

HEPA EUROPE IN BELFAST NORTHERN IRELAND

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FREE to MOVE

promotion of active and sustainable home-to-school mobility behaviour using PRECEDE-PROCEED model for needs assessment and planning

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BACKGROUND

Physical activity level, and health in general, can be improved encouraging children to go to school doing physical activity and creating for them a safe and comfortable environment. In Northern Italy only the 8% of primary school children goes to school alone while the 52% is driven by their parents. According to the 2015-18 regional prevention action plan, more effective strategies to advocate for healthier transport policies need to be figured out and implemented.



AIM

Aim of this project was to promote healthier mobility behaviour among primary school children using the PRECEDE-PROCEED participatory approach.



METHODS

- Identification of a cross-sectoral promoter group, involving Piacenza municipality, local health and educational authorities
- Building a project group of stakeholders of the Community and the School
- Participatory action research on factors affecting autonomy and mobility choices of children and their families
- The stakeholders, using the PRECEDE-PROCEED framework, discussed the project along with the data resulting from participatory research, the WHO recommendations and good practices
- Participatory evaluation of the project
- The stakeholders set up and implement new activities.



RESULTS

Both the process and the relevant impact has been evaluated. The promoter institutions issued a memorandum supporting active and sustainable home-to-school mobility, as evidence of their commitment to the project. Community and school stakeholders group analysed the educational, environmental, political and administrative related causes for which school and its neighbourhood could affect children mobility behaviour. 21 teachers working at 2 different schools agreed to put the project into practice with 360 children. In order to empower children, teachers identified skills and motivations that may sustain children's autonomy and sustainable mobility behaviour, and changed their lesson plans to promote it. For impact evaluation on educational factors, teachers tested the children assigning practical tasks, and made the children fill forms for self-evaluation. Was observed a good development of motor skills and competencies concerning health, urban orienteering and safeness, critical assessment of urban social and environmental sustainability. The local institutions are willing to renovate their commitment to this program, issuing a new memorandum for participatory approaches, that address not only educational, but also human-built environmental factors affecting active and sustainable mobility. A manual was issued to support dissemination.



CONCLUSION

The project confirmed, at the local level, effectiveness and efficiency of the precede-proceed participatory approach to:

- advocate for physical active and sustainable transport policies
- empower school communities and children.



IMPLICATION

This project might strengthen, at a local and regional level, adoption of strategies that take into account locally identified educational and environmental factors, drawn upon participatory approaches and structured planning models.