

IDENTIFYING INTERSECTORAL STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE WALKING AND CYCLING BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER WORK IN THE NETHERLANDS TO PREVENT NCDS

(Organised by the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment - 22 January 2020)

BACKGROUND

Sufficient physical exercise reduces the risk for a number of important chronic diseases including type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, depression, breast and intestinal cancer. For older people physical exercise reduces the risk for fractures, physical impediments, cognitive decline and dementia. However, active commuting is not enough; physical exercise throughout the day is as important. Walking and biking are modes of exercise that are easily put to practice in daily life and may help change sitting behaviour.

The Alliance 'Werken in Beweging', formed by the Dutch Cyclists' Association and Wandelnet (network of recreational walking) was set up in line with goals of the National Prevention Agreement, i.e. to encourage daily exercise among employees to prevent obesity. The Alliance aims to launch an online platform to inspire and inform employers about possibilities to promote walking and cycling to / during work and to offer this in the form of step-by-step plans, downloads, etc., as concretely and as easily as possible. The actual implementation of these programmes and activities at the workplace is thus the central aim of the project of the Alliance 'Werken in Beweging'.

OBJECTIVES

The two action oriented sub-questions were: 1) How can the ministries engaged (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Infrastructure and Water) effectively contribute to structural activities: coaching, organisations' sports day?; and 2) How can societal stakeholders contribute?

CONCLUSIONS AND MAIN ACTION POINTS

The coordinating body Alliance 'Werken in Beweging' will bring the theme of this Policy Dialogue forward by collaborating with stakeholders from policy and practice in different sectors and policy fields such as social affairs, infrastructure, transport and health.

Each participant in the Dialogue formulated an action point and will continue with their own actions, they included:

- Promoting 'Cycling as medicine' by pilot group of physicians and patients;
- The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management has a cycling mission: every employer in the Netherlands makes an effort for 10% more employees to cycle to work.
- Almere city will design a physical activity-friendly city.
- The Dutch Patients Association will incorporate practical guidance for stimulating physical activity among workers with a chronic disease into the 'central information point for chronic diseases & work'.
- Waterschap Rivierenland is disseminating information about its role as cycling friendly employer to other national water authorities.