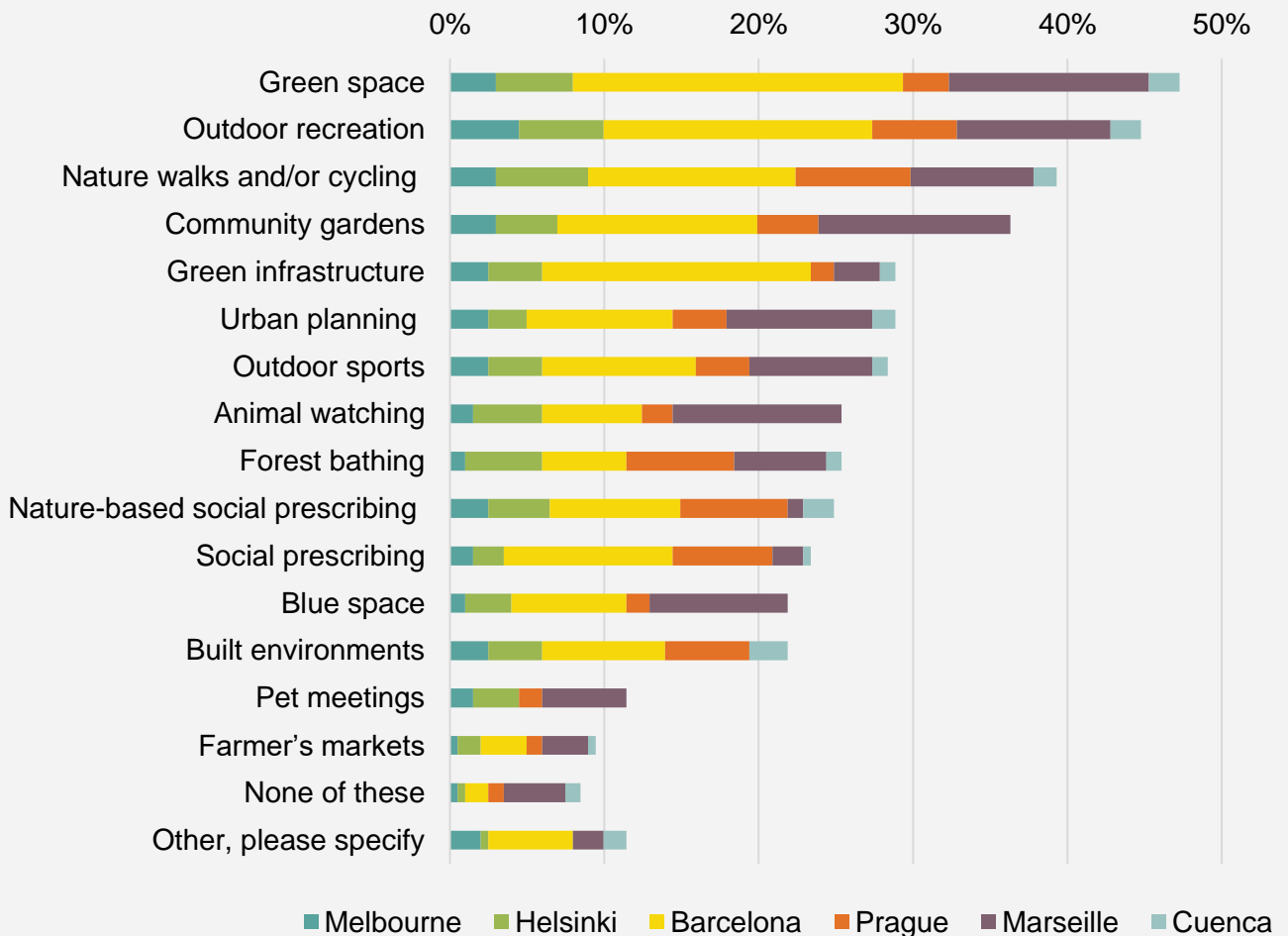


Nature-based Solutions Used

The most used solutions by respondent organizations include green space (47%), outdoor recreation (45%), and nature walks and/or cycling (39%).

Q7: Which of the following solutions in nature, natural spaces, or activities in natural space does your organization use to address mental health, well-being, and loneliness, if any? (Choose all that apply)

n = 201 responses



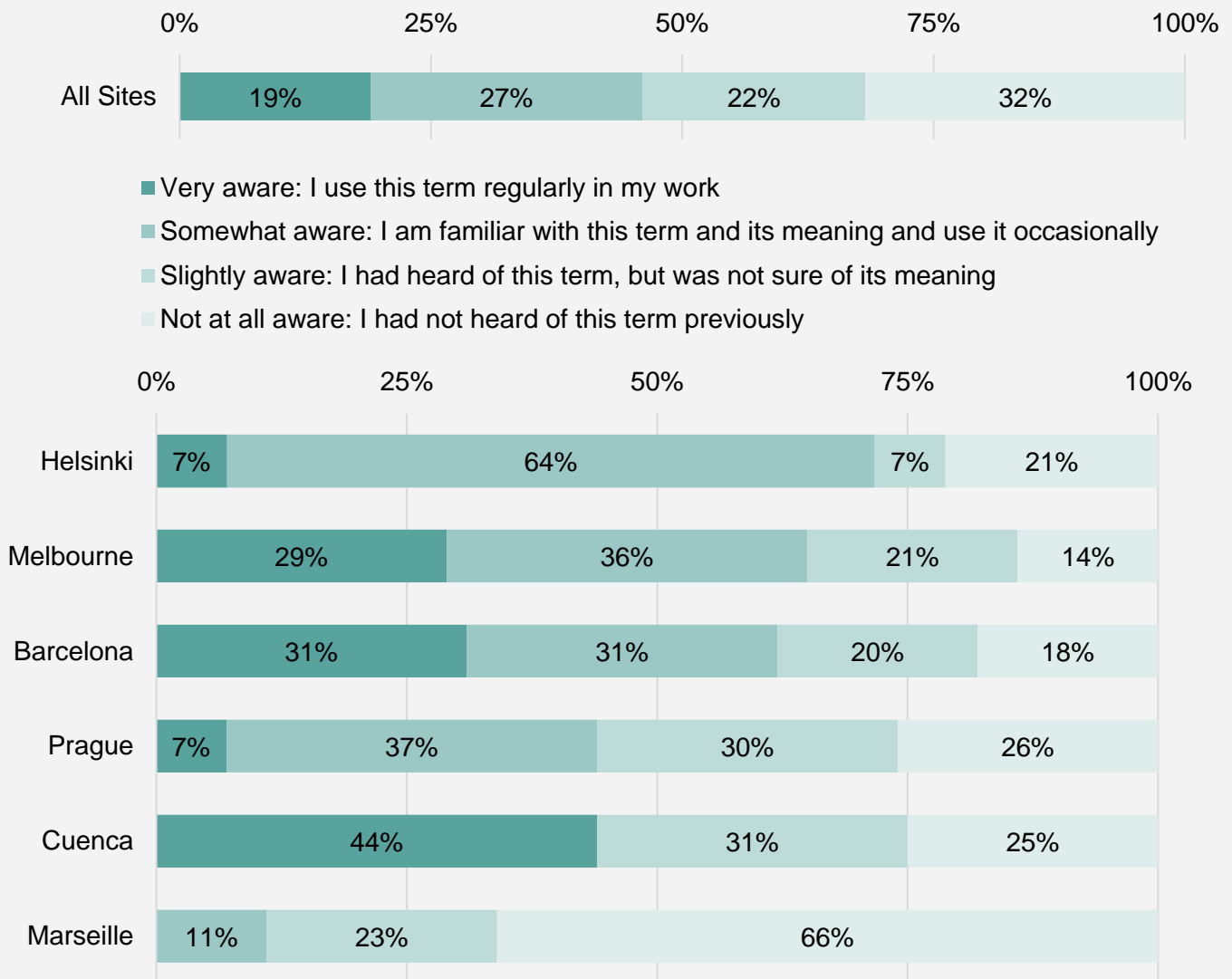
Nature-based Social Prescribing and Solutions

As many as 46% of respondents indicate they are either “somewhat” or “very” aware of the term “nature-based social prescribing.” Helsinki leads in awareness (71% somewhat or very aware), followed by Melbourne (65%), and Barcelona (62%). While Cuenca comes in lower (44%), this value is noteworthy as it is entirely made up of “very aware” respondents.

Q8: To what extent are you aware of the term “nature-based social prescribing”?

In contrast to medical prescriptions, “social prescriptions” are prescriptions to spend time with other people in order to improve health and well-being. “Nature-based social prescriptions” are prescriptions to spend time in nature with other people, in order to improve health and well-being.

n = 189 responses



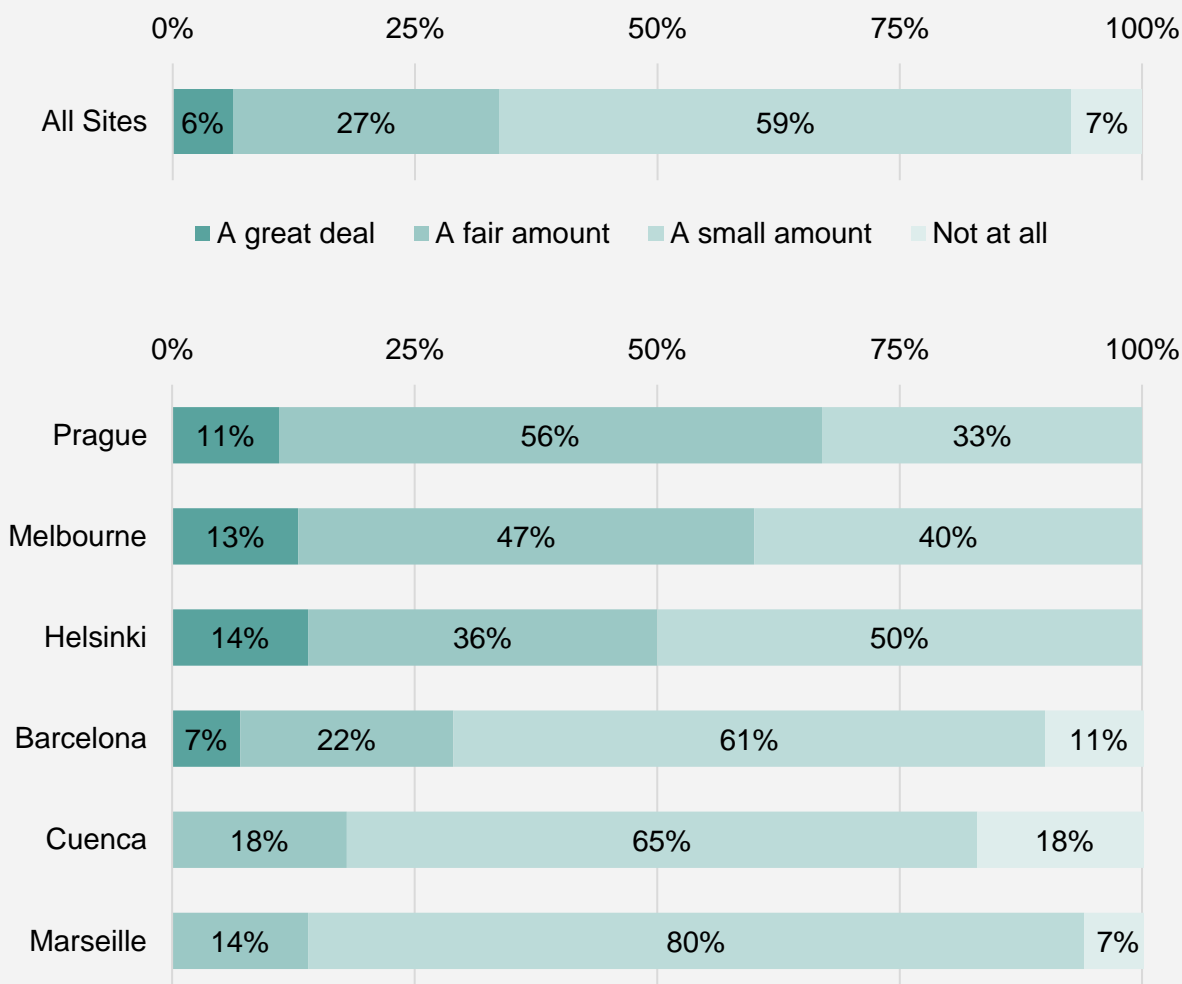
Nature-based Social Prescribing and Solutions

Barcelona reflects the average belief across all sites in terms of whether nature-based solutions are being adopted to address mental health, well-being, or loneliness, with a roughly 30-70 split (29% either “a great deal” or “a fair amount”, 72% either “a small amount” or “not at all”). Prague shows the most optimism (67% positive responses).

Q9: To what extent have nature-based solutions to address mental health, well-being, or loneliness been adopted by people in your city?

Solutions involving natural spaces and activities in natural spaces. For example, solutions such as building green infrastructure and engaging in social activities in nature (community gardens, group excursions in nature, forest bathing).

n = 193 responses

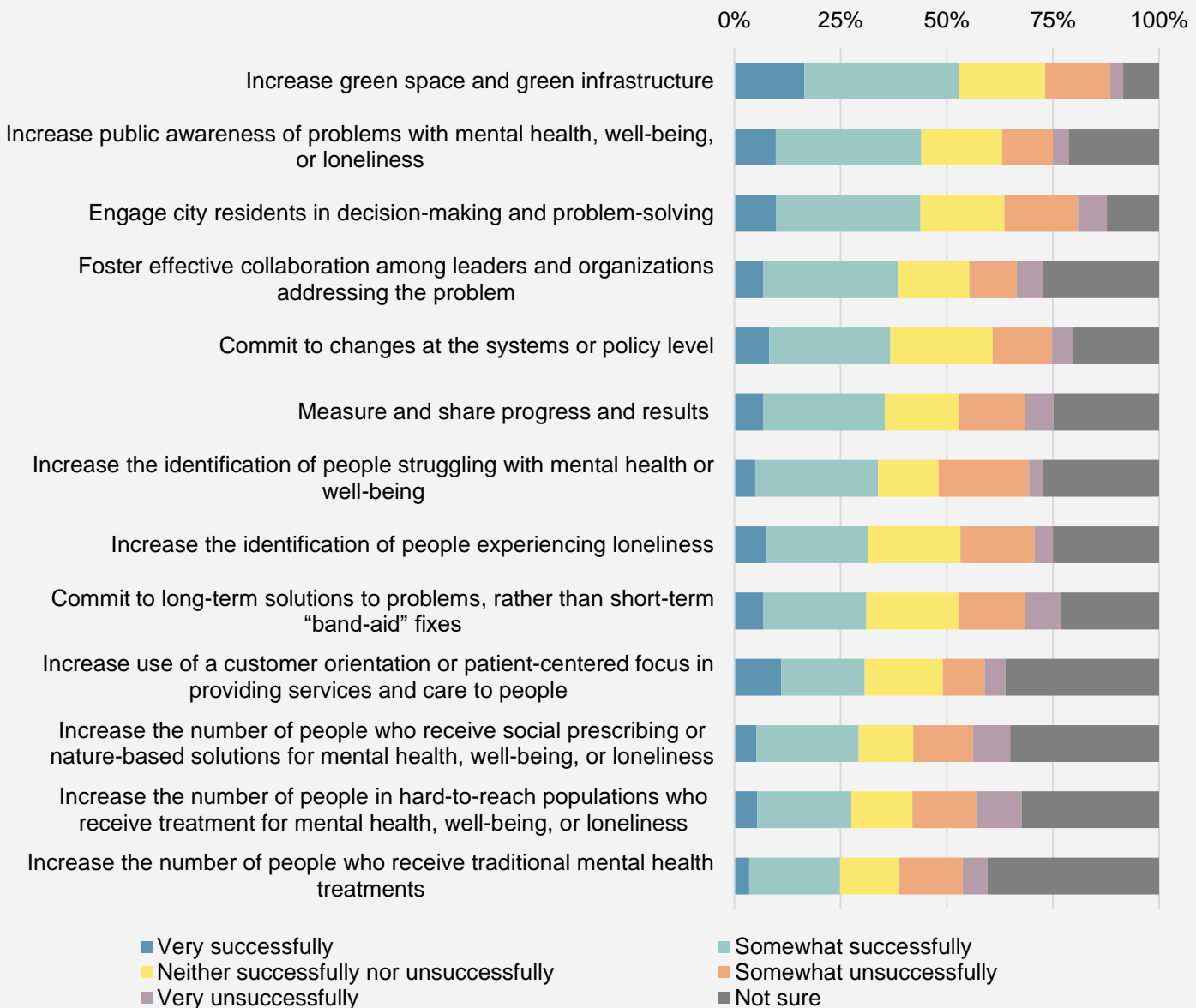


Success at Achieving Objectives

Respondents across all sites found their cities most effective at increasing green space and infrastructure; and increasing public awareness of problems with mental health, well-being, or loneliness. Respondents likewise had the most certainty when sharing their opinion on increased green space and infrastructure, with as few as 9% reporting “not sure.”

Q10: How successfully does your city achieve the following objectives with regard to addressing mental health, well-being, and loneliness? (Choose only one, and use the scroll bar if needed to view all options)

n = 184 responses



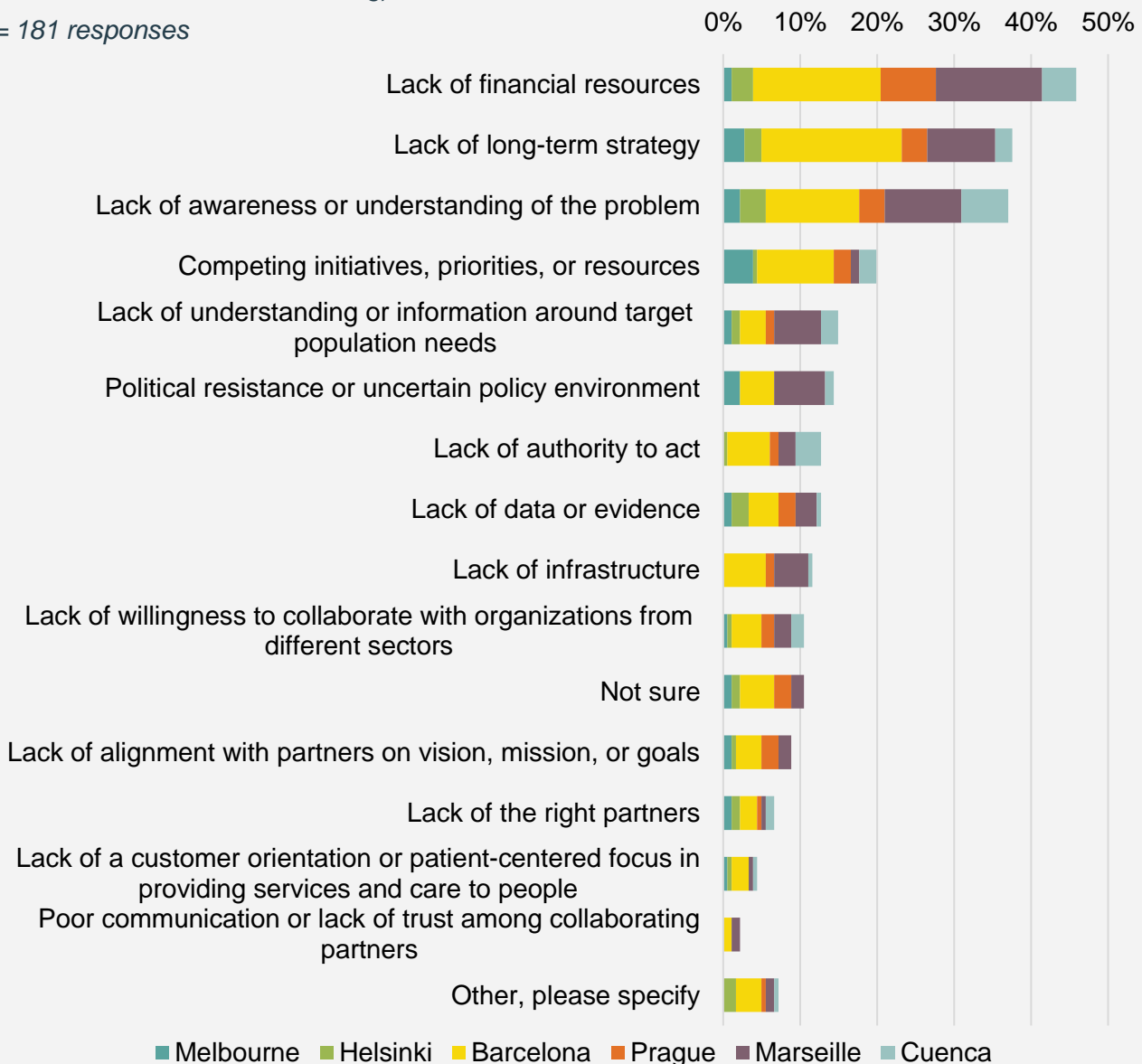
Barriers and Challenges

46% of respondents selected lack of financial resources among barriers or challenges; followed by lack of long-term strategy (38%); lack of awareness and understanding of the problem (37%); and—distantly—competing initiatives, priorities, or resources (20%).

Q11: What are the greatest barriers or challenges currently hindering your city’s progress in addressing mental health, well-being, and loneliness through nature-based solutions? (Choose up to 3)

Solutions involving natural spaces and activities in natural spaces. For example, solutions such as building green infrastructure and engaging in social activities in nature (community gardens, group excursions in nature, forest bathing).

n = 181 responses

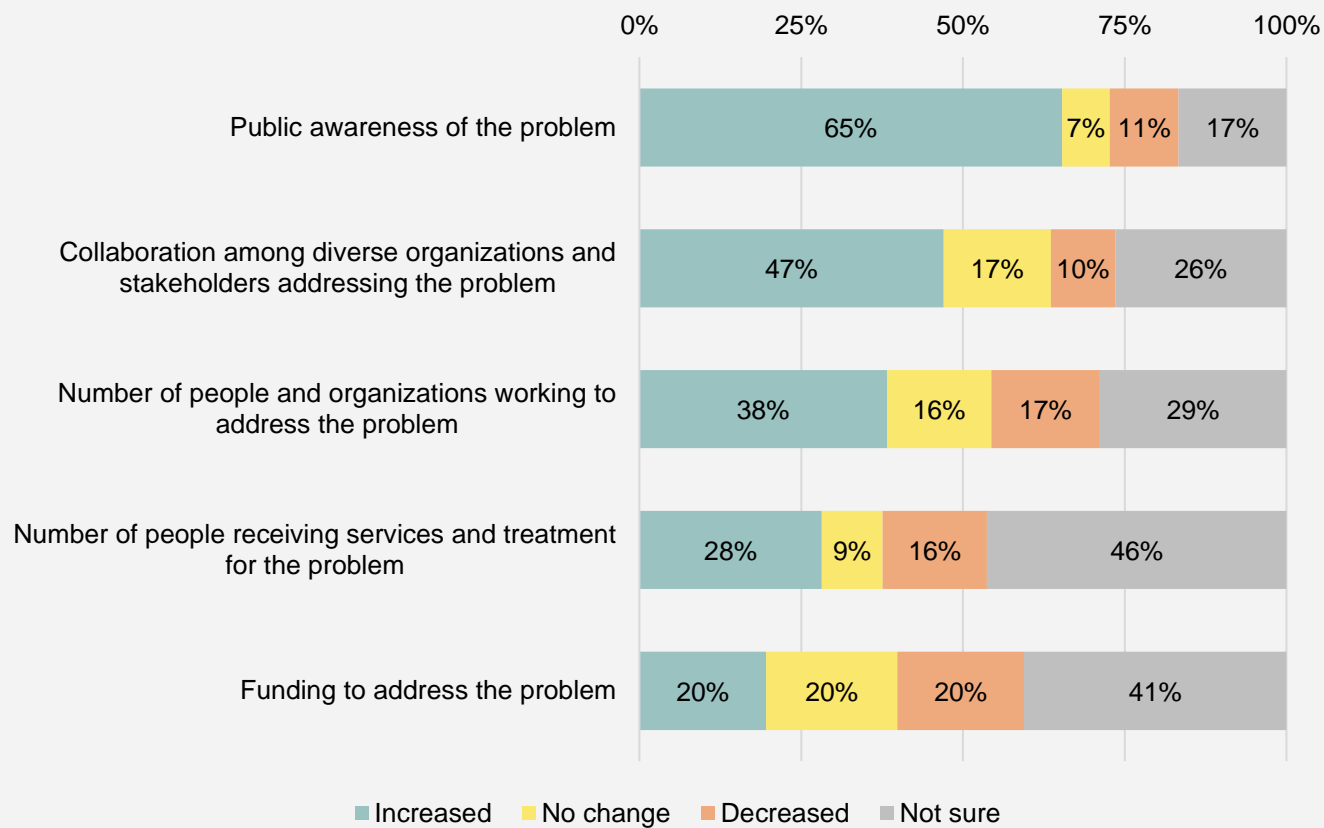


Impact of COVID-19

Most respondents believe that the COVID-19 pandemic increased public awareness of the problem of mental health, well-being, and loneliness. Respondents are evenly split on how the pandemic affected funding, as well as substantially uncertain both on the question of funding (41%) and the number of people receiving services and treatment (46%).

Q12: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your community’s progress in addressing mental health, well-being, and loneliness? (Choose only one, and use the scroll bar if needed to view all options)

n = 151 responses

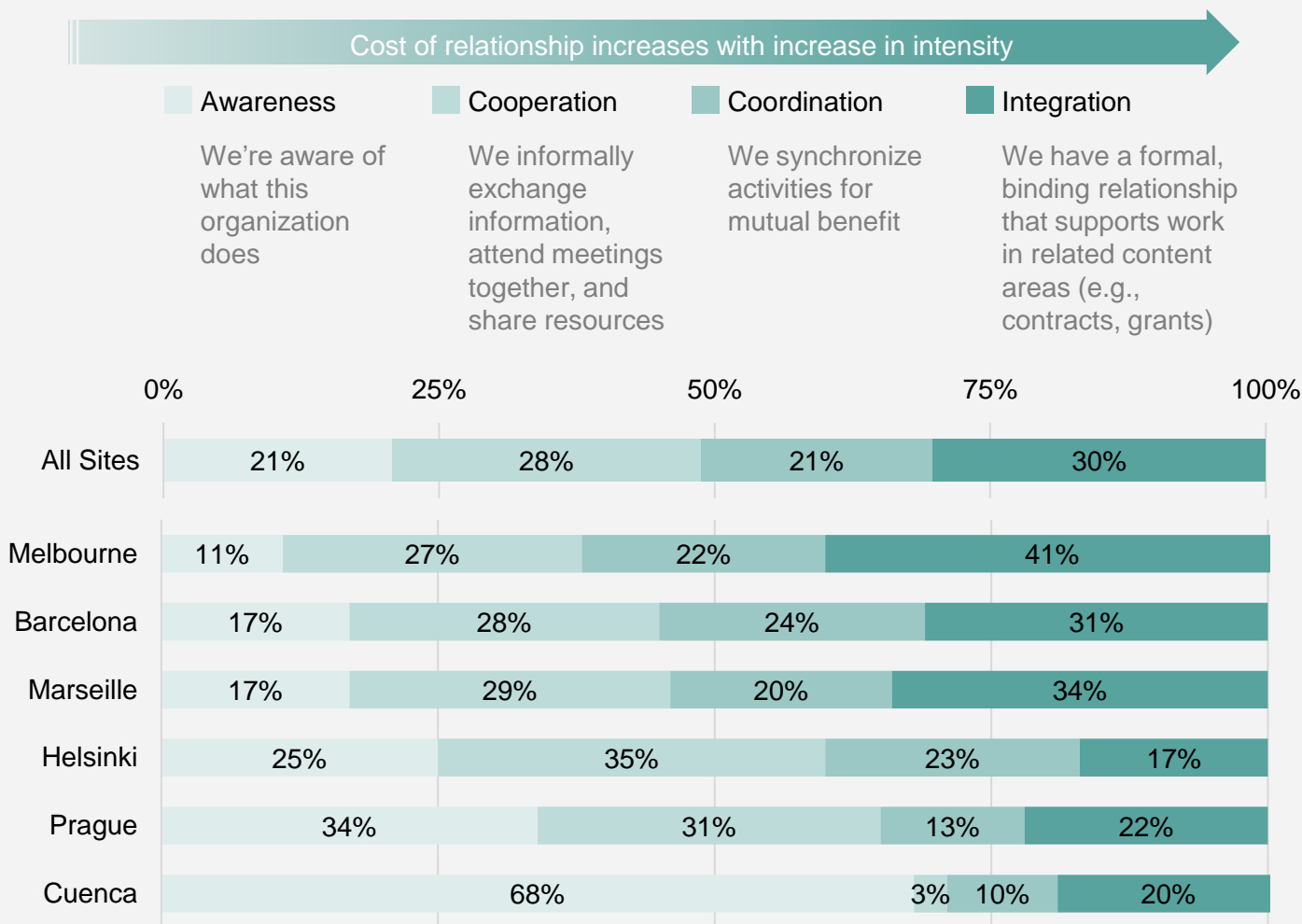


Intensity of Relationships

Network relationships were assessed according to their level of intensity. This is important, because more connections and greater intensity of connections do not necessarily result in a thriving and sustainable network. While the appeal to create a more diverse network is strong, organizations are equally challenged with the reality that they have limited relationship budgets—that is, limited resources to build and manage diverse networks. We know that networks have advantages, but there is a limit on how many relationships we can manage before we lose the collaborative advantage altogether. And while it is our intuition that more network connections should indicate a better functioning network, this approach can be endlessly resource intensive.

Q14: What is your organization’s most common way of interacting with this organization? (Choose only one, and use the scroll bar if needed to view all options)

n = 1,026 relationships

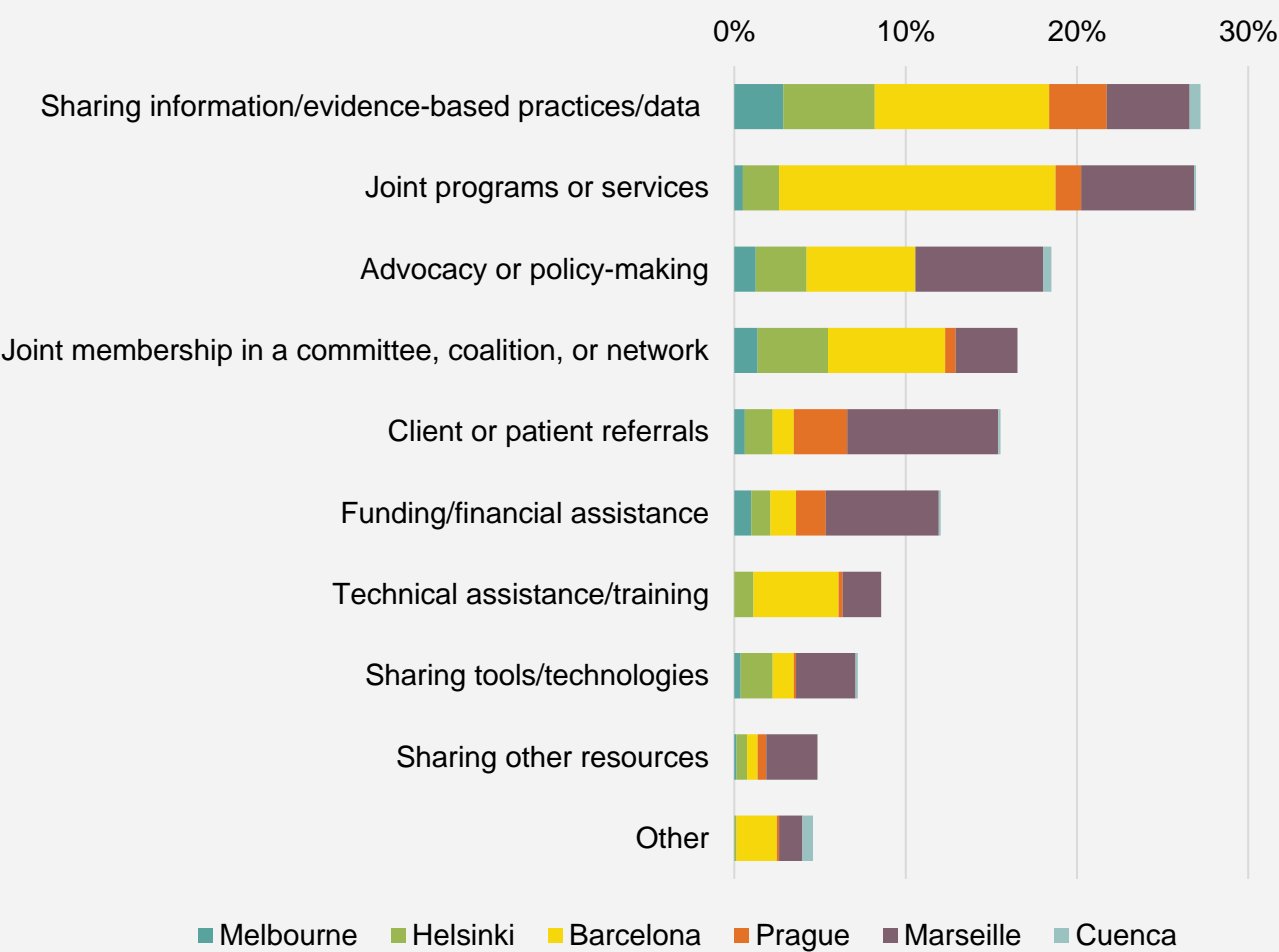


Shared Activities

27% of relationships across all site networks involve sharing information/evidence-based practice/data (cooperative activity); similarly, 27% involve joint program and services as well (integrated activity). Advocacy and policy-making (coordinated activities) define 19% of relationships across sites. Generally speaking, the balance demonstrates a fairly even distribution among activity categories, but perhaps an overreliance on integrated action.

Q15: What activities does your relationship with this organization include? (Choose all that apply, and use the scroll bar if needed to view all options)





n = 805 relationships



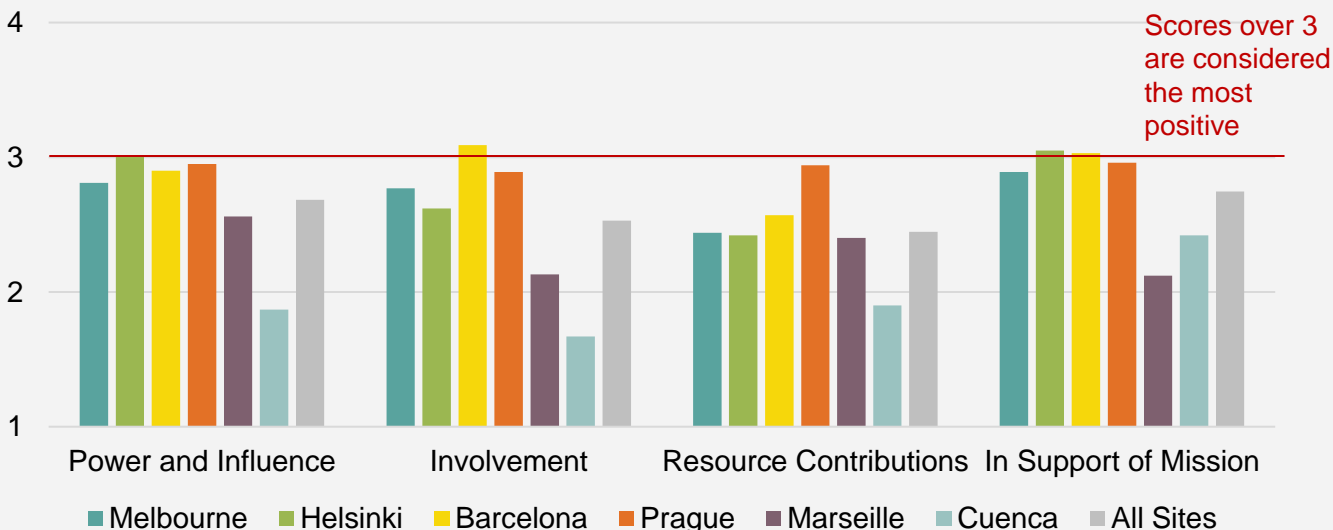
Relationship Scores

The survey assessed four validated dimensions—power and influence, level of involvement, resource contributions, and support of mission (see definitions below). Survey participants assessed each of their reported relationships on these four dimensions according to a 4-point scale, with 1 = Not at all, 2 = A Small Amount, 3 = A Fair Amount, and 4 = A great deal. Scores over 3 are considered the most positive.

Understanding network relationships is important in leveraging the different ways in which members contribute to the network. The column chart below depicts the average relationship scores within the network.

	Power & Influence: The organization holds a prominent position in the community because of its financial resources or policy-making authority, and/or because it has displayed leadership and success as a change agent.
	Level of Involvement: The organization is strongly committed and active in this work, and gets things done.
	Resource Contribution: The organization brings resources to the work like funding, staff time, and information.
	In support of Mission: The organization shares a common vision of the end goal of what working together should accomplish.

Q16-19 Relationship Scores

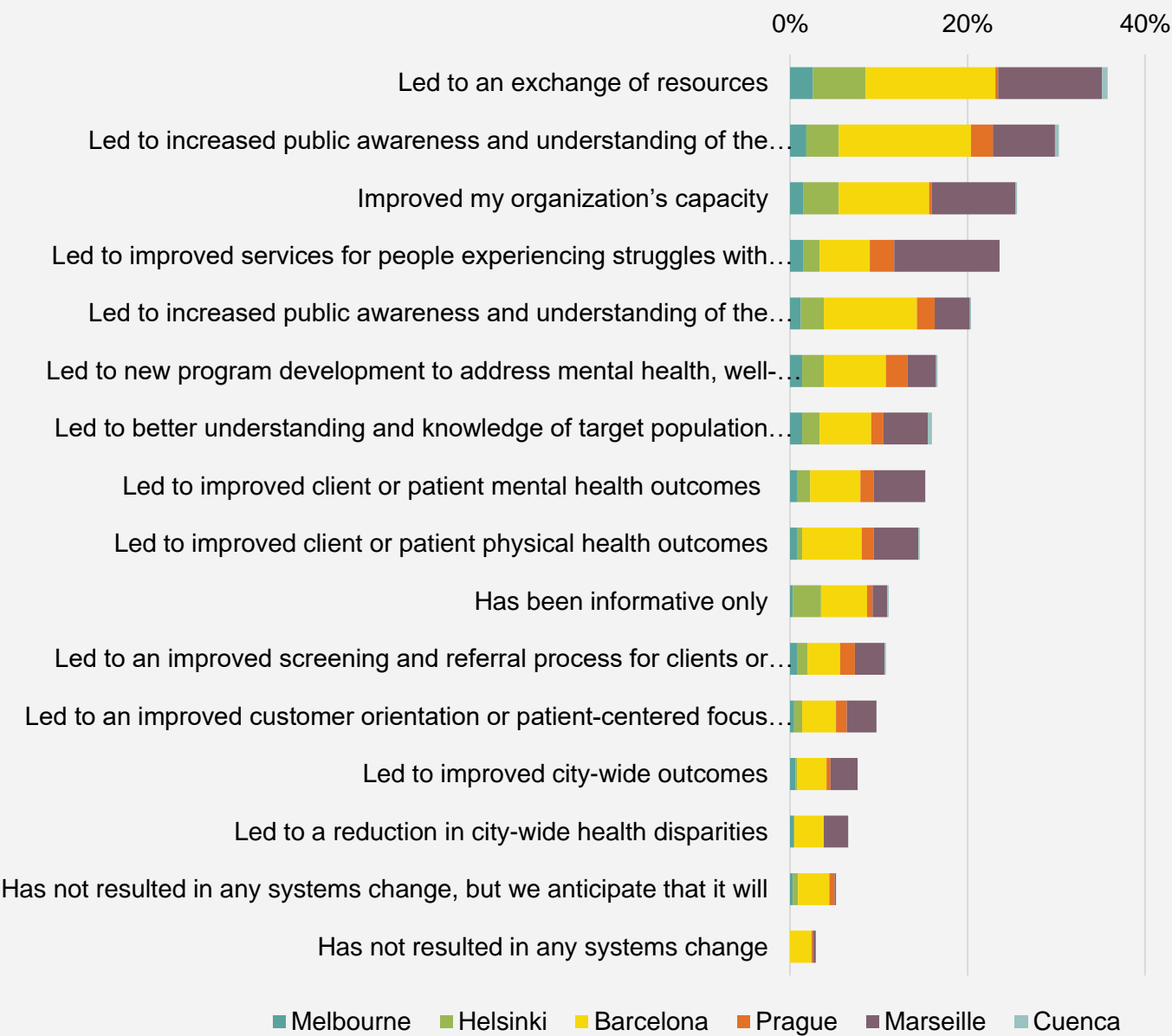


Relationship Outcomes

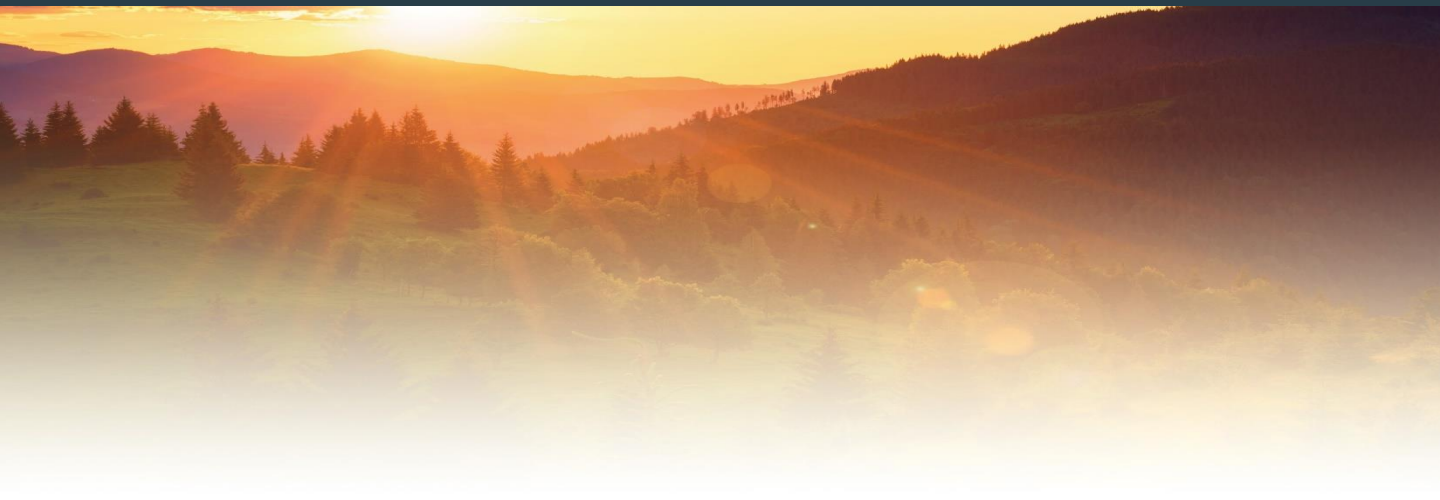
Respondents reported that 36% of their network relationships led to an exchange of resources, 30% led to increased public awareness and understanding of mental health and well-being, and 26% improved their organizational capacity.

Q20: Has this relationship resulted in any of the following outcomes? (Choose all that apply, and use the scroll bar if needed to view all options)

n = 657 relationships



Summary and Recommendations



- ❖ Discuss the characteristics of the overall network with network members and make sense of the network maps together.
 - Consider how network members connect with each other and which ones are considered most valuable to partners. For example, participating cities show a general trend toward high intensity relationships (Q14).
 - Are there sectors or types of organizations that are under- or over-represented in a given network? For example, the number of national-level actors in Helsinki, or neighborhood-level in Prague (Q3).
 - Are the networks overly dependent on just a few members?
 - Considering the ways in which members connect with one another and the types of activities they work on together. Is this sustainable over time?
- ❖ Consider whether changes in the nature of the network relationships would improve collaboration or increase impact.
 - Discuss how to manage the expected and recorded levels of activity among members. What is the minimum amount of effort required to reach goals? Where are gaps?
 - Are the resources contributed to each network by members being properly leveraged to achieve network goals? Consider whether there are ways these networks could facilitate the further exchange of resources among members. Identify gaps and redundancies in resource contributions to devise member recruitment and engagement strategies.
 - Look to relationship dimensions (Q16-19) to pinpoint factors of success among similarly scoring cities such as Helsinki and Barcelona that may otherwise have very different features.
- ❖ Use the process outcomes in this report to track, demonstrate, and celebrate progress toward long term goals.
 - Develop intentional strategies for partner engagement and involvement in the network over time.
 - Develop strategies to increase perceptions of the value of power and influence among members of each network.
 - Discuss what success means for the members of these networks and develop strategies to achieve it—for example, for all their differences, all sites consistently report the same barriers or challenges to progress in addressing mental health, well-being, and loneliness through nature-based solutions (Q11).

Appendix: Glossary and Resources

Nature-based social prescribing

In contrast to medical prescriptions, “social prescriptions” are prescriptions to spend time with other people in order to improve health and well-being. “Nature-based social prescriptions” are prescriptions to spend time in nature with other people, in order to improve health and well-being.

Nature-based solutions

Solutions involving natural spaces and activities in natural spaces. For example, solutions such as building green infrastructure and engaging in social activities in nature (community gardens, group excursions in nature, forest bathing).

Green infrastructure

Green infrastructure is a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services such as water purification, air quality, space for recreation and climate mitigation and adaptation. This network of green (land) and blue (water) spaces can improve environmental conditions and therefore citizens' health and quality of life. Examples include parks, gardens and green roofs.

RECETAS Resources

For more information on RECETAS, please see the resources below:

- ❖ [RECETAS Website](#)
- ❖ [RECETAS – What is Nature-based Social Prescribing?](#)
- ❖ [RECETAS Infographic](#)

The social network analysis was conducted using **PARTNER** by **Visible Network Labs**. For more information about Visible Network Labs and the tools and resources available, please visit www.visiblenetworklabs.com.

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