

Good practices in Promoting Physical Activity in Schools; Turku, Finland

Education I

Turku, Finland

Socio-demographic indicators:

Municipality/City Population: 191.484

Gender ratio (i.e. percentage of men and women): 52,5% women; 47,5% men

Age distribution: 0-14 years 13%; 15-64 years 67%; 65- years 20%

Socio-economic indicators:

GDP per capita (and in relation to the national GDP per capita): 50.052 € per capita (2018 estimate)

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Health and Physical Activity Issues

Main challenges are increasing physical inactivity and growing disparity between different population groups regarding physical activity. Inactivity leads to obesity, NCDs and marginalisation. There are cultural, social and economic obstacles in participation. Another challenge is how to inform and attract citizens to use existing activities and here the focus is citizens in vulnerable position.

Why did you start a strategy / an activity / a project?

School on the move-project for upper secondary and vocational training

The programme is based on good results from School on the move-programme for comprehensive schools: increasing physical activity among students in order to help students to better cope with the studies and enhance active and healthy lifestyle. It tries to tackle inactivity among pupils and students, increasing obesity and mental health problems; problems with coping with school and studies and concentration.

The target group is students in upper secondary and vocational education, teachers, instructors, managers

How do you do it?

The goal is to increase physical activity among students by creating learning environments, study communities and didactic methods that promote physical activities. The project will develop a sustainable model with clear understanding of responsibilities to promote physical activity as a tool for growing and developing of the students.

The promotion of physical activity consists of both increasing physical activity and decreasing sedentary time.

- During the school day, physical activity can be increased by adding more physical education lessons, promoting active commuting and encouraging physically active breaks.
- During school lessons, sedentary behaviour can be decreased by implementing active learning methods involving short active breaks, in order to support optimal learning and avoid long periods of continued sitting. Decreasing excessive sitting during school lessons is an opportunity for all school personnel to participate in the programme ideology.

7,000 students are involved, as well as 2 full-time project coordinators, 2 part-time teachers at each school, with a total of 26 teachers.

The budget is 300.000 €, funded by Government funding.

What have been the Challenges and Successes?

The main challenges have been to attract the whole school community to work for the goal of increasing physical activity. This has been dealt with by planning every action in such a way that schools can implement them on their own after the project, and creating versatile possibilities to increase physical activity during the school day.