

National Network of Health Promoting Schools Lithuania

Title in the original language: Sveikata stiprinančių mokyklų tinklas

Which 'life stage' for CVDs prevention targets the intervention?

The intervention targets the children and staff in schools and universities.

Short description of the intervention:

A 'health promoting school' is defined as 'a school that implements a structured and systematic plan for the health and well-being of all pupils and of teaching and non-teaching staff. This is characterized as a whole school approach (or 'whole of school approach'). The health promoting school is a health promotion program for children organized through formal and non-formal education. In Lithuania schools prepare, implement and self-evaluate 5-years duration programs. Requirements and criteria for programs are approved by the Health Promoting School Recognition committee (7 specialists from health and education fields). There are Health Promoting Schools in almost every municipality in Lithuania and every year to this network joins a growing number of the country's educational institutions. Lithuanian health promoting school network belongs to the Schools for Health in Europe network (SHE network). The health promoting school is a school where the whole community, with the partners, seek to strengthen the school community's health. In these schools, health topics have been integrated into the educational process - lessons and after-school activities. Health promoting schools conducts a long-term targeted and approved health promotion programs. Health promoting school includes various health areas:

- physical activity and physical education;
- a healthy diet;
- tobacco, alcohol and other psychoactive substance abuse prevention;
- accidents, injuries, stress prevention;
- violence, bullying prevention;
- preparation of family and sexuality education;
- communicable diseases;
- a culture of consumption.

Health promoting school community members participate in joint projects, competitions, training, conferences, actively share best practices. The SHE network demonstrates how networking at an international and national level can be effective and sustainable. Networking at a European level has stimulated the development of indicators for health promoting schools. Also, three European conferences were organised by the network, attracting a wide audience of researchers, policy makers, practitioners and schools. The most recent adopted the Vilnius (Lithuania) Resolution, which is a new tool for governments and schools to introduce school health promotion, intended to help put health promoting schools higher on the international and national educational and public health agendas. The Vilnius (Lithuania) Resolution was presented, discussed and adopted during the 3rd European conference. It marks the main outcomes of the conference as a next step in the development of school health promotion in Europe. For the first time, the work of students during a European conference was included, demonstrating their active involvement and participation, which are part of the underlying principles of the health promoting school approach.

Was the design of the intervention appropriate and built upon relevant data, theory, context, evidence, previous practice including pilot studies?

Over the last 20 years, 'health promoting schools' have shown evidence of improving the health and well-being of the whole school community. Most of the evidence on the effectiveness of health education and health promotion in schools is from work on specific health topics. The most positive evidence is found in the topics of mental health promotion in schools, healthy eating, sports and physical activity in schools and the weakest evidence is in the area of substance use. Successfully establishing health promoting schools within national educational systems takes time and requires the following: The more connected young people feel to their school, the greater their emotional well-being and educational attainment. Schools play an important part in improving the education, health and well-being of all young people and in the task of reducing health inequalities in Europe and across the world.

Did the design thoroughly describe the practice in terms of purpose, SMART objectives, methods?

The School Health Promoting Schools Recognition Procedure (Official Gazette. 2007, Nr.91-3656; 2010 NR.74-3758) approved by the Minister of Health and Minister of Education is intended for all schools wishing to become a Health Promoting School and schools belonging to the health promoting schools network. It provides the procedure of Health Promoting School recognition, the criteria for health promotion programs evaluation procedure, the certificate registration and issuance procedures.

To which type of interventions does your example of good practice belong to?

Policy/strategy

How is this example of good practice funded?

Institution of education, public health and/or research

What is/was the level of implementation of your example of good practice?

National

What are the main aim and the main objectives of your example of good practice?

The main aim is to improve pupils and school community health.

Is your example of good practice embedded in a broader national/regional/ local policy or action plan?

Yes. In a National Child Welfare Policy Strategy and Pre-school education development program for 2011-2013

Implementation of your example of good practice is/was:

Continuous (integrated in the system)

In design, did relevant dimensions of equity were adequately taken into consideration and targeted?

Yes. All members of school community have equal access to education and health.

Which vulnerable social groups were targeted?

The children from poor families are educated in health promoting schools.

Did the intervention a defined and appropriate evaluation framework assessing structure, processes and outcomes?

Each Health promoting school evaluates the interventions. There are two guides for schools how to evaluate the interventions.

Did the intervention achieve meaningful participation among the intended target population?

Yes, already there are 244 general education schools, 4 vocational training centres, 104 pre-school education institutions and 1 university in the National Network of Health Promoting Schools.

Communication details

ignas.keras@smlpc.lt