

Good practices in Promoting Physical Activity in Schools; Ljubljana, Slovenia

Education

Ljubljana, Slovenia

Socio-demographic indicators:

Municipality/City Population: 273.195 residents (on January 1, 2019)

Gender ratio: Men - 131.566 - 48,2 %; Women - 141.629 - 51,8 %

Age distribution: 0-9 (10.4%), 10-19 (8.7%), 20-29 (8.9%), 30-39 (14.5%), 40-49 (14.9%), 50-59 (14.4%), 60-69 (13.2%), 70-79 (8.7%), 80-89 (5.2%), 90+ (1.1%)

Socio-economic indicators:

GNI coefficient: Slovenia (total economy), 2018 - 45.033,5 in mio EUR

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Health and Physical Activity Issues

The City of Ljubljana is responsible for provision of primary health care such as general practice, gynaecology, physiotherapy, dental health, pharmacies and others which is executed by the Community Health Centre of Ljubljana, Pharmacy of Ljubljana and concessionaries. Three national preventative screening programmes, DORA, SVIT and ZORA, are implemented by providers of primary health care and offer early detection of breast, cervical and colorectal cancer for free. Regular medical check-ups are available free of charge for babies, children, youth, employed and for women during pregnancy, while additional medical attention is devoted specifically to women and to Ljubljana seniors.

Children and youth are also targeted by the networks of healthy, physically fit and eco schools, while the concept of health extends to kindergartens as there is a network of healthy kindergartens as well. Networks focus on integration of the notion of healthy lifestyle into the existing curriculum and are set on national level but also widespread in Ljubljana.

Additionally, we offer spaces for socialization (9 daily activities centres for seniors with a strong intergenerational component, youth centres on the level of Ljubljana quarter communities and a

family centre), support services for the LGBT community and a consumer advocate, we finance or co-finance home care services, family assistants, support families of patients with dementia and offer palliative care. The City of Ljubljana is also very supportive of the notion of health literacy which is proven by regularly publishing brochures that focus on different vulnerable groups with the intention to cover everyone's needs.

Preventative workshops of the Ljubljana Community Health Centre that are free of charge offer an opportunity for addressing the most common non-communicable diseases as they focus on the issue of healthy lifestyle and present preventative measures that can be taken by each individual (the so-called WHO CINDI workshops, physical fitness, weight control, giving up smoking).

Addressing specific priority issues, physical activity is rather popular among the citizens of Ljubljana there are many opportunities for exercising as it is one of the greenest capitals in Europe with many trim tracks and outdoor fitness. There are also annual and well attended intergenerational events such as a marathon, cycling marathon and a 37km walk of remembrance and comradeship.

We perceive alcohol as one of our important challenges and alongside co-financing the existing programmes, we have brought together academics, professionals and NGO representatives dealing with the issue in order to help with initiation of programmes that would effectively deal with the problem of alcohol.

The problem of diet and obesity is primarily exposed among children and youth and together with the Ljubljana Community Health Centre which established a programme that is built on the idea of healthy lifestyle and successfully address the issue.

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

It is important to start the promotion of physical activity at an early stage of a child's development: it contributes to his/her health and to development of healthy life-styles that are more likely to be maintained at later stages.

This strategy, with Primary school: 4th and 5th grade children, involves bike-riding knowledge improvement for Ljubljana primary school pupils before attending bike-rider examinations, and acquiring competences for safely riding a bike. All costs are covered for the entire specific pupil generation in Ljubljana primary schools. The aim is the development of three physical abilities: coordination, agility and balance.

How do you do it?

The project involved over 50% of primary schools and 60% of children in the entire 4th and 5th grade population, to upgrade their theoretical and practical knowledge of cycling. The activities and outputs include:

4th grade: Fužine Pumptrack

5th grade: in the school neighbourhood

Over 3,000 children, 24 coaches and 3 managers were involved in the project in 2019. The budget was 45.000 €, financed by public funds from the local community. These are part of the municipal annual sport programme.

Projects are part of the municipal yearly sport programme, and managed by the Department of Sport, Bicycle Clubs, school gym teachers and overseen by the Department of Sport. Partners include 2x Bicycle Club: KD Rajd, KD Rog.

We are pleased with the current results and expect to achieve our goal in the coming years.

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