



**AN ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL APPROACHES TO
PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORTS IN
CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

FULL REPORT

Written for HEPA Europe by Paul Kelly, Nick Cavill and Charlie Foster

**British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research Group,
University of Oxford**

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A note from the authors

This study was commissioned in response to a need for more detailed information on the different approaches to physical activity and sport promotion in children and adolescents in countries of the WHO European region.

The resulting report is designed to be useful on two levels;

For the HEPA Childrens Workgroup to;

- Report the current state of play for physical activity promotion in children
- Give information on 6 case studies from across Europe
- Summarise the findings of the analysis
- Reflect on the current analysis method
- Suggest directions for future research

For HEPA Projects and Promoters (working with children and adolescents) to;

- Act as a resource for existing and new projects and promoters, who can read the experiential findings. These findings have been organised thematically, so HEPA promoters can access just the information relevant to them
- Suggest guidance points for consideration

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Participants at the analysis workshop in Orebro, Sweden, March 2009

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Foreword

Physical inactivity has become a major public health issue and there is growing concern particularly about the situation in children and adolescents. Many European countries have developed their approaches to tackling this problem and there is a wealth of experiences from these projects and programmes. However, publications usually only cover a small part of these experiences and scientific articles in English that are readily available through electronic databases are the exception.

As one of its objectives, HEPA Europe has to "develop, support, and disseminate effective strategies and multi-sectoral approaches in the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity". The project presented in this report has been very successful in doing so, by crossing language borders, by facilitating exchange between experts from all over Europe and by distilling the results to a readily accessible format.

I thank the British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research Group at the University of Oxford, I thank the physical activity promotion programmes and their representative and I also thank the organisations funding the analysis for this important step which will hopefully only be the first one in an important endeavour.

Brian Martin

Chairman of HEPA Europe, November 2009

Glossary of Terms

Guidance points – Lessons or learning derived from the 6 participant projects that may be taken into consideration by existing and future HEPA projects for children and adolescents

Campaign – The period of implementation or promotion of a HEPA project

Cascade Model – A project that does not directly interact with the target audience, but that grows by training trainers and sending these trainers out to train more trainers and implementers

Event Model – A project that takes the form of an event with defined start and finish dates, and a relatively short campaign period

Formative Evaluation – Prior to implementation, designed to test programme and resources

Guided Reflection - The analysis team's interpretation of the data and findings

HEPA – Health enhancing physical activity

Impact Evaluation – Tests the short term progress in implementation and may include measurement of health promotion outcomes

Mega Event – An international tournament or competition, such as a World or European sporting championship

Outcome Evaluation – Designed to assess whether a project has achieved its goals and objectives

Process Evaluation – Tests the implementation and delivery of a programme

Programme – The actual workings or components of a HEPA project implementation, including length, setting and approach

Project - An approach or initiative to promote physical activity or sport in a target audience

Reach – The extent to which the project is exposed to potential participants

Sub-Groups – A sub set of children or adolescents by socio-economic status, gender, migration background or physical activity levels

Executive Summary

Analysis Background

This report is a response to the need for more detailed information about the different national approaches to promotion of physical activity and sport in children and adolescents in countries of the WHO (World Health Organisation) European region. We report the lessons, experiences and learning of six projects and how they may apply to future and existing initiatives in the form of 36 guidance points. The report is designed to realize the aims of the HEPA Children's workgroup and to be a useful resource for HEPA promoters and projects across Europe.

Following an audit of European approaches six projects were selected. They were drawn from culturally and geographically diverse regions and represent a wide range of approaches and settings.

Beweegkriebels	The Netherlands
Handshake with Sport	Sweden
Kampagne Kinderturnen	Germany
Move with Us	Spain
The Sports Adventure around the Globe	Finland
Youth and Sports	Switzerland

The investigation comprised mainly of qualitative analysis methods. The data were collected in three stages; (i) a self-completed questionnaire, (ii) a three day workshop hosted in Orebro, Sweden in March 2009 and (iii) follow up emails and telephone conversations. Participant projects nominated one or more project representatives to provide data and attend the workshop.

The study was also an attempt to identify and refine a viable method of investigating and documenting the HEPA (Health enhancing physical activity) promotion for children and adolescents that is taking place across Europe.

Results

Project planning and development; all projects reported that enough time should be allocated to project planning and development. Ideally, a pilot project with built in formative evaluation should be used to direct a full scale HEPA project.

Parents and teachers; both are crucial to the delivery and implementation of a HEPA project. They should be involved in the development of the project and considered an intermediate target audience as to reach children and adolescents it is often vital to reach, engage and motivate the parents and teachers.

The Event model; running a shorter 2-4 week event type project gives flexibility and the opportunity to tailor approaches to the different target audiences. This can be considered a way to generate media coverage and raise public awareness, to launch

a new project or invigorate an existing one. The Event model has been cited as a possible way to evolve and adapt a large national project, targeting new sub-groups without losing the positive aspects.

Reaching the active; HEPA projects might be deemed to have failed if they only reach those who are already active. However, given the documented drop out rates and decline in physical activity in children and adolescents with age, continuing to reach the active should be considered a success. To complement this it may be that different and tailored approaches are needed to reach the inactive.

Drop out; it is possible that the drop out from sport observed in adolescents may be in part due to the pressures and commitments required from sports and sports clubs. Finding suitable alternative activities to competitive sport such as active travel and non-organised sports, and working with sports clubs to foster participation are possible solutions.

The Internet; the internet is emerging as an important tool for HEPA projects. It is a way of communicating with and supporting implementers such as teachers. It is also a medium familiar to many in the target audiences and may be a good way to reach and engage them.

Project Setting; The primary settings for HEPA projects are schools and sports clubs. Results from this analysis suggest that schools are a good setting to reach many targets and certain sub groups, but that there are competing pressures for time and resources in the classroom. Sports clubs may not reach so many targets but may have a greater effect with those they do reach due to the resources and quality of facilities on offer. However, they may not have the expertise to work with obese children or those who are least physically adept.

Evaluation; HEPA projects are benefiting from evaluation findings. However, there is still room for improvement, especially with regard to early formative evaluation to guide and refine project design.

Next steps

We feel that the approach to HEPA project analysis used in this investigation can be considered both a success and a valuable contribution to the research evidence of studies exploring national approaches to promoting physical activity and sport in children and adolescents. Repeating this type of study in more HEPA projects will generate an invaluable resource, making accessible for the first time and in one place, the experiences and lessons learned by HEPA workers across Europe. It is likely that a comprehensive databank of European HEPA projects for children and adolescents would be key to the success of this.

This report recommends that future analysis projects should look to select projects from a more geographically diverse region, focusing on Eastern and Southern Europe. The contacts and networks of central HEPA network staff will be crucial. Maintaining the diversity of age ranges in selected projects is also important.

Principal Findings

The following section contains results for the principle research questions.

What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the different projects?

The six participant HEPA projects' strengths were many and varied. For a full table of self reported project strengths and weaknesses see **Appendix 1 - Strengths and Weaknesses**.

A strength demonstrated by the projects was their ability to work across multiple sectors with many different parties and stakeholders. Projects worked in partnership with government departments such as health and sport, in schools and sports clubs, with parents and teachers and in some cases with industry and private corporations. The ability of the projects to adapt successfully to these environments can be considered a key to their respective successes. This was often associated with good leadership and skilled project staff.

A common weakness acknowledged by the projects was the time allowed for planning and preparation and the knock on effects of this throughout the life of the project. Projects reported that given more time they could produce a better product by working with children, experts and implementers, such as teachers and instructors. The knock on effect most cited was realising too late they should have been monitoring the project from the start with built in evaluation. If projects are able to learn from this and adapt in the future then this supposed weakness can be considered an invaluable lesson.

The projects also commonly came to realise that they had sometimes lacked understanding of the target audience. There is a need for more tailoring of approaches to the needs of children and adolescents, based on research and behaviour change models. This is related to the need for improved evaluation, specifically evaluation that starts at the beginning of the project. This formative evaluation of pilots will lead to improved design and development and possibly better engagement of implementers such as teachers.

How successful are the different projects at reaching different sub-groups?

Some of the projects' own evaluations have shown that there is a tendency to continue not to reach inactive children and adolescents. Spain is the exception by targeting obese children and those with low self esteem. Most projects did not report specific action to target different sub-groups. This is in contrast to other findings that suggested a very high targeting of specific groups by HEPA projects (Kunze, 2008).

A common perceived weakness seemed to centre on a tendency to reach the same children and adolescents, the active, over and over again if a project uses sports clubs or even the concept of sport. Obese and inactive children may not have the ability or interest to take part and clubs may not have the resources and expertise to

cater for them. The environment of sport, often emphasising commitment, performance and competition is probably not suitable for these sub groups.

Using schools may improve reach to these target groups; by recruiting teachers there is the opportunity to recruit their whole class, including children who would not normally take part. However, there are other challenges and pressures in the classroom to be considered.

It is important to remember that reaching those who are not in a sub-group is not a failure; keeping active children and particularly adolescents in physical activity and sport and working to prevent drop out is crucial. The findings suggest that further and perhaps tailored approaches are required for sub groups such as the inactive or obese. Success has been found in these groups by working to identify children with low self-esteem and acting to improve this personality trait.

Other important sub groups include those from low SES (socio economic status) and migration backgrounds. In boys from these groups football has been shown particularly successful illustrating that popular sports have a vital role and that for these subgroups tailored strategies for reaching them, rather than new interventions may be the way forward. Research is still needed to show what may work best for girls in these groups, with dance often suggested as having potential.

How good is the structural integration of the projects and to what extent can they be considered to have sustainable impact after the completion of the programme?

Structural integration of a HEPA project can take many varied forms. There is the Dutch project which is integrated into the curriculum and day care system; there is the Swiss project that has integrated into the sports clubs, government departments and the lives of the population; the Spanish project is well integrated with primary care and schools; the Finnish project is also well integrated with the school system there; the German project has successfully worked through and alongside the national gymnastics association; and finally the Swedish project is working to integrate schools and sports clubs for the long term.

The nature of the integration will impact on the way that the project can be considered to be sustainable. Any project that provides training and support will leave skills in the community, while any project that has a message will have raised awareness in the population for a period of time, the length of which is difficult to determine.

Likewise, any project successful in raising physical activity levels during its life will have an ongoing effect on fitness and health, though again how long this effect lasts after an intervention is a question that has been identified as requiring further investigation (NICE, 2009).

Was the project financed by government or industry and how did project experiences of this differ?

Having a legal base in policy can help to secure government funding, however, there will be restrictions and challenges associated with this. It is considered difficult working across departments, such as sport, health, transport and education. Further to this, working with government departments and implementers in the field at the same time and attempting to reconcile the fundamental differences between the two has been raised as a critical issue for HEPA projects. An important consideration will be the extent to which a project aims to be devolved and 'bottom up', or centralised and 'top down' and the effect this choice has on project implementers and intermediaries.

On the other hand, funding from industry and private corporations may give more freedom but will come with challenges of its own. In this case the objectives and mission statements of the funders and financiers may diverge markedly from those of the project. Further, by taking funding from one company or corporation, you may rule out the possibility of working with partners who have arrangements with other rival companies.

What was the legal basis of the projects?

Five of the six projects reported that their legal basis was in government or federal law or policy, with obesity and physical activity strategies specified. The exception was one project that reported they were initiated by a national sports federation. Whether this is representative of HEPA projects across Europe is unclear, but previous work has shown high involvement of ministry and the political mandate in the instigation of projects (Kunze, 2008).

What is the ability of the different projects to contribute to physical activity promotion?

The different nature of the projects enabled them to contribute to physical activity promotion in different ways. Those projects working through schools attained good coverage and reach, while those using sports clubs achieved good effects. All projects reported that whenever they could successfully get children to take up physical activity and sports, attitudes and perceptions of these activities improved.

It is not possible to determine in this investigation whether overall physical activity has increased as a result of these projects. However, as previously discussed, it is important to consider other intermediate impacts such as knowledge generation, skills training, partnership and network forming and increasing the awareness and profile of the benefits of physical activity. These are all likely to benefit future work.

What is the ability of the different projects to prevent the drop in physical activity often observed in adolescents?

Drop out from physical activity and sport is a problem in adolescents, particularly girls (Currie et al., 2002), and it is possible that the projects were more successful at this aspect than they may have realised. A common theme amongst the participants was

disappointment at only reaching children and adolescents already involved in sport. However, this is a legitimate and important target group and keeping this population in activity and sport should be considered a significant achievement. Every active child kept active is a success in the fight against increasing physical inactivity.

What lessons have been learned from these projects and how do these lessons apply to future and existing projects?

The projects have learned significant lessons surrounding planning and preparation time as well as developing an understanding of the target groups. All projects reported that enough time should be allocated for project planning and preparation and that they would like to use their target groups in the development of future projects. It was felt that ideally, a pilot project should be used to direct planning of a full scale HEPA project and that early pilot work with built in formative evaluation would allow for a better end product.

All the projects agreed on the importance of both parents and teachers to the successful delivery and implementation of a HEPA project and this was a key learning point. The value of considering them as an intermediate target audience has become clear, as to reach children and adolescents it is often crucial to reach, engage and motivate the parents and teachers. Project learning included how to involve them, engage them, motivate them and support them as a successful element of HEPA project implementation. Engagement and communication with parents and teachers was also a common theme for the design and development of better projects and project materials.

The internet plays a crucial role in some projects, and its importance is only likely to increase. Children and young people use the internet in large numbers, and tend to find it familiar and engaging making the potential reach and impact very promising. It has also been successfully employed as a communication tool for reaching and supporting teachers.

As discussed, projects learned that all too often they reach the already active. This may suggest that new and tailored approaches to reaching and then engaging specific sub groups are required. What is being done is working to an extent and does not necessarily require dramatic alterations, as keeping active children active is an important goal. However, it may be time to accept that novel approaches to compliment existing work are needed to reach and work with particular sub groups. Research to identify and understand the target groups is vital for this.

The use of the whole year is an important learning point. While the benefits of short event style models have been discussed, seasonality is known to have an important effect on physical activity levels in children and adolescents (Riddoch et al., 2007) and therefore interventions during the winter should not be neglected. However, using an Event model by running a shorter 2-4 week event type project gives flexibility and the opportunity to tailor many approaches to the different target audiences. This can be considered a potential way to start a new project, or invigorate an existing project and the Event model has been cited as a possible way

to evolve and adapt a large national project, targeting new sub-groups without making wholesale changes to existing work and losing the positive aspects.

The projects learned that they have to make plans for later on in their project life. Whether this is to do with sustainability, or a successful exit strategy so that the target groups do not just revert to their pre-intervention state, depends on the nature of the project and the approach. For this, specific goals should be defined with a flexible plan for what to do next e.g.

- We want to secure extended funding – consider objectives to align with policy and use the media to raise your profile
- We wish to identify new directions and change our ways of working – use formative evaluation to inform your strategies and pilot studies to test new ideas
- We wish to have a continued impact after completion – consider your education strategies for the target groups and the resources and skills that may be left in place where you have been working

1. Introduction

Physical Activity

Physical activity plays a vital role in the health and wellbeing of children and young people. It contributes to their short and long term physical, social, emotional and psychological development; it promotes independence and healthy growth, and helps to develop fundamental movement skills. It can reduce the risk of chronic long term medical conditions and help to manage existing conditions (WHO Europe, 2002; NICE, 2009). A recent report into young people's health found increasing evidence for an association with physical activity and enhanced academic and cognitive performance (Currie et al., 2006).

In the HSBC (Health Behaviour in School aged Children) International Report, in all countries and across all age groups boys were active more often than girls. Physical activity in young people declines with age, with the rate of decline varying according to country and region. In most countries and regions this decline is more pronounced in girls (Currie et al., 2002). It has been reported that in more than half of European countries there was no association between family affluence and physical activity levels (Currie et al., 2006).

It is known that time spent in sedentary activities reduces daily physical activity and energy expenditure, increasing the likelihood of obesity. Over the course of childhood, the effects of sedentary behaviour can build up. The establishment of healthy patterns of physical activity during childhood and adolescence is important, as physical activity behaviour tracks during adolescence and from adolescence to adulthood (Currie et al., 2006).

Physical Activity Recommendations

In most countries it is recommended that children and adolescents should undertake a total of at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity each day. To improve bone health, muscle strength and flexibility, weight bearing activities that produce high physical stresses should be included at least twice a week. There is likely to be a link between the amount and intensity of physical activity and its effect on health. Recent evidence suggests that children aged 9 may need 120 minutes per day and young people aged 15 may need 90 minutes per day, to reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease (Andersen et al., 2006).

To receive the benefits there is a need for children and adolescents to participate in a wide range of different physical activities. Competitive sport, formal exercise, active play, swimming, dancing, walking and cycling are all examples of suitable activities. For children under the age of 8 years, enjoyment is one of the main facilitators. Creative and fun activities, participating in their favourite pursuits and older children involving younger children are thought to enhance enjoyment. For this age range,

there is evidence that supervised physical activity interventions, incorporating running, galloping, hopping, sliding, leaping, skipping and general motor agility, and conducted in the pre-school setting can be effective in improving core physical skills (NICE, 2009).

What is health enhancing physical activity (HEPA) for children and adolescents?

Health enhancing physical activity is any form of physical activity that benefits health and functional capacity without undue risk or harm.

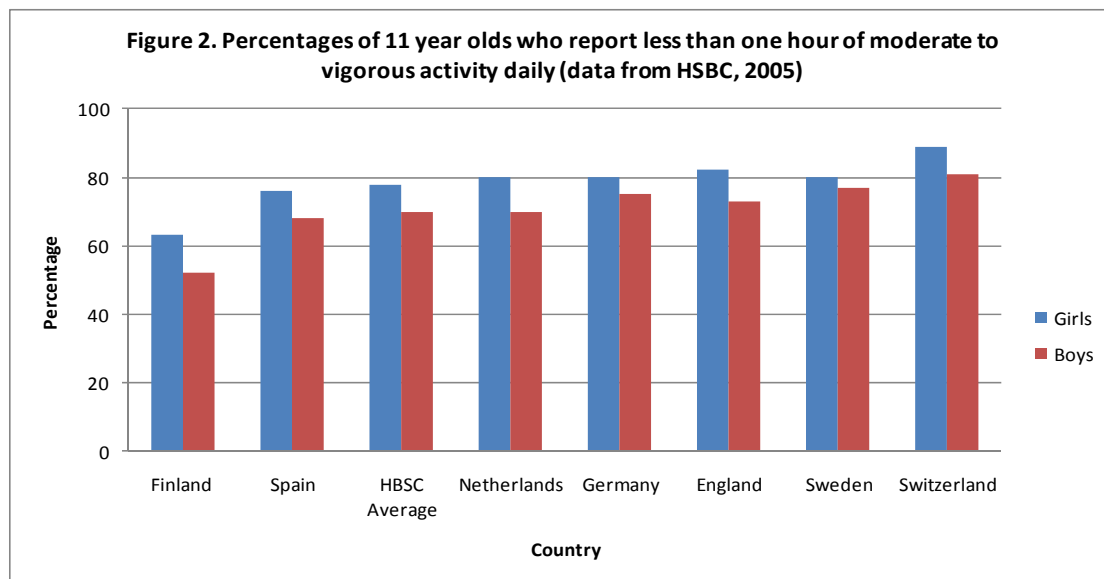
The following is a list of example activities based on metabolic equivalent (MET) values that may be suitable for children and adolescents and contribute towards their daily or weekly physical activity targets;

walking to school	marching band	ice skating
cycling	playground games	downhill skiing
dancing	gymnastics	cross country skiing
playing drums	roller skating	basketball and netball
swimming	rope jumping	

Figure 1. Examples of health enhancing physical activities for children and adolescents. MET values from Ainsworth et al, 1993.

Prevalence of Physical Activity

Despite the well-known benefits of an active lifestyle, epidemiological studies have identified an increasing prevalence of inactivity among children and adolescents. From 2001 to 2002, World Health Organisation (WHO) carried out the “Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study” with 11-, 13- and 15-year-old pupils in 35 countries of the European WHO Region as well as North America. It demonstrated that approximately two thirds of young people do not meet the current recommendation for physical activity of 60 minutes per day, five or more days a week (cf. Roberts et al. in Currie et al., 2004).



Burden of Physical Inactivity

The importance of regular physical activity and exercise for disease prevention and health promotion is widely accepted. The prevalence and impact of physical inactivity is emerging as one of the largest public health problems throughout Europe. The *European Health Report* of the WHO of 2002 states that a more physically active lifestyle could contribute to the avoidance of 15% to 39% of coronary heart diseases, 33% of strokes, 22% to 33% of colon cancer, 5% to 12 % of breast cancer and 18% of fractures resulting from osteoporosis (cf. WHO Europe, 2002). The health, social and economic costs of treating chronic diseases and conditions will grow as the problems associated with a less active population continue to develop. The causes of this increased inactivity may be related to changes in occupation, transport, leisure time and the environment that are encouraging the majority of the population to remain sedentary (US Department of Health and Human Services, 1996).

The economic burden at a national level is high; in Switzerland the direct treatment costs of physical inactivity are estimated to €1.1-1.5 billion per year (WHO Europe, 2009) while in England the cost of physical inactivity is estimated to be £8.2 billion a year. This estimate is comprised of both the direct costs of treating major, lifestyle-related diseases and the indirect costs of sickness absence (Department of Health, 2004). It is also estimated that a sedentary lifestyle causes 54,000 premature deaths a year (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2002). The bad news is that these costs are predicted to rise (NICE, 2009).

Physical Activity for Children and Adolescents

There is consensus that the origins of some chronic diseases which normally manifest during adulthood lie in childhood. The decrease in physical activity in children and adolescents with increasing age reported in many European countries

results in a substantial proportion of inactive adults among the European societies. Physical activity promotional efforts in children and adolescents may therefore have a strong impact on physical activity behaviour and health benefits in later life. This is a key issue for future activities in the European network for the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity, HEPA Europe.

Tackling the decline in the physical activity of both boys and girls across Europe and tailoring initiatives as they grow older has been highlighted as an important issue. Likewise, there has been a stated need to be culturally sensitive to the variations in physical activity across countries and regions (Currie et al 2002).

Determinants of Physical Activity

The variability in child and adolescent physical activity levels across Europe is not geographical patterned (Currie et al., 2006) and may be explained to some extent by environmental factors such as accessibility of leisure facilities and patterns of travel to school by car, cycling or walking. Individual factors, such as the degree to which sporting achievement and popularity are related, are also thought to have some impact (Currie et al., 2002).

Data from the United Kingdom show that physical activity levels in children and adolescents aged 2–15 years appear to be influenced, amongst other factors, by gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status (DH 2003; The Information Centre, 2008a; 2008b). The influence of gender has also been consistently confirmed in international reviews (Sallis et al., 2000; van der Horst et al., 2007). However, international results appear less conclusive for ethnicity and socioeconomic status with association found for adolescents but not so much for younger children (Sallis et al., 2000; Ferreira et al., 2006; Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006; van der Horst et al., 2007)

Environmental, economic and social factors as well as perceptions about safety, accessibility and weather conditions are thought to affect the opportunities for children and adolescents to be physically active (Biddle et al., 2007). Likewise, the influence of peers can encourage or discourage physical activity behaviour. In older age groups the transitions between, or from, education institutions are known to be periods when opportunities for physical activity and sport are restricted (Biddle et al., 2007).

As well as opportunities for physical activity, children and adolescents need time, space, facilities and equipment, permission and encouragement to be sufficiently physically active. Evidence from four systematic reviews of observational studies has suggested that there is a large positive association between parental and social support and physical activity levels in children and adolescents. Current recommendations state that any physical activity promotion should ensure that there are local indoor and outdoor opportunities for physical activity where children and adolescents feel safe. Activities should be tailored to the individual's developmental

stage and physical ability and also need to be sensitive to culture and gender issues (NICE, 2009).

Physical education and non-organised activities at school are under threat from increasing time pressures and emphasis on academic achievement in the classroom. In addition, the amount of physical education at school and the way in which it is organized vary from country to country contributing to national differences.

Current advice for those involved in developing policy and programmes stresses the need to consider key barriers to physical activity participation and the available evidence on the effectiveness of interventions (Currie et al 2002).

Physical Activity Promotion

The most effective approaches to promoting physical activity in children and adolescents may differ according to their age, developmental stage, culture and gender. Making physical activity more enjoyable by improving physical skills and general ability to participate has been highlighted as key to increasing involvement (NICE, 2009).

Recommendations state the importance of improving the choice of physical education activities at school and emphasizing the social aspects of sport. Gender issues, particularly the needs of girls (such as adequate changing facilities at school) are important (Currie et al., 2002).

Current guidance documents for the United Kingdom have stated the need to determine the most effective and cost-effective methods of increasing and sustaining different types of physical activity in children and adolescents. The same is true for different sub groups by age, culture, ethnicity, disability issues, gender, geographic area, religion and socioeconomic status. It is said that particular attention should be given to disadvantaged groups (NICE, 2009). One of the main challenges for physical activity and sport promoters in Europe is to tackle physical inactivity by mobilising political, organisational and community support (Foster, 2000).

Evaluation of Physical Activity Promotion

Different evaluation methods are used to measure impact and outcome at different stages of a programme. Formative evaluation occurs prior to implementation and is designed to develop and test the programme and its resources. Process evaluation tests the implementation of the programme once it has begun and the extent to which the programme is delivered as planned. Impact evaluation assesses the short term progress in programme implementation and may include measurement of health promotion outcomes. Outcome evaluation is designed to assess whether a project has achieved its goals and objectives (Nutbeam and Bauman, 2006).

It is well understood that for effective promotion, physical activity initiatives aimed at children and adolescents should be regularly evaluated. These evaluations should

investigate uptake among different sub-groups groups, effect on physical activity levels and the length of effect after completion. Wider effects on physical skills and health outcomes (physiological and psychological) should be recorded (NICE, 2009).

It is still early days for health promoters to be fully engaged with evaluation in all its forms. One aspect of this analysis will be encouraging health promoters to share and exchange their experiences of the evaluation of physical activity promotion projects.

HEPA Europe; what is being done?

The HEPA Europe network is one of the organisations concerned with promoting health enhancing physical activity for the citizens of Europe. It works to facilitate the development of national health-enhancing physical activity policy.

So far, little is known about the different European approaches that promote physical activity and sport in children and adolescents. As more is learnt about HEPA promotion for children and adolescents within the different countries, cultures and settings across Europe, new examples of good practice will undoubtedly emerge. These lessons can be used to inform HEPA promoters across Europe as they tackle the challenge of physical inactivity in children and adolescents. Previous similar investigation of physical activity promotion in adults has been the starting point for guidelines and recommendations (Foster, 2000). It seems that a considerable amount of information on national approaches of the promotion of physical activity and sports in children and adolescents exists in different countries, but usually these are in languages other than English and therefore not readily available to a wider European audience.

In November 2006, HEPA Europe initialized a work group named “Physical Activity and Sports Promotion in Children” to focus on factors that influence physical activity behaviours. This work group is concerned with the exchange of experiences related to the promotion of physical activity and sports in children and adolescents whilst putting emphasis on the improvement of national implementation projects. One of the first tasks of this work group was to set up a documentation and analysis of existing national approaches in countries of the WHO European Region regarding the promotion of physical activity in children and adolescents as well as specific sub-groups.

Under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Dr. Banzer of the University of Frankfurt am Main, this task was undertaken by Jule Kunze in her Masters thesis. She identified 135 projects from across WHO European region and selected and investigated 21 suitable projects from 12 countries (Kunze, 2008). She produced a comprehensive quantitative analysis and an excellent insight into European HEPA promotion. This first step simultaneously showed the great breadth of HEPA promotion activities across Europe, and the need for more detailed analysis.

The Next Step

This analysis was commissioned to develop the previous work and add to the currently scarce available documentation on European HEPA promotion in children and adolescents. In contrast to the existing work, this project has conducted an in depth and focussed analysis of a much smaller number of HEPA projects (six) selected from the WHO European region. The focus was on the qualitative nature of the experiences and lessons learned by the HEPA promoters and project workers and how these might relate to existing and future HEPA projects.

By stimulating discussion and exchange we intended to reveal the lessons and experiences of HEPA promoters working with children and adolescents. We have also attempted to look at the solutions and problem solving applied in different settings that would be beyond the scope of survey based quantitative research.

2. Analysis Project Aims

The following aims and research questions were agreed after extensive consultation with the HEPA Children's workgroup. The primary analysis aim was to;

Produce a report that compiles the lessons and experiences of HEPA promoters across Europe, specifically those that target children and adolescents, in the form of an accessible resource for all HEPA promoters and project workers.

To achieve this we wished to identify and analyse systematically a selection of the most important and promising European programmes and approaches, in terms of their strengths and weaknesses, their ability to reach different subgroups of the younger population, their structural integration and their ability to contribute to physical activity promotion and the prevention of the drop in physical activity often observed in adolescents. We aimed to investigate the nature and context of the lessons, and to reveal the underlying factors where possible.

It was not the intention of this report to make comparisons or to grade the projects for how 'good' they are. This report aims to collect and compile all of the lessons learned by the project representatives, to generate a useful resource for HEPA project workers across Europe. The research team has attempted to interpret the lessons and experiences and highlight any common themes or strands that emerge. With feedback from the HEPA Children's workgroup it was decided to create Guidance points for consideration from these interpretations (see **6. Guidance Points**).

The research team formulated the following research questions for the study;

- What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the different projects?
- How successful are the different projects at reaching different sub-groups?
- How good is the structural integration of the projects and to what extent can they be considered to have sustainable impact after completion?
- Were the projects financed by government or industry and how did project experiences of this differ?
- What was the legal basis of the projects?
- What is the ability of the different projects to contribute to physical activity promotion?
- What is the ability of the different projects to prevent the drop in physical activity often observed in adolescents?
- What lessons have been learned from these projects?
- How do these lessons apply to future and existing projects?

The final aim of this study was to reflect on whether this method of analysis is appropriate for use on a wider scale and a suitable method of contributing to the

documentation of HEPA projects across Europe. We report the strengths and limitations of this method, and make recommendations for future similar work.

3. Analysis Methodology

Literature Review

A review of the literature related to the promotion of physical activity, play and sport for children and adolescents was carried out by the British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research Group, Oxford. The results were used for the background to this project (see **Introduction**) and to inform the project analysis workshop themes.

Project selection

The earlier work by Jule Kunze had identified a considerable number of HEPA projects for children and adolescents across Europe. The initial sample was 135 projects with 21 selected for analysis (Kunze, 2008). This was the starting point for our selection. We invited nominations for further suitable projects at the 2008 4th Annual HEPA meeting in Glasgow and contacted key stakeholders from the HEPA Children's Workgroup for advice and leads.

To give this investigation a wide appeal and relevance we aimed to cover a range of age groups, settings and approaches in our final selection. These project characteristics were defined with consultation from stakeholders of the HEPA Children's Workgroup.

To give further significance and meaning to the report in terms of HEPA projects and promotion across Europe we applied the following selection criteria for project inclusion;

- The programme was at a national level or had large scale impact
- The programme had been evaluated (or was at least foreseen to be)
- The programme was willing to send a representative to the workshop and provide project materials
- The project was considered to be important and promising by HEPA representatives

It was critical that the attending project representative could speak English due to the nature of the analysis methods of the workshop. This particular selection criterion may need consideration if future work wishes to extend to Eastern Europe (see **Next Steps**).

Using these criteria and to cover the necessary characteristics, six projects were selected for analysis (see table 2). The projects came from The Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, Spain, Switzerland and Finland. Of the selected projects, 4 had been included in the previous analysis (Kunze, 2008) and 2 (Beweegkriebels from the Netherlands and Move with Us from Spain) were newly identified.

Project name	Country	Age of target group			Setting		Approach	
		0-5 years	6-10 years	11-19 years	School	Other	Sport for all	Other (all PA)
Beweegkriebels	The Netherlands	✓				✓		✓
Handshake with Sport	Sweden		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Kampagne Kinderturnen	Germany	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Move with us	Spain		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Youth + Sport	Switzerland		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
The Sports Adventure around the Globe	Finland		✓		✓	✓		✓

Table 2. The six projects included for analysis, with selection characteristics

Conceptual model

To give structure to the analysis, we developed a conceptual model that plots the theoretical life-course of a HEPA project. The model is based on a similar construct used previously in analysis of 4 national adult HEPA projects (Foster, 2000) and categorises distinct stages of a HEPA project;

- Stage 1. Project conception
- Stage 2. Project planning and preparation
- Stage 3. Project design and development
- Stage 4. Project implementation
- Stage 5. Project evaluation
- Stage 6. Project legacy and sustainability

Data Collection

Project Questionnaire

The research team designed a questionnaire as the initial data collection tool (see **Appendix 2**). The questionnaire was based on a previous tool successfully

employed for a similar project by the same research team. The format of the questionnaire was designed to follow the conceptual model of a HEPA project's life.

The questionnaire was emailed to one representative from each project as a word document and each respondent had two weeks to return the questionnaire. All six questionnaires were returned. The responses were used as direction and guidance for the workshop sessions.

Analysis Workshop

The University of Orebro, Sweden hosted the evaluation workshop from 18th-20 March 2009. The data collection took place over two and a half days and consisted of large and small group sessions, and one on one interviews of various lengths. All sessions were recorded and transcribed. In session one each project nominated one representative who was asked to give a 12 minute presentation on their project.



Project presentation



Focus group 1

In session two, the representatives split into two groups and discussed the relative strengths and weaknesses of their project. This session was run as a focus group, defined as 'interaction within a group based on topics supplied by the researcher' (Morgan, 1997). The topics were derived from our research questions (p18) and the session was structured around our conceptual framework for the lifetime of a HEPA project (p20).

Session three focused on opportunities and threats to a HEPA project. Participants were grouped by project and considered identifying and solving the challenges encountered by their project. They were asked to consider actual events as well as learning that could be applied in the future. In session four the representatives interviewed each other seeking the best and worst aspects of their projects, and advice for future HEPA promotion.



Focus group 2

Session five was a whole group session in which the representatives discussed their favourite characteristics of the other projects and what they felt they had learned. For the full workshop schedule see **Appendix 3**.

Participants were asked to provide any project materials such as videos, publications and campaign-written resources that were available in English. These were collected at the workshop.

Data Analysis

Each session was recorded and transcribed. These data were combined with our research team notes and questionnaire responses and analysed independently by two researchers. Relevant information was extracted and assessed using standardised methodology; content and thematic qualitative analysis. Any post-workshop questions were followed up after the initial analysis.

The principal method used for this research was content and thematic qualitative analysis. The first qualitative iteration identified our initial thematic areas. These were independently assessed by the analysis team. The second qualitative iteration resolved these themes into our five project areas. The analysis team interpreted these areas to form the results section.

Formation of results

The final stage was a presentation of our preliminary results to the HEPA Children's workgroup at the 5th annual meeting of HEPA Europe, in Bologna 11-12 November 2009. This was followed by a group discussion between the workshop participants. It was agreed that the results could form the basis of Guidance Points for HEPA projects. It was also agreed that future work should look to be fully representative of HEPA promotion for children and adolescents, particularly from a geographical point of view, with the aim of developing a blueprint for HEPA promotion in this age group.

In response, the results were used to form our 36 Guidance Points for HEPA projects (see **6. Guidance Points**). These should be considered a checklist for consideration, rather than project rules.

4. Participant Project Overview



Beweegkriebels

Project name	Beweegkriebels
Country of origin	The Netherlands
Target age group	0-4 Years
Physical activity target	Play and movement, movement in playing and physical activities
Project activities	<p>'Course Beweegkriebels and 'Workshop Beweegkriebels'; training professionals and teachers to be creative with day care for the under fives, practicals for organising an meeting with parents about the importance of physical activity</p> <p>DVD, cards with advice and tips and tricks, website</p>
Project length	Launched in 2005
Setting	Childcare, pre-school, first groups primary school, consultation centers, and all settings where young children play and live
Legal basis	Reflective of government obesity policy
Evaluation design	Effect studies
Project results	<p>130 professionals are certified by NISB to give the course Beweegkriebels</p> <p>Accepted into curriculum of 5 education centres for day care education</p>

Key Learning

Early effects study allowed an evidence based approach when applying for funding

Area for improvement

More evaluation and documentation needed to monitor project impact and growth



Handshake with Sport

Project name

Handslaget

Country of origin

Sweden

Target age group

6-18 Years

Physical activity target

Sport and physical activity

Project activities

The project supplies the sports movement with new resources that increase opportunities to develop sports activities at the local level

Activities during lesson times with the teacher present, activities during school breaks organized by leaders from a sports club and after-school activities with a focus on pupils who do not take part in sports during their free time

Sports leaders come to the school to demonstrate their sports and the children can try them according to their own abilities

Project length

Continuous since 2004

Setting

Compulsory School and Upper Secondary School

Legal basis

Political strategy

Evaluation design

There have been at least 4 independent evaluations of the “Increased collaboration with schools” from 4 different county councils

Project results

In total 2500 schools and 3300 sports clubs have been engaged. Together they have started about 5500 different projects

90 percent of all schools took part in some form of Handshake activity during years 1 to 4, reaching a total of 25 000 pupils.

About half of the schools representatives claimed that physical activity among pupils had increased

Key Learning

Take longer to plan and use experts, incorporating evidence based methods

Schools are a good way to reach youths not active in any club

Internal reflection and problem solving generated valuable knowledge that will benefit future work

Area for improvement

Conduct evaluation earlier

Open doors for more physically inactive children and adolescents not interested in sport



Kampagne Kinderturnen

Project name	Kampagne Kinderturnen
Country of origin	Germany
Target age group	3-10 Years
Physical activity target	Gymnastics
Project activities	Testing of motor abilities A specific motoric test including seven test items (one footed standing, walking backwards on a switched bank, jump to and fro, stand and reach, long-jump from a standing position, push-ups, six-minute-run) Effective physical education in order to guide the participants to lifelong physical activities Recruiting new members for German Gymnastics Federation clubs
Project length	Continuous since 2006
Setting	School and Kindergarten
Legal basis	Initiated by the German Gymnastics Youth (DTJ) which is part of the German Gymnastics Federation (DTB)
Evaluation design	Quantitative analysis of 34 290 children
Project results	Nationwide participation of gymnastics clubs, trainers and children

The intervention group of this project reached better results than their aged matched counterparts in the control group. The results over all test items were on in average 7.3 % better than those of the control group

Key Learning

Bring trainers and coaches to schools to share experiences and examples of activities

Motoric testing is a good motivation for children to do gymnastics

Linking to world championships very important to success

Using existing infrastructure provided man-power to realise the project

Area for improvement

Involve and give more influence to partners and regional associations in planning and preparation

Motoric testing should be adjusted for specific age groups



Move with Us

Project name

Muevete con Nosotros

Country of origin

Spain

Target age group

6-12 Years

Physical activity target

All physical activities that integrate overweight children

Project activities	<p>Health enhancing physical activity for overweight and inactive children</p> <p>Empowering overweight and inactive children for better physical activity habits by improving their sport and social skills</p> <p>Promoting willingness of parents to cooperate in this HEPA project</p>
Project length	Approved in 2007
Setting	Local physical or sport activities
Legal basis	Launched by the Regional Ministries of <i>Youth & Sports</i> and <i>Health & Dependence</i> of the government of Extremadura. Implemented by Faculty of Sports (AFYCAV) at University of Extremadura
Evaluation design	Evaluation and monitoring compatible with Stage of Adoption Model
Project results	Progressively increasing the number of municipalities involved in the programme from 35 to 130, and the number of participants to more than 150
Key Learning	<p>After running a pilot project, evaluation should be ongoing</p> <p>Fine tuning with the political schedule can enhance political support and funding</p> <p>Parents are key and coordinating with their daily schedule is vital</p> <p>Paediatricians from primary care should also be involved referring and advising children and parents</p>
Area for improvement	Better inter sector communication to improve agreement between Health and Sport departments



The Sports Adventure around the Globe

Project name	Liikuntaseikkailu maapallon ympäri
Country of origin	Finland
Target age group	6-12 Years
Physical activity target	All physical activity during the day
Project activities	<p>Pupils activity cards to record the amount of exercise of each pupil</p> <p>Performances per class are collected every day and Nuori Suomi is informed about the result (daily lotteries are used as means of motivation)</p> <p>A web adventure counts the daily physical activity per pupil (on average 3 hours)</p> <p>The media have been used extensively: radio (phone calls to the schools), information on TV and an advertising competition on TV (2007), the local newspapers write hundreds of articles during the campaign</p>
Project length	3 week campaign every year since 2001
Setting	School, internet and home
Legal basis	The government made the decision
Evaluation design	Process and Outcome evaluation
Project results	Half of the pupils of the lower school levels (between 170 000-180 000) take part in the project

The project has opened the doors to schools and to more than 10 000 teachers

The project has also influenced the fact that the school yards have been put in order

Key Learning

Initially involving a sample of teachers in development of tools and resources lead to understanding their needs and better products

Competitions or events prior to commencement engage beneficiaries and improve chances of success

The internet resources can support the schools

Area for improvement

Better use of the whole year



Youth + Sports

Project name	Jugend + Sport
Country of origin	Switzerland
Target age group	5-20 Years (5-10 Years in new pilot)
Physical activity target	All physical activity
Project activities	Instructors in sports clubs lead courses and training sessions for children and adolescents in their discipline. Teachers lead general weekly sports lessons for 5-10 year old children

The federal government provides;

	<p>Training sessions for new instructors and continuing training for all instructors</p> <p>Counselling and support for instructors</p> <p>Financial remuneration for lessons held</p>
Project length	<p>Launched in 1972, Pilot for 5-10 years added in 2007</p>
Setting	<p>Schools and Sports clubs</p>
Legal basis	<p>Financed by the federal government, basis in federal law and federal constitution</p>
Evaluation design	<p>Outcome measures</p>
Project results	<p>550, 000 children participate in the programme each year 12,000 instructors are trained each year</p>
Key Learning	<p>Understanding that schools are a good setting for reaching targets by selecting at the level of the teacher</p> <p>To work well in sports clubs you have to consider objectives of the clubs and their volunteers</p> <p>Current input into training curriculum for instructors may need to be supplemented by supervision and prescription of what they are actually doing in the sports clubs</p>
Area for improvement	<p>Better use of the internet which has potential for reaching children and adolescents</p>

5. Results

The following section reports the results of the data analysis by theme (see below). Each section contains relevant project learning and problem solving. Examples of what went well and not so well are included where appropriate. In some examples case studies are used to illustrate the results.

The analysis revealed 5 loosely defined categories of theme; Early on, Children and Adolescents, Approach, Partnerships and Later on. Association mapping has shown that some themes are associated with more than one, and in some cases many other themes and categories. An obvious example is evaluation; it is often considered towards the end of a project, but if it is not planned in the early stages then impact is impossible to determine as there will be no baseline data.

We have reflected on each section and where appropriate suggested an Guidance point for projects. Where our findings or reflections link directly to another area we have identified the other area in bold e.g. (see **Parents and Teachers**).

Analysis Themes

Early on	p36	Partnerships	p57
Reason for existence	p36	Sports Federations	p57
Social History and Social Climate	p37	Sports Clubs and Schools	p57
Planning and Preparation	p37	Parents and Teachers	p60
Design and Development	p39	Instructors and Implementers	p62
Government, Politics and Policy	p40	Collaboration	p63
Funding and Finance	p41	Competition	p65
Growth	p43	Core Team and Structure	p66
		Communication	p66
Children and Adolescents	p45	The Internet	p68
Target Groups	p45	Media	p69
Understanding target groups	p46		
Reach, impact and drop-out	p46		
		Later on	p71
Approach	p50	Perception	p71
Ways of working	p50	Change	p72
Outcomes	p52	Monitoring and Evaluation	p73
Resources and tools	p54	Sustainability	p76
Mega Events	p55		

Early on

Factors relating to the early stages of a HEPA project

'Ensure a positive start to your HEPA project' (Christoph Nuetzi, Switzerland).

Reason for existence

Why does the project exist and why is it needed

Our participating projects gave a range of reasons for why they had come into existence. For example, the Spanish project, *Move with Us*, reported that in their country they are faced with increasing prevalence of obesity in children, along with a decrease in physical activity; 'We face a major problem for health and sport: Child obesity'.

The Finish project, *Sports Adventure Around the Globe*, also cited a lack of physical activity; 'The idea of the project was an attempt to solve the problem of the increasing number of children getting too little exercise, discovered by a Finnish study on physical education, and to promote the daily physical activity of every child'. As a result 'physical activity became a part of policy [in the] Wellbeing programme'.

The Swedish project, *Handshake with Sport*, again cited policy and reported that 'a comprehensive political strategy for increasing children's physical activity has resulted in a demand for daily physical activity being included in the curriculum'.

Case study – Beweegkriebels The Dutch project reported that a change in the day-care system had given more responsibilities to schools and had increased attention to the quality of day-care available, generating a need for day-care solutions. 'We heard very well the needs of professionals...and we noticed what was going on in day-care'. 'The raised attention and responsibilities to schools were the reasons schools, day-care centres and others were on the look out for good quality programmes and ways to work. Beweegkriebels fits well into that'. This was part of a general raised awareness in the Netherlands of the importance of physical activity.

Guided Reflections

Understanding the driving forces behind your project allows the project to be designed in response to these demands. The combination of demands seen in the Dutch programme, namely a need for better quality day-care and the increasing awareness of the importance of physical activity, gave a clear indication of what sort of programme could be successful.

Guidance point 1; understanding and combining multiple factors of need may strengthen the case for your HEPA project.

Social History and Social Climate

Social and cultural backgrounds prior to or underpinning the projects

The workshop participants reported that there were social influences behind their projects. The Swiss representatives felt that their project, *Youth and Sports*, had been aided by the pedagogic movement in the 70s and 80s and the health movement in the 90s. They anticipated further benefits from the social inclusion movement in the future. They felt that it was a strength that 'Youth and Sports is well accepted and supported by the Swiss population'. In Germany, it was felt that the old tradition of doing gymnastics had given the opportunity to create their project, *Kampagne Kinderturnen*.

The Spanish project, *Move with Us*, talked about using cultural awareness of childhood obesity and the fact that there are 'many people willing for someone to produce good practice' to push the case for their project; 'In the preparation we have to convince people...so it's easy to talk about obesity in children, it's a matter of culture'.

Guided Reflections

Growing social and cultural awareness of the problem of physical inactivity and obesity, particularly in children and adolescents, is an opportunity for projects. It is an emotive subject, and can be something that can stimulate support for your HEPA project.

Guidance point 2; a project that responds to and engages cultural and social needs may find support more easily.

Planning and preparation

Factors associated with planning a HEPA project

The importance of planning and preparation to a HEPA project was highlighted during the workshop. The Spanish project, *Move with Us*, stated that in order to get successfully funded you have to present a budget to illustrate that you have planned what you are going to do, and what you are going to develop; 'In our country you have to prepare in [formative research and development] before they say yes. So you propose this and they say, okay go forward a step, and then you have to develop it. You have to make a strong proposal, and do it yourself. You have to be good but different'.

This point was developed by the Swedish project, *Handshake with Sports*; 'you have to apply for what is [going to be] done, but if you don't know what you should do in the sports organisations and in the schools it becomes more of the same'.

Unfortunately, they only identified this in the evaluation of their project. The Spanish project said that they felt they were 'running too quickly' for thorough planning and preparation and if they could do things differently, they would like to plan a pilot project.

The Swedish project felt that if they could start again they would 'take longer to plan' and 'use experts in the planning'. They would also investigate inactive youths and incorporate evidence based methods during the planning phase; 'We need to use some of this huge amount of money...instead of doing late evaluation study we should have done some actual research to develop more skilled technologies that could be useful'.

The German project, *Kampagne Kinderturnen*, said it was very important to have sufficient freedom to plan the project as they wished. However, they felt that it was 'impossible to [involve] the regional associations in the planning and preparation of their campaign...they do not have a chance to create the campaign or give their ideas to the campaign' due to a lack of available time for planning. They would advise future projects to 'give all partners more time and influence in the preparation'.

Case study – Beweegkriebels The project was praised by the workshop participants for their focus on planning. They had the foresight to plan an effectiveness study, and so were able to use an evidence based approach when applying for funding. Further to this, they were able to prepare a potential market by planning to incorporate physical activity referrals from the Primary Care Sector. However, the project itself felt that they could have done better with regard to long term planning.

Guided Reflections

We observed that projects recognise the importance of planning but there appear to be two obstacles to conducting this phase as they would wish. The first is the fact that the project needs to be planned in order to get funded, an awkward situation in that without funding it is difficult to conduct research into what needs to be done and use an evidence based approach. The second obstacle is that there is a time pressure to get started and not spend too long on the planning phase. It is likely that this is often linked to the first obstacle of funding as investors often want to see a quick return in the form of results.

One of the challenges is the need to be evidence-based and innovative. You can either attempt to think up new ideas or re-create old ideas based on good evidence. In an ideal world you would do research and consultation with the developers, implementers, clubs and intermediaries as well as the end user and beneficiaries. For any project trying to work through big networks of intermediaries the extent to which they consult with those intermediaries, get consensus and develop an understanding of the way forward is critical.

Guidance point 3: initially apply for a smaller grant to plan and pilot the study, before rolling it out full scale. This may be more likely to be approved, and come with less pressure to show instant results while also allow for learning and knowledge and skills generation within your team that will benefit the full scale roll-out of the project.

Design and development

Important factors in designing and developing a HEPA project

This is the process of bringing your plans to life and creating a HEPA project. For example, the Dutch project, *Beweegkriebels*, was practice based and used implementers to aid with the project design and development from the very beginning. They would advise future projects to ‘learn from each other and not create a “new programme” that already exists’.

Case study – Sports Adventure around the Globe The Finnish project also involved their implementers, the teachers, in the design. The project was initially tried in three schools to test their ideas. They involved approximately 15 teachers at this stage. For example, they trialled different variations of their exercise card and they found that it was too complicated. The project development was also helped by an expert familiar with children in need of special support.

‘One way we succeeded was with target groups. We start with children, teachers, school directors and operatives in the cities and we decided what to do in the planning. We collected all the data and we also think; what do we want to change in their behaviour? At the end we make several calls for each target group. What are the best tools to reach them? Systematic working with the target groups; what do we want to do with children? What do we want to change? How can we do it?’

‘We would advise other projects to find out thoroughly what the needs of the children and the teachers are right now and try to find solutions that work’.

However, they reported time pressures having a negative impact on the development of their tools; ‘We had lots of plans for how to help the teachers, but it took so much to make the campaign happen that we didn’t have time to prepare some of the materials’.

Guided Reflections

The involvement of experts, implementers or practitioners in the design and development phase can be an invaluable resource. The use of formative evaluation as part of development and design has been shown to be very important in testing ideas and refining the project. Small pilot studies are an excellent way to do this and as discussed earlier, ease some of the planning burden (see **Planning and Preparation**). Involving teachers in designing and developing the tools they are

actually going to use is likely to engage and motivate them, as well as lead to better tools.

Guidance point 4; small pilot studies with built in formative evaluation and involving experts and the project implementers in design and development can benefit a HEPA project.

Government, Politics and Policy

Government and political influences on a HEPA project

While the Swiss project, *Youth and Sports* felt 'supported by political will', a 'lack of initiative and support from the hierarchy' was perceived as a problem. They attempted to solve this through lobbying at the programme level; 'The legal base to reduce age to enter Youth and Sports to 5 years is being worked out. It should go through well with parliament once it is presented to them'.

Case Study – Move with Us The workshop participants praised the Spanish project *Move With Us*, for 'fine tuning with the political schedule' and benefiting from political support and funding. However, the Spanish project reported that they wished to be 'even more fitted to the political schedule' in order to achieve more inter-sector agreement between departments in different ministries. In particular they would look to stimulate cooperation between the Health and Sport departments. If they could do things differently they 'would coordinate and communicate goals between the government department [and] talk more regularly to politicians from different departments to find out about their ideas and plans.

The Swedish project, *Handshake with Sports*, reported that in their project most of the planning, regulation, decision making and evaluation were done at a regional level by the regional Sports Federation. In some cases the regional Sports Federation gave the clubs freedom to plan their own project. The National Swedish Sport Confederation formulated only the overall objectives and there were very few national regulations. The result was a variety in the quality produced at a national level; 'some did a really good job; others did not'.

Government and Funding

Factors that link government and funding

The Dutch project, *Beweegkriebels*, also felt they were funded due to political support; 'About the money, it was only the beginning because we are a national institute; we have the chance to propose to the ministry projects and ideas that we feel that are important because they recognise that we are closer to the field than the ministry...if we write in our work plan and we come with a good proposal they give us a lot of money to develop things and to test and do pilot projects. Later the financial situation would change but in the beginning that was a strength; financial support of the ministry'. The Swiss project reported that good timing was important; 'The reason

why we got 10 million francs is the situation from the politicians and the society'. 'The good economic situation and the willingness of politicians helped to start the new programme – today, in the actual economic situation we wouldn't get the money'. In addition, the money for the pilot project for 5-10 year old children was initially provided by a fund linked to the upcoming 2008 European Football Championships held in Switzerland and Austria (see **Mega Events**).

Guided reflections

The importance of political support can not be overstated; fine tuning to the political schedule seems a popular way of gaining this support. This effect can be enhanced through communication with the individual departments with the aim of achieving inter-sector agreement (see **Communication**).

Government is a key funding source for many projects and the participants emphasised the importance of good timing and relations in order to secure this funding.

Guidance point 5; communicate with government, understand the political schedule and align your project aims where possible. Think about the best time to make proposals and funding bids.

Funding and Finance

The funding or finance for a HEPA project

In terms of scale, the Finish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, stated that it was crucial to have 'the courage to invest [a lot of money] in something new and do something big.' They felt that you have to be willing 'take a risk at the start'.

On a practical level, the Spanish project, *Move with Us*, stated that 'you have to identify who is willing to finance [your project]'. Accordingly, the Dutch project, *Beweegkriebels*, reported that it found its way to the people who had to make the decisions and were responsible for the funding' through a bottom up approach so that the implementation could be 'financed by others'. They combined this with conducting research to see if there was a market for 'selling their concept' to find out if the project was financially viable.

Case Study – Move With Us The Spanish project was successful in finding finance from regional government and discovered this was accompanied by other forms of support; 'The Regional government finance and support the regional structure of programme and also promote the institutional inter-sector relationships (different departments of the Government of Extremadura and the municipalities)'. The Spanish project also incorporated the idea of cost utility to quantify to the benefits and economic value of the project.

The Finish project reported that to get financed they 'have to make good offers to ministry and companies...better than others do'. This indicates that they would consider both industry and government funding. However, our projects stated that receiving funding from industry was associated with certain difficulties. The Spanish project, *Move With Us*, reported complicated issues around receiving money from sponsors such as McDonalds or pharmaceuticals presumably as a result of contrasting aims. They felt that alternative structures such as Foundations linked to government could help to solve some of these difficulties. The German project, *Kampagne Kinderturnen*, found that competition between industry sponsors could result in problems; 'we have an insurance company as our sponsor, and one or more of our regional associations have sponsorship with other insurance companies, so it's hard to link them'.

On a practical side, the Finish project reported that even when funding is secured from sponsors, as was the case for the first five years, it is a challenge to actually 'collect the money to implement the campaign free of charge to schools'. This is an important point as they considered providing the project free of charge to schools to be a key element of a successful project. The German project, *Kampagne Kinderturnen*, agreed with Finland that there should not be a complicated financial burden on organisations taking part, saying 'there should only be one payment for the project'. On a positive note, the accomplishments of their project meant there is 'a good possibility to get more funding' in the future. The workshop participants praised the Finish project for 'the size of the achievement considering the available budget', being 'very impressed by what they were able to achieve'.

In Sweden they encountered the problem that the funds were distributed unevenly between different regions. They also reported that if they could do things differently they 'would not spend money so quickly – this needs more time'. This is another example of time being the limiting factor (see **Planning and Preparation** and **Design and Development**).

The Spanish project, *Move with Us*, felt it is important but very challenging to 'allocate money for the long-term'. The Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, had the same issue: 'In the plan for the next few years there was no budget whatsoever for evaluation. There is also no budget for any development or changes'. The Spanish project developed this idea saying that they can only take it one year and one small project at a time. This means that it is hard to 'pick up the best professionals' as they will not take a short contract and want to know how for many years they will be employed.

Guided reflections

Regarding funding and finance, the main sources for our projects were government funding or industry sponsorship. No project reported trying to raise their own funding by selling a product or concept to paying customers.

A strength of government finance is that it may be backed up with other administrative and organisational support. However as discussed later, there may be obligations to do with monitoring and evaluation (see **Monitoring and Evaluation**). Conversely, industry sponsorship can be complicated by rivalries and conflicting interests so be prepared for this. However, the Finnish project showed it may be the preferred option in for a new project and great successes can be achieved.

Guidance point 6; understand the differences and challenges in gaining funding from either government or industry, and select according to your project needs and capabilities. Be able to make an appropriate and strong proposal.

Once funding is secured, the projects reported that there may still be challenges in the collection and distribution.

Guidance point 7; the collection and distribution of funds is very important to project intermediaries and should be well planned and executed.

Finally, the projects discussed the challenges of funding a project for the long term.

Guidance point 8; assign money for the long term to allow for planned evaluation and for the recruitment of the best professionals.

Growth

Growth of a HEPA project

'We learned that small ideas can get very big' (Axel Kupfer, Germany)

The Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, reported that they would like add complementary programmes and projects to their own, but that they needed a more flexible structure to do this'. The Finish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, reported that they are actively looking further a field and have identified the opportunity to 'go to Europe spreading the campaign'.

Case study – Beweegkriebels 'From the research we thought yes this is a chance to do something. At the same time we were not prepared for success and that's what we notice now... we know exactly how many certified trainers there are that's okay but we don't know how many people they train and with whom the trained trainers are working so I don't have very precise data on the number of children that we reach... when you move back into the evaluation part it should have been better structured from the beginning...a future challenge will be to monitor the spreading of Beweegkriebels in the Netherlands'.

Guided reflections

Growth of a HEPA may be unexpected and should be monitored. Using a cascade model rather than direct contact with beneficiaries (as the Dutch project does) makes this particularly important and challenging. Unexpected growth and expansion can lead to a loss of control and ability to monitor quality and it will be difficult to regain this after the event.

Guidance point 9; Plan ahead for increasing capacity and ensure that the structure of your project is flexible enough to be able to add components in the event of success and further investment. This may require acceptance of adding personnel to the core team, of changing the ways of working to be appropriate to the increasing size of the target group or committing resources to the monitoring the number and standards of implementers and instructors.

Children and Adolescents

Factors relating to the beneficiaries of a HEPA project

Target Groups

Target groups identified by HEPA projects

The participants reported a variety of target groups for their projects. The Dutch project, *Beweegkriebels*, was considered particularly interesting for its target group of 0-5 year olds and was praised by the participants for 'prevention at an early age'. The Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, reported that 'in Switzerland it is politically impossible to go below five [year olds], because politicians say the family should be on their own and it's not a federal interest to say how they should do it'. This is interesting as it shows how the possible target groups in different European countries may be affected and restricted by external factors. The project reported two age based target groups 5 to 10 years and 10 to 20 years. However, they felt that 'it could be a weakness of Youth and Sports that we have no actual subgroups'. To focus on 5-10 year olds – they had to 'convince parliament that it should be in law'. The German project, *Kampagne Kinderturnen*, also had an age based target group looking at children aged 3 to 10 years.

The main target group for the Finnish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, was inactive children or 'the children who exercise too little' aged 6 to 12. The Swedish project, *Handshake with Sports*, targeted all children aged 6 to 18. However, they considered their project an opportunity to show a variety of activities to inactive children, and maybe foster an interest. They reported that 'a change in objectives from inactive target groups to keeping active children in the activity longer was perhaps wrong'.

The Spanish project, *Move with Us*, targeted inactive and obese children aged 6 to 12 and this was in response to government policy to complement other previous programmes for the child population. The project was praised by the participants from Switzerland for targeting the most difficult to reach – those with low self esteem; 'it really tries to reach those children and adolescents that are the most difficult for us, those that are obese and those who are very physically inactive. Those are typically the people we don't get into Youth and Sports'.

Guided reflections

All the projects had an age based target range. Germany, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Finland and Sweden targeted all children in their defined age ranges. Finland reported a special interest in the inactive, while Spain the obese and inactive with low self-esteem.

The influence of Government on target groups is apparent. Further research is warranted into the factors that influence target age ranges, and the specific learning and experiences of working with them.

Understanding target groups

Understanding the make-up and behaviour of the target groups in a HEPA project

In one of the group sessions, the participants from Sweden, Switzerland and the Netherlands agreed that a generic weakness in the preparation and development of all projects was a lack of understanding of children and teenagers.

The participants from Sweden felt they were did not know enough about this group yet; 'There is an awareness of the problem [too little physical activity in children] but there is no real understanding of the problem'. They said that key to understanding this problem was gaining a better understanding of the targets themselves; 'I think we have to know more about them – how they think and how they act and how they are'.

With better understanding, they wanted to know better how to reach them; 'To know how to reach the target groups, we have to learn more about the target group and how to address the information to the target group in a proper way before rather than afterwards'.

The participants from Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, reported that they knew something about their target groups, but also needed deeper investigation; 'We know that 44% of the children change [club] at least once before they are 10 and were not asked where are they going'. They saw the results of recent studies as opportunities to gain or benefit from political support. Inactivity, obesity and the positive effects of PA and sport led to recommendations that became part of the political agenda.

Guided reflections

Understanding of the target groups in particular teenagers is important, but currently not good enough. The participants reported that work in this area should be done early in the project rather than too late (see **Planning and Preparation**). A better understanding of the size and scale of the problem may stimulate political will to support further projects (see **Reason for existence** and **Government and Politics**).

Guidance point 10; Funding streams should be directed towards investigating the target groups and their behaviour. There is a need for the behavioural change models that this research can generate.

Reach, impact and drop-out

Reaching the target groups of a HEPA project

'That the sports movement will reach all youngsters is probably a Utopia' (Johan Tranquist, Sweden)

As mentioned in **Growth**, the Dutch project, *Beweegkriebels*, had expanded to the point where they did not know its impact and reach in terms of how many children were taking part. They stated that it will be a future challenge to 'get a real overview of the use in practice' and to 'better know how many people work with *Beweegkriebels* and with how many children they work'. They also reported that they did not know 'the extent to which it had an effect on the health of the children'.

However, they did know that the project had been taken up by the official education system; '*Beweegkriebels* is now in the curriculum of some higher education schools for those people working in the day care centres, so it's being implemented in the official school system'.

The Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, felt there was an opportunity to extend their reach by working into political processes, into schools and with younger ages in sports clubs. In terms of their own reach and impact, they reported that 'the programme has been very influential within sports federations and sports clubs but it has not really had the impact we would have hoped for at the entire population...it's very influential with the people who are in the club but not necessarily for the rest'.

Case Study – Youth and Sports The Swiss project discussed how they had a good understanding of their project's reach and impact; 'Overall we have poor coverage of the least active and the obese because they, by definition, are less or not interested in sports...we know from national data girls with a migration background, usually within the low socioeconomic status, are not reached very well. You don't get at them because they have more barriers for government sport - we know that. Within the 5 to 10 year old it has been a particular issue to actually reach the socially disadvantaged, the less active and those with a migration background and there are two arms in the 5 to 10 year old. One is through the sports clubs but is less likely to reach them there. The other arm works from schools and we have studied evaluation results that showed that we reach them reasonably well. The selection happens at the level of the teachers not at the level of the individuals and that's the advantage of going through the school. Within the 5 to 10 year olds we have made some attempt and the preliminary results from pilot phase shows us that we're making some progress'.

The Swiss project stated that while school was the better setting to reach their target groups than sports clubs, the school has the problem that there are fewer options for sports courses and the school is already heavily burdened with a lot of other targets and issues (see **Sports Clubs and Schools**). Also, this approach relies on the teacher taking the project up, and if this doesn't happen they reach no-one. However, despite these challenges, the project was praised by the participants for 'their ability to target, understand and reach certain groups', such as young males. In particular they reported that they were able to reach a very high proportion of males through football; 'we have a very high proportion of mostly low socioeconomic background boys from a migration background'.

Case study – Handshake with Sport The Swedish project had a clear picture of where it worked well, and not so well; ‘...doors have largely been opened up to traditional organized activities; that is, more of the same...reaching those who are already interested in taking part on the terms that the sports movement stipulates. With few exceptions, doors have not opened for physically inactive youngsters who are not interested in sport. This also holds true of the schools. And it is here that the most serious question mark regarding the Handshake programme presents itself’.

‘For some groups these programmes are perfect, we reach them and they get a lot of benefit but the question is how many don’t we reach? We need other initiatives because we shouldn’t throw away things that are good’. They reported that projects always seem to be more of the same and they ‘should have made intervention mapping and asked the inactive children what will interest them in sport and physical activity...by cooperating with the schools, the clubs can also reach youths who are not active in any club’.

Case study – Kampagne Kinderturnen The German project had begun to plan how they would enhance their reach and impact; ‘We have very good offers for children for physical activities in gymnastics clubs, with qualified trainers and coaches. However, one of our biggest problems with this is that we reach the wrong target group, already active kids - the more active than normal school or nursery school kids - so we need to focus on the children who are not in a gymnastic club. This is one of our biggest problems – linking our trainers and coaches and how they are working in the club, to schools is pretty hard - I would like to take our trainers and coaches and bring them to the regular schools and maybe give some examples or share experiences of what we did in the gymnastics clubs in the PE lessons’.

The Swiss project reported a high drop out of older children and considered it an important challenge to prevent the drop-out seen in 13-16 year olds; ‘...we have a drop out [at the age] of 12 to 14 and then of 16 again to 30% - that drop out is too high, much too high’. They expressed a desire to focus on ‘lifelong physical activity’.

The Swedish project, *Handshake with Sport*, reported that a potential cause of drop-out amongst active adolescents is the pressure to succeed and the commitment required, with little focus on the social aspects; ‘Today when they are in a sports organisation at 15/16/17 years old they are training every day and after a while they are fed up with that - it’s too much. When we were at that age we trained maybe 2 to 3 times a week but nowadays its everyday...they will drop out because it’s too much and there’s no spare time - no time in between for doing other activities... the drop out is big’.

Guided Reflections

The format and model of the Dutch project, *Beweegkriebels*, meant that it was possible for official recognition by the school system and this had a positive effect on

their potential reach. However, they still did not know well the extent of this reach and their impact (see **Evaluation**).

The structure and personnel in a sports club are a good medium for impacting on physical activity behaviour. However, while the setting of a sports club has been successfully employed, it had the problem of mainly reaching active children, already involved in sport and having little impact on the inactive or the overall population.

Conversely, the school setting has the advantage of selecting at the level of the teacher and the potential reach is far greater. However, schools and teachers have many other pressures and priorities and this approach relies on their cooperation (see **Parents and Teachers** and **Sports Clubs and Schools**).

Guidance point 11; when deciding on your project approach consider the relative reach and impact of school and sports club settings. Also, understand the possible competing interests and objectives of the two settings.

Perhaps unsurprisingly football was reported to be effective in reaching males from low socio-economic and migration backgrounds. However, unsurprising or not this success should be recognised and the important point is that it emphasises the differences in target groups, such as gender differences, and suggests each different target group may require tailored approaches.

The workshop participants reported that they felt a weakness in their projects was that they reached the already active. However, reaching active children and adolescents is not a weakness if this is your aim. Preventing drop out of the physically active through adolescence can be as important an outcome as reaching the sedentary and inactive, and has been identified by British researchers as an appropriate target group (van Sluijs E et al., 2008). Understanding your objectives is important.

Guidance point 12; define your objectives well, and be prepared to be positive about continuing to reach active children and adolescents.

Drop out and decline in physical activity were identified as important issues by the participants. The idea that those involved in sports at older ages are put under too much pressure and time commitment is important. If clubs and schools are motivated by performance they will always push participants to outperform their peers, and may neglect those who can't excel or just want to take part. Incentivising large participation levels and retention to the clubs and schools may help this situation.

Guidance point 13; when working in sports clubs work hard to encourage participation and enjoyment in favour of performance and outcomes. When scheduling programmes consider the daily schedule and other commitments of children and adolescents.

Approach

Approach and implementation of a HEPA project

Ways of working

The Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, discussed two different models or approaches to implementing a HEPA project; 'The question is whether you start from the centralised approach or not, under the general assumption that central knows best and the people on the ground don't know what they're doing - basically, that's the one assumption. The other assumption is that people in the field know best and the people within the central structure are very much removed from that'.

Another aspect of a HEPA project's approach or way of working is whether sport or all physical activity is used. The Swiss project stated they would like to extend their project 'to include further elements of children's overall physical activity behaviour' and also talked about an opportunity to target the non-organised sports such as street sports and inline skating for the first time. The German project, *Kampagne Kinderturnen*, stated that; 'One of the main aims is an effective physical education in order to guide the participants to lifelong physical activities'. The Spanish project, *Move with Us*, felt they had learned that there were 'possibilities besides sports' and the Swedish project, *Handshake with Sport*, specified that 'walking and cycling to school should be a bigger part of project'. The Dutch project, *Beweegkriebels*, was praised by the participants for 'use of non-organised sport' suitable for children aged 0-5 years. They would now like to 'broaden the project to include other healthy lifestyles'. The Swedish project also aimed to 'participate in the fight against drugs'.

The Swedish project agreed that a broad approach was necessary. They were concerned with the argument being made for the physical activity approach taken; to say that young people are obese because of too little exercise and the solution is more physical activity is 'completely wrong and we don't really tell the story in the right way ... we can never solve the problem with just physical activity'.

In terms of the implementation, the Swiss project felt they had learned that a campaign should be split into parts. They felt that the Finnish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, showed that 'many small pilot projects results in more flexibility'. On this note, the Finnish project would advise other projects to specialise each campaign.

Case Study – Sports Adventure around the Globe The Finnish project was praised by the workshop participants for the ‘use of a three week “event”’. The Spanish project, *Move with Us*, recognised the potential of the Finnish model; ‘It is a project not like the other projects – it is a really good event that would make an excellent start to a longer campaign’. The Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, felt that as well as starting a campaign, the Finnish model could serve to stimulate or boost a campaign that was already running; ‘I am interested in the Finnish programme, because our programme is based on regularity, sustainability and quality. It lasts at least half a year or an annual course while they have an event character – three weeks, every year...the combination of events and programmes could lead us to get more target groups into the programme’. The Finnish project responded that they could also learn much from the successes of longer HEPA projects; ‘Perhaps we could last longer and do more things in the year and have some kind of mixture’ and the Swedish project, *Handshake with Sport*, was praised for ‘use of the whole year’.

The Finnish project also took the opportunity to engage the beneficiaries before the start of their campaign and recognised this as a key component of their success; ‘One good thing we figured out [was] we took the children and the participation. Every year we had some kind of pre-competition or event with the children, before they did the campaign with us. They have TV commercials, they have songs, they made drawings, [we had] cartoons - and then they do something. There is really something to do before the campaign that

The projects discussed the best way to engage the target groups. The Swedish project recognised the importance of producing a project that delivers what the beneficiaries actually need; ‘This is the challenge for all of us; to develop activities and initiatives which meet their needs and interests. The challenge is that we are not participating enough in the way that they are actually involved in activities’. The Dutch project also mentioned producing a project that is interesting to the young children; ‘how can we have an interesting programme for these long days while parents are working’. In relation to this, a better understanding of the beneficiaries and target groups is clearly required (see **Understanding Target Groups**).

The Swiss project agreed with this idea; ‘There is actually a lack of population relevant objectives...I think we should improve or rethink the original objectives...we need to provide a very broad approach not a disciplined based approach to young children, a multi sports approach basically...so not just keep doing what has been done so far...I think it would be useful to make some progress in the actual design of a programme and come back to what it really wants to achieve...this has somehow been lost...nobody hears about the objectives ... it has become a pure question of ideology and it has moved away from what really should be achieved I think’.

Guided Reflections

The idea of a centralised administration or devolved approach to implementation is important. This should come back to your project concept and objectives - are you aiming to be prescriptive about what happens or are you trying to empower your

implementers? The correct approach may come down to who your implementers are. If you are working with unpaid volunteers and clubs, the empowerment model may suit, whereas working with paid or government agents might suit a prescriptive approach.

Teachers may not be 'volunteers' by definition but due to their other pressures and objectives they may be treated as such and many HEPA projects need their voluntary cooperation. As discussed in previously (see **Design and Development**) involving teachers from the initial phases onwards can be very important and this group may suit an empowerment approach.

Guidance point 14; consider your implementers when deciding your delivery model. The more your project relies on volunteers, the more freedom you may want to give them.

The projects recognised that there is more than sport as a way to increase physical activity in children and adolescents.

Guidance point 15; targeting all the domains of physical activity behaviour increases the potential for having a greater impact. Active travel and non-organised activities (i.e. play) are possible examples. Also, consider that physical activity is just one domain of a healthy lifestyle, and there are possibilities for partnerships with other sectors.

The example from Finland suggests that a small and specialised project in the format of an event has many potential benefits. It may be a good way to start a larger project, or inject life into an existing project. It may also give more flexibility, and the chance to target different target groups independently. It may be something about a dose and further investigation should be directed at what works more effectively; a big injection over a short time or a lower continuous dose over a longer time.

Activities to engage with the target groups before the start of the project, through media or schools were shown to be key elements of the success in the Finish model. Any other projects running an event type project may consider this point important.

Guidance point 16; a short 2-4 week event with intensive media coverage and participation may be a good way to start a new project or inject life into an existing project. Incorporate engagement activities during the lead in.

The projects recognised that whatever their approach it was important to keep it interesting and relevant. This would again suggest that a better understanding of the target groups is vital (see **Understanding Target Groups**) and that involvement of target beneficiaries in project design, possibly a pilot study, would be successful (see **Design and Development**).

Outcomes

Outcomes of the HEPA programmes

'Obesity rates continue to rise and if projects can't show results, this way of working may come under threat' (Charlie Foster, United Kingdom).

For specific results see the **Project Outline** section.

The Spanish project, *Move with Us*, reported it was a challenge that despite the existence of their programme, the problems with health were getting worse; 'Obesity is increasing [in Spain] despite the effects of the programme'. The Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, reported a similar situation in their country; 'We have 37 years of Youth and Sport but still the percentage of active children is going down and the percentage of obese children is going up'.

The German project, *Kampagne Kinderturnen*, reported they had learned that there are different kinds of outcomes. The Swedish project, *Handshake with Sports*, also made this point, stating there was a *need* for different kinds of outcomes. Specifically, they stated that goals should show a spectrum of timeframes and there should be both intermediate and future goals. This was partly because of the time necessary to know the impact or effect of the project; 'What effect the Handshake programme may have had or will have in the future is something that will not be known until the programme has been evaluated over a number of years'.

Case study – Handshake with Sport The Swedish project reported that the internal reflection and problem solving conducted during the project had led to the outcome of generating a lot of useful information and learning; 'the fact of the numerous people [working on the Handshake] being obliged to reflect on and find solutions to the issues one may claim that the Handshake programme has been successful as a project generating knowledge, and will therefore be of value to future programmes'.

They reported that the project could almost be considered as a methodological exercise; 'The Handshake has more been a method of developing and improving sporting activities than a project with a beginning and an end'.

One interesting result came from the Spanish programme. They reported a negative finding in that children did not want to leave the programme after 8 months. That is, they did not want to return to their normal classes and activities as they were too comfortable in the programme. This is not surprising as they had taken children, selected for amongst other reasons low self esteem, and removed them from this environment to one where they were amongst supportive adults and similar children. They developed a project exit strategy in response to this.

Guided Reflections

The results show that there are more than just obesity or specific health outcome goals for our projects. The **Project Outline** section shows that participation related outcomes are important to the projects and this may be because population obesity levels do not seem to be going in the right direction. The Spanish representative stated that 'from other projects I have learnt the importance of clarification [and better definition] of goals' and this emphasises that the project outcomes are leading to changing ideas.

The Swedish project talked about having outcome goals with varying timeframes and this is a good way of monitoring and tracking progress. SMART (Specified, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-framed) goals may be a useful tool for projects.

The Swedish case study shows other kinds of outcome and this is very important as it is a way of giving funders and investors something for their money; 'Emphasise the positive results of the Handshake'.

Guidance point 17; be aware of all of your project outcomes such as skills training, experience gained and knowledge generation as these will benefit future projects and can be part of the funders value for money.

The Spanish finding of participants not wanting to leave at the conclusion of the project shows the need for a plan for returning and re-integrating children and adolescents back to normal life at completion. This will be especially important to projects who remove children from the natural environment to participate in the programme.

Guidance point 18; planning and implementing an exit strategy may be necessary for projects that take children out of their natural school or home environment.

Resources and tools

Resources and tools used in a HEPA project

The projects reported using many resources and tools during implementation. The Spanish project, *Move with Us*, felt that running a project was an opportunity to create tools that could be used by other programmes. These tools could include an inventory of adequate practices in health, education and sport and tools to evaluate fitness for referral.

The Dutch project, *Beweegkriebels*, considered their tools and resources to be a major strength; 'we have a lot of nice materials... there's folders, there's cards, there's the website where people can download tools so it's very easy to start ... there are many different kinds of workshops and training so there's a lot available that makes it easy for people to start with Beweegkriebels'. The Finish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, thought that their tools were important to encourage the

children to take part and complete more physical activity; 'The activity card is a crucial motivator and inspirer'.

Case study – Kampagne Kinderturnen The German project had a battery of motoric testing as a key component of their programme. They reported that their motoric test is meant to be the 'motivation or initiation to go to the gym and do gymnastics...the kids really like to do the testing...they like to hear about the results and compete with friends'. However, they reported that the testing has an end and it is difficult to carry this on.

The German project learned that tests should be adjusted to reach specific age groups and that in the future renewed campaign tools may be needed. They praised the Swedish project for their 'age specific tests'.

The Swiss project, *Youth and Spots*, found that 'due to bureaucracy it was very slow to move materials from the state to schools'. They reported that one of the things they would do differently was the way they would distribute materials. The Spanish project, *Move with Us*, found inequalities in existing resources at a local level and between small cities. They stated that in response to this 'language is everything' and they would advise other projects to conduct an inventory of local resources.

The Finish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, reported use of the internet in the project implementation. They discovered the need to update their web pages and tools and had made it 'more modern and including different languages'.

Guided Reflections

If a project develops tools that have applications for other projects and organisations it may be a potential source of income, collaboration and increased exposure, as well as engaging the target beneficiaries.

Tools aimed at implementers should be accessible and make it easy to start up. Tools aimed at children and adolescents have the potential to encourage, motivate and inspire, and may differ according to the target age range.

There is the potential for difficulties and inequalities in the distribution of a projects tools and resources. Plan this well, use existing infrastructure and inventory what is out there.

The internet may be an invaluable tool (see **Internet**), but as a technology it is moving fast so will need updating and maintaining, with the specialised skills this requires.

Guidance point 19; involving target beneficiaries and implementers in designing and developing tools and resources may lead to better products that can engage and motivate participation in your project.

Mega Events

Use of Mega Events in a HEPA project

Some HEPA projects utilized upcoming international tournaments or championships within their project programme. The Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, saw the 2008 European football championships, Euro 2008, as an opportunity to widen their target group to 5-10 year olds and start a pilot project. It was also cited as an important factor in receiving government funding (see **Government and Funding**). As a result of their experiences they would advise other projects to 'Explore possibilities of using mega-events for launching pilot-projects and new initiatives'.

Case Study – Kampagne Kinderturnen The German project was able to link the start of their campaign to the start of the 2007 Gymnastics World Championships and consider this very important in their success. However, the representative reported that working to a deadline that would coincide with the start of the championships added a lot of pressure and felt like carrying a huge weight; 'We only had 6 months to start the campaign because it should be linked to the World Championships in gymnastics 2007 in Stuttgart – this historic chance of having the World Championships in Germany had to be used and felt like carrying a huge backpack while [trying to] move faster and faster...we would have spent more time on preparation, but for the link to the world championships'.

Guided Reflections

Mega events can be an opportunity to start a new project, or launch initiatives within existing projects, as they may simultaneously coincide with raised awareness in the population and the increased likelihood of government funding. However, they may come with extra time pressure which can already be an impediment to planning (see **Planning and Preparation**).

Guidance point 20; when using a Mega Event alongside a HEPA project be aware of the raised profile and opportunities for government funding. However, also consider carefully the added burden of time pressure and the effect this may have on planning and preparation.

Partnerships

Working with other outside organisations and individuals during your HEPA project

Sports Federations

The involvement of sports federations in HEPA projects

The Finnish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, reported that their project was an opportunity to 'coordinate the sports federations'. The Swedish project, *Handshake with Sport*, considered their project an opportunity for the federations of smaller sports to showcase their activities to children. However, it was considered a challenge to foster dialogue between the sports federations and political leadership about their shared activities.

Case Study – Kampagne Kinderturnen The German project felt that because their project was conceived in the headquarters of the Gymnastic Federation this gave the project the strength of being able to draw on 22 regional associations with over 22,000 clubs. As Gymnastics is one of the biggest sports associations in Germany there was an opportunity to use a large existing network and infrastructure. Although they reported they did not have time to draw on this resource in the planning (see **Planning and Preparation**) this did give them the 'manpower to realise the campaign, implement the project and reach their aims'.

Guided Reflections

Any project based on a single sport may wish to utilise the existing networks and infrastructures that could propagate and implement the programme. The projects using sport in general reported that their activities are both an opportunity to conduct into sports federations and stimulate communication. They are also a chance to showcase the activities of the lesser known sports that children and adolescents may not otherwise get a chance to try.

Sports Clubs and Schools

The involvement of sports clubs and schools in HEPA projects

The use of sports clubs as a delivery mechanism was not unusual in the workshop HEPA projects. The Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, reported that action at an early age can have positive effects on long term attitudes [towards sports clubs]; 'Starting with 5 year olds and giving them a physical activity experience based on well-being, fun and exploring diverse disciplines can foster a change in attitudes for sports clubs in the long term'. The Swiss project was praised by the workshop participants for 'their use of sports clubs'.

However, the Swedish project, *Handshake with Sports*, reported that 'clubs are crowded with men, the leadership is made of men and it has been for hundreds of

years', which is a potential weakness of the clubs. They also reported a problem with sustaining continuity; '...many parents are leaving the sports clubs during the years they have children ... so that's a problem for some sports organisations having continuity'. The Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, felt that it was a significant challenge to get sports clubs to be more open in the way they work. They felt this was particularly the case for the younger age groups. The Finnish project also reported this problem; how to get sports club to cooperate with the schools, and praised the Swedish project for the cooperation they had been able to foster.

The German project, *Kampagne Kinderturnen*, reported that there was a 'tendency for local clubs not to join official federations any more'. They felt this was due to a centralised approach disenchanting the clubs (see **Ways of Working**); 'The idea comes from the top down to the smallest clubs, and they have to eat [like] the idea – this is a political thing'. As discussed previously (see **Design and Development**) the German project felt a potential solution to this was giving more freedom to those at a club level and involving them in the design of the project; 'it would be nice if they were able to create and give their own ideas, and their own experiences with motoric testing, to the campaign'.

Case study – Youth and Sports The Swiss project discovered a fundamental difference in working with sports clubs or schools; 'I think in general, if you're working with sports clubs the barriers are a little higher than for example if you're working with schools'. They recognised that to break down these barriers they had to take into account the objectives of the clubs and their volunteers; 'if you're working through sports clubs you must take into consideration the genuine interests of the clubs themselves because it is mainly voluntary work being done there and they're going to do mainly what they're interested in'.

They know well what the limitations of this approach are, and recognise the need for additional complementary approaches; '...if you have a programme like Youth and Sports it is supposed to work through sport clubs and there are some limitations to that approach and you must be aware of these but they are not necessarily a weakness. You must then think about what additional approaches would be necessary at the population level'.

They also discussed a specific problem of sports clubs; 'sports clubs provide only a single choice or dose of physical activity for teenagers and if it's the right one great...some schools may provide lots of different doses of little choices to see which one they like...in the club, you've got to commit to one and the thinking is you commit to one and then you'll stay with that one for a long time - that's a weakness – a limitation of the sports clubs'.

The projects reported that the goals of sports clubs can be a major challenge; '...the clubs are not really nowadays that interested in the general health issues for young people they're actually interested in succeeding from what I can see and they're not interested in government or state money ... this is hindering them from their own

goals they don't want to be steered into something – they want their own independence'. The Swedish project reported that sports clubs had a lot of money from the lottery, but it ended after 10-15 years. Then they had the opportunity to get state money and they said 'yes of course' but they were not really interested in the goals. They reported that this was an area for further investigation; 'In the future I would like to conduct evaluation of specific sports organisations and the cooperation with schools'. The Swiss project reported that clubs are more interested in talent identification; '...if the clubs just want to find the talent that can give them the best players in their team then they're not going to listen too much to what we tell them about children's development'.

The Spanish project, agreed with this and reported that sports clubs may not be able to accommodate the least physically adept, who may be the individuals who stand to benefit the most; 'Not all physical activity groups integrate well with children of low fitness or sport-technical level'.

Case Study – Handshake with Sports The Swedish project recognised that potential impact can depend on the size of the club a project is working with; 'I think there is a big difference between different sports organisations of different sizes... where you've got a sports organisation with employed people working there competing on a high level, they are very much on [recruitment] ...the smallest clubs [and sports] got more benefits from the Handshake activity than the big clubs who were already well known and had the contacts

The Swedish project identified a potential conflict between their project and schools, with the programme taking away from learning time in the classroom (see **Reach, Impact and Drop out**). The Finish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, recognised the importance of engaging parents and felt the school setting was an ideal way to do this; 'There is the opportunity for schools to have parents evenings in physical activity or active evenings together with children'.

Guided reflections

Sports clubs are popular and some projects take steps to engender positive attitudes towards them in early life. However, there can be internal problems with clubs such as male dominance, a lack of continuity and little openness to cooperation with schools. Further, it may be that clubs will not join official federations and subscribe to their goals in order to retain their freedom.

Guidance point 21; if working with sports clubs act to encourage buy in to your projects aim and objectives. Understand that the interests and objectives of sports clubs may differ to your own.

Working through schools has benefits such as selecting at the level of the teacher and perhaps reaching more children and adolescents (see **Reach, Impact and**

Dropout) but there is the chance for conflict with the project competing for time with other classroom activities.

Guidance point 22; if working in schools remember to give consideration to how much school and classroom time your project can reasonably ask for.

Parents and Teachers

The involvement of parents and teachers in HEPA projects

'Teacher is the key person' (Jukka Karvinen, Finland).

The Swedish project, *Handshake with Sport*, considered it a challenge to involve teachers and foster a positive attitude towards the project and the German project, *Kampagne Kinderturnen*, stated that 'to motivate teachers is very important'. They reported that it is a challenge to 'inspire teachers as they take the decision to take part'. The Finish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, felt that it was important to 'help teachers and make it easy'. They learned that they could motivate teachers to join the campaign by giving them good tools and materials, making their job easier, inspiring the children to be active, using short term prizes e.g. "trip of the day" and using the positive effect of previous campaigns.

The Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, reported that 'the number of teachers that took part [in the new pilot for 5-10 year olds]' is one of the best things about their project.

'If I could do it again I would address parents. Parents must be involved' (Narcis Gusi, Spain)

The Dutch project, *Beweegkriebels*, was praised by the Swedish participants for its involvement of the parents 'to get the children active'; 'There are lots of special workshops like information evenings for parents to make them initially aware but also to give them tips and tricks for how they can work...the trainers they can also organise workshops for parents'. The Finish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, reported that their project was intended as a message to both parents and teachers; '[The project] is a message to the parents about the importance of daily physical activity... and helps the parents and the teachers to follow the physical activity of the children. It is supposed to influence on teachers and parents'.

Case Study – Move with Us The Spanish project said it was important to involve the parents in their project as it was these parents that had to transport the children to take part in the programme; 'The main obstacle for the campaign was finding a way to coordinate the daily schedule of parents and children and the local sport professionals'. 'We are very focused on the classical point of view, the user, but not on what are probably the most important people to promote physical activity in children, the parents...we depend a lot on the parents. We could convince the children, but the parents can't pick them up because of their schedule'. 'The attitude and willingness of parents to bring their child to sport facilities (formal or informal) are major determinants for promoting the attendance of child to physical activity programmes...to promote this willingness to cooperate in our HEPA project was a key objective'.

The representative from Spain felt that they had 'reasonable involvement from parents' with their project. This was achieved by including the parent for the first visit, explaining the programme and outlining the different health and social outcomes. Parents were included for 2 more visits at 3 and 8 months and the project was always open to receive and answer questions, but the time requirements for them were kept low.

The Finnish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, feel that HEPA projects are an opportunity for positive contact with parents and teachers and they can do more with them in the future. The Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, stated that a positive health message could be an effective way of winning parent and teacher support; 'Show parents and teachers that a multi-sportive training and a motoric development in many directions using variety and all sorts of movements is very important and helps in later life'. However, the Swiss project reported that they had learned it was 'difficult to reach the parents'. This point was reiterated by the Finish project; 'it is a challenge to get the message to parents'. One potential solution they had identified was the use of wide media cooperation and a booklet for parents.

Guided reflections

The importance of working through teachers has already been discussed as it addresses to some extent any selection bias (see **Reach, Impact and Dropout**). The challenge is to engage and motivate teachers and this can be done early in the project by involving them in design of the programme and programme tools (see **Design and Development** and **Resources and Tools**). It is important to empower teachers as projects need their voluntary support (see **Ways of Working**).

The parents should also be addressed as they have been reported as the most important people to promote physical activity to children and adolescents.

Guidance point 23; the message of your HEPA project should be addressed to parents and teachers, with their role in the mechanism of delivery clearly defined.

Instructors and Implementers

The role of instructors and implementers in a HEPA project

'The most important delivery method was using and working with the people in the field. The professionals, working with the children, were the ones who knew the importance of the intervention' (Peter Barendse, The Netherlands).

The instructors and implementers of a HEPA project are those workers 'on the ground' who run the programme. The Spanish project, *Move with Us*, felt it was important to understand the requirements of their implementers; 'detect the needs of sports professionals'. They reported that these needs may differ from the expectations of government; 'Developers do not always consult with implementers so we have to reach a consensus from the top to bottom ...we have to permeate or assist. If a top politician says you have to do this, they say no. You have to talk to both and listen. You have to combine developers and implementers'. This touches on the centralised versus the devolved approach debate (see **Ways of working**) and getting the project developers to communicate and interact with the implementers early (see **Design and Development**).

Case Study – Youth and Sports The Swiss project discussed supervising what the instructors are actually doing in the programme asking 'how much should you prescribe and control what instructors do when they work with children?' The solution was considered to be getting some structured education underway. They felt it was a strength that they had input into the curriculum; 'because the trainers courses are centralised in Magglingen we have some control over what's being taught to the instructors...there's elements in there about children's characteristics and how they develop and I think it's important to get that through to the trainers and instructors and I think perhaps if they were just doing it themselves many of them wouldn't include things like that [and may just focus on skills]- it's a very broad curriculum'.

There is structured support for the instructors; 'Youth and Sports instructors are in charge of the training sessions. Their personalities and their respect in dealing with the children under their responsibility make up the attractiveness of the offers. The Youth and Sports co-ordinators counsel and support the instructors, also in questions of their own training and continuing education, and co-ordinate as well as supervise the course offers for the children'.

With this input they felt confident about giving responsibility to the trainers; 'I think the aim of the training structure has to be to empower the instructors and carers and if they are empowered I think we can let them go and let them do - sometimes we check with questionnaires or some sort of evaluation how they get on'.

The Dutch project, *Beweegkriebels*, felt they could achieve greater reach by training trainers rather than directly training instructors, a form of cascade model; 'NISB cannot train all people involved – NISB chose to work through intermediaries and to train trainers'. Further, while Switzerland can't control whether the instructors got the

message or not, the Netherlands doesn't want to – 'we want to give them the idea that they are creative enough to make what they want out of what they learnt'. '...we see the people we work with as the professionals in child day-care centres... and we aim that they transfer all the creativity and material to their situation so if they work with diverse groups or low SES groups we expect they can make that transition'.

Specifically they 'train professionals to do more with movement and physical activities through playing. This way they can give young children more and improved possibilities to explore, to move and to be physically active during the day. In this way play can form an important role in helping young children learn an active lifestyle'.

The Swedish project, *Handshake with Sport*, said that moving forward they would like to introduce formal training for their senior implementers; 'In the future I would like to support training for the programme leaders'.

Guided reflections

Instructors and implementers are the medium of delivery for your project. In a cascade model like *Beweegkriebels*, they are also the primary target beneficiaries. Providing support and help, not policing, can help to build mutual trust and a sense of responsibility.

Guidance point 24; involve the delivery groups (instructors and implementers) early and facilitate communication and their collaboration with project development. Understand their competing needs and the ways of supporting your project's instructors and implementers.

Collaboration

Working with your partners in a HEPA programme

'Involve friends and critical partners, especially those with political influence' (Christoph Nuetzi, Switzerland).

The workshop participants identified aspects of the other projects that were attractive and felt that cross boarder collaborations could be beneficial. For example, the Swiss project liked the motoric testing in the German project and stated a desire for cooperation in the future. The German project, *Kampagne Kinderturnen*, also felt they had learned the importance of searching for international partners and the Finish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, stated a desire to 'know what we can do with other countries and how we can use materials together'.

The Dutch project, *Beweegkriebels*, took the view that they could strengthen their intervention by joining with others; '...it is a little bit a stand alone intervention. There are many interventions in primary schools, not so many starting from 0 and 6, but there are some things and sometimes we act as if *Beweegkriebels* is the centre of the world and everything has to fit with it but it would be interesting [to combine with

them]'. It is a future challenge to 'combine Beweegkriebels with other interventions to get sportive day arrangements...municipalities have to have centres for youth and families now, and this is a new option for cooperation...other health promoting institutes are interested to join Beweegkriebels; food, other health promotion, etc'.

The project was praised by the workshop participants for looking around and taking opportunities; 'what I like about Beweegkriebels is that they can look at what's around, what policies are coming up, what other teams are doing in similar areas, and then try to link into those opportunities'. The Finnish project reported that collaboration is particularly pertinent to projects with smaller teams; 'because we are a small organisation we have to get partners...strong enough partners to support the implementation'.

The Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, felt that collaboration could help them reach more difficult target groups and reported a desire to 'include other agents in addition to sports clubs in order to attend more to the inactive'. They were particularly impressed with the Spanish project's attention to those with low self-esteem and the obese (see **Target Groups**). They reported a 'lack of coordination between sports (sports clubs) and health organisations (physical activity and the inactive)' and the need for greater cooperation with other organisations as an important project learning. They also felt that the huge number and diversity of collaborators and stakeholders was an obstacle to implementing change. The 'sheer size of the programme induces a lot of inertia at an operational level' and decisions can take 2-3 years to be implemented as change for children. Advocacy of education and evaluation is considered a solution to this but they knew that integrating a new system in an existing sports programme or system is a challenge.

The German project 'found it hard to get external partners' and in the future wished for 'more participation with regional campaigns'. However, they did report successful collaboration with existing partners, based on a strong internal communication strategy (see **Communication**).

The Spanish project, *Move with Us*, 'would advise other projects to work with experts. Those with experience in practice not theory or research'. The Swedish project, *Handshake with Sport*, learned that they should implement their project together with experts and professionals with a wide base of experiences; 'it's very important to work on the intervention together with different kinds of people with different kinds of backgrounds and with different kinds of experiences'.

Guided reflections

Partnerships are important for small teams and the opportunity for international collaboration has been recognised, though currently lacking. However, as the Swiss project found, there appears to be a critical mass for collaborators after which 'operational inertia' can be a challenge.

There are issues with the whole phase of getting stakeholders on board; how do you brief and warm them up? How do you link to regional associations and your clubs

and your networks? How do you make sure that you have consensus between developers, the people developing the campaign and those implementing it? How do you make sure you've got them all on board?

Guidance point 25; communication strategies can be key to securing and maintaining effective partnerships. Choose partnerships that will be mutually beneficial.

Competition

Competition to and competitors of a HEPA project

'You need to build alliances not competitors' (Narcis Gusi, Spain).

As well as potential collaborators and partners, there may be competition for HEPA projects. The Spanish project, *Move with Us*, reported that there were 'a lot of competitors within the region and Government' due to childhood obesity being such a major issue. The main source of this competition was from the nutrition and exercise sectors. They also reported that there was competition for the attention of parents, as they are getting messages from so many directions, including paediatricians, supervisors at school and the mass media.

Case study – Move with Us The Spanish project discussed the idea of competition and conflict of interest; 'you are between the government and the system; the politicians and the big companies all want to take a part, and they are competing. So it is rather difficult to make a big programme because there are a lot of people who are facing you...there are a lot of people who want to pick something up, to get a piece of the cake...it is difficult to make the programme because you have to fight with a lot of people who are presenting proposals'.

'There are partners that want to help us but the government and politicians say no. Because they are worried about specific sector conflict of interest and this being visible in the media'. This is an issue for any campaign trying to get private sector money, but also talking to the government about trying to get their money.

Even within the same sector, the German project, *Kampagne Kinderturnen*, reported 'competition between sports federations'. They felt that this was a result of the amounts of money available, particularly to the big federations of popular sports such as football. This was recognised as a challenge to the project.

Guided Reflections

The projects are working in a competitive market place and while it is unclear if market saturation has been reached there are already many messages and initiatives out there. There are the issues of government and private sector conflict of interest

(see **Funding and Finance**), competition between government departments, sports federations and different sectors of the health system. All these are a potential block to projects and profitable partnerships.

Guidance point 26; employ a strategy to make sure your project and message will be seen and heard above the competition.

Core Team and Structure

The core team of a HEPA project and its structure

As previously discussed, the Finnish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, reported that their small team meant they needed external partners (see **Collaboration**) yet still they were not able to do everything they had planned; 'Programmes for after the three weeks were planned, but not implemented due to limited staff'. The representative reported that he used to be able to visit schools more in the past during the campaign phase, but there is little time for that now as there was 'too much concentrated in the three weeks'.

The Dutch project, *Beweegkriebels*, echoed this sentiment; 'A small but good and enthusiastic team at NISB is working on Beweegkriebels but team members cannot do all the work'. For this reason they had enlarged their team in 2009. On having a small united team they reported; 'The motivation of the members was a strength and personal motivation is very important but the disadvantage of having a core team, which is highly motivated, is that we were not able to easily involve other people'.

The German project, *Kampagne Kinderturnen*, considered their large network and infrastructure a positive. However, there was still a core team which was praised by the workshop participants for 'showing the importance of self-motivation' and being able to initiate the use of the existing infrastructure. The German representative commented that 'you should stay open-minded in your core team'.

Guided Reflections

Small teams may be good way to start a HEPA project as they can stay focused and motivated. However, these small teams may need partners to manage the workload and implementation (see **Collaboration**). Further, while the team unity may be good, it can also be difficult to work with external partners if the team becomes too insular.

Guidance point 27; use small teams early on to initiate larger networks, and always keep an open mind with respect to involving external partners and enlarging the team to manage increasing workload.

Communication

Communication in a HEPA project

The participant projects discussed the different aspects of communication they felt were relevant to the successful running of a HEPA project. The Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, talked about the challenge of informing the different target groups and involved partners about the developmental steps of the programme. Their solution was to prepare this information and make it part of the programme plan as well as using testimonials. They felt that 'communication to various partners should be regular, but there is not enough time to do that' and it was an important project learning that they had to 'plan how to inform target groups in the future'.

The Swedish project, *Handshake with Sport*, agreed with this and would advise future projects to 'listen to professionals, collaborate, be structured and engage in early dialog with the target group'.

The Spanish project, *Move with Us*, reported success from talking regularly to the relevant government officials (see **Government and Politics**). The German project, *Kampagne Kinderturnen*, was able to motivate members of their board to promote the project to regional associations and consider this a key to success. They found that communication was key to this; 'we talked to our regional associates many, many times in order to bring them on our side; in order to make the next steps together and run the campaign as one big thing which is our baby. Fortunately this worked and together we realised a good campaign'.

Case Study – Kampagne Kinderturnen The German project reported good communication strategies; 'I think it is a strength of our campaign that we have many ,and I think quite good, internal publications, and we also have publications of our partners'. In addition, they had a clear understanding of how they would like to build on this citing 'an external publication possibility, to get the information and throw it nationwide' as well as a desire for continued TV advertisements.

They reported that they have a campaign with a national newspaper but again would like to see it 'published in a continuing way'. They feel they reach the members inside their association very well and would like to make these improvements to their communications so that in the future they would be able to reach those outside.

The Finnish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, picked up this theme of continued dialogue; 'The project has opened the doors to the schools and to more than 10 000 teachers. This has made Nuori Suomi more known and made possible an ongoing communication with the teachers (internet-pages, an internet-newspaper, a printed newspaper, reports)'. The idea of communicating with teachers was also identified by the Swiss project as very important and they would 'advise other projects to communicate with schools as directly as possible'.

Guided Reflections

There seems a need for communication to both the project target groups and the involved partners, and the medium for each may be different. Use of media and internet is important for target groups, while publications may work best for project

partners. A combination of these may be most effective when communicating with teachers and all communication should be regular and ongoing. As with reach, it may be that communication is good to those already involved and novel strategies are required to communicate with those 'outside'.

On a practical note, although they had a small team (see **Core Team and Structure**) the Finnish project felt it necessary to have a dedicated communication officer; 'There is a contact person [on the team of 5], who takes care of outer communication and things that have to do with the co-operative partners'.

Guidance point 28; have clear communication strategies for target groups, implementers, teachers, and involved partners, with an understanding of the best medium for each.

The Internet

Applications for the internet for a HEPA project

The Finnish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe's*, use of the internet to communicate with teachers (see **Communication**) was an idea highlighted by the Swedish project, *Handshake with Sports*. They saw this medium as having huge potential to communicate their message to the target groups due to its popularity; 'In Sweden every week 1.5 million children are on a special website and maybe we could use that as a way of communicating with them'.

Case Study – Sports Adventure around the Globe The Finish project reported they had been using the internet for 8 years, which was initially considered risky; 'We took a huge risk to pick up a new media, the internet, in 2001. We knew teachers were not able to use the internet very well and the machines were old fashioned in schools'. However this had proved to be particularly successful and a good way of reaching teachers and schools; 'We make a lot of tools with the internet...the web adventure gives a real feeling of adventure and supports school work in many ways'.

Case Study – Youth and Sports The Swiss project reported that video clips had been well viewed on their website; 'video clips are available at the Youth and Sports website but not only there...we are co-operating with a national prevention programme that uses the website and it's about smoking and sexuality and all these things that adolescents are very interested in...we first had a section on physical activity then we did a little research and found out that many of the youngsters on the website are actually very interested in sports as well so we are linking this to the Youth and Sport and we're actually using the information technology there to provide access and information that maybe these people wouldn't get otherwise'.

Guided Reflections

HEPA projects may need to embrace some of the technologies that teenagers use to improve target audience engagement. Web based resources can support schools and this may be a suitable response to the problem of projects conflicting with other classroom aims, and make it easier to use the school as an appropriate setting for projects (see **Reach, Impact and Dropout**). It also motivates and supports the teachers, a common challenge for projects (see **Parents and Teachers**). In addition, video clips on internet may be a way to improve reach to new target groups (see **Reach, Impact and Dropout**), and collaboration with other health sectors (see **Ways of Working**).

Guidance point 29; the popularity of the internet amongst children and adolescents makes it a key medium for communication and project delivery. Ensure your project has this capability and access to the necessary expertise.

Guidance point 30; use the internet to communicate with and support teachers. Web based resources can be used to compliment other classroom activities.

Media

The relationship between a HEPA project and the media

The Spanish project, *Move with Us*, discussed the use of mass media as both necessary for a project's sustainability and the best way to reach their target groups; 'Mass media is important for international recognition and this is crucial in order to ask for more money to continue'. The German project, *Kampagne Kinderturnen*, reported that use of television was a strength of their campaign; 'We are very proud to have big media partners, like the second German television channel'. The Finnish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, felt their campaign was an opportunity to use the internet and create 'good medias; www-magazine, www-pages, databank of exercise tasks, www-pages on good ideas'.

Case Study – Sports Adventure around the Globe The Finnish project reported that they had found 'media cooperation is a challenge'. Specifically the challenge was to 'have or to get enough publicity so that children have the feeling they are part of something big and important'. They did not succeed in negotiations with the biggest media houses...the Finnish Broadcasting Corporation, commercial channels and radio – 'we needed to educate...that was a weakness'.

However, they did report that 'media have been used a lot: radio (phone calls to the schools), information on TV and an advertising competition on TV (2007), the local newspapers write hundreds of articles during the campaign' to successfully serve their aims. They would give the following advice to other projects; 'It is important to have well planned marketing of the campaign, right timing, all channels and inspiring messages'.

On the theme of gaining positive media cooperation the Spanish representative reported that with their project they had been able to get programmes on TV once a week with no problems. They felt the key was to address the newspapers and TV directly with the message of childhood obesity.

Guided reflections

Mass media may be critical to a project in terms of reaching the target audience and when it comes to applying for further funding. However, projects have sometimes found it a challenge to gain this exposure and a well planned marketing strategy with relevant messages would be advised.

Guidance point 31; to gain media exposure choose a message that will interest the big media partners.

Later on

As a HEPA project matures

Perception

The external and internal perception of a HEPA project

As discussed in **Mega Events**, in the run up to international tournaments and competitions there may be increased awareness of physical activity in the population and some HEPA projects have tried to take advantage of this.

The Finish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, was praised by the workshop participants for 'the use of an event type campaign to assimilate the population' and normalise physical activity in the population and beneficiaries. They reported that 'states and schools have confidence in our organisation' and this helped them to achieve their aims.

Case Study – Youth and Sports The Swiss project felt that confidence in their organisation was important. They thought that they had received additional funding as 'the project itself is so well established and so well accepted that everybody just thought it was a great thing...I've been talking to some members of parliament and they said they were surprised to see that within the parliament as soon as it was about Youth and Sports there was no more argument...they grew up with it, we don't know a world without Youth and Sports'. They would advise other projects to 'be active in lobbying for additional resources, using familiarity with the programme, involving people as ambassadors, using HEPA-related advocacy material and personal contacts as well as official channels such as political structures and professional associations'.

However, the Swiss project felt their acceptance was not necessarily all positive; 'Everybody knows it's so good that nobody really cares about what it is actually doing'. An example was when health lobbyists argued for a programme to fight obesity, but parliament gave the 5 million Swiss Francs to Youth and Sports 'even though it had nothing to do with the original argument'. They felt they were at risk of petrification, due to the fact that 'many players are happy with the system; regardless of whether it achieves any objectives at a population level'. There is a feeling that 'all PA promotion in children and adolescents is taken care of'. The size of the project was mistaken for success and made it forget its limitations. Good leadership and diplomacy, as well as evaluation are considered a solution to this.

The German project, *Kampagne Kinderturnen*, felt there was 'the opportunity to be idols for a healthy lifestyle...we are able to promote the campaign by all our trainers and coaches who can, and should, be idols for a healthy lifestyle...they are multipliers of our campaign aims – to show that "Kinderturnen" is the fundamental and basic physical education (maybe for all other sports activities)'. Like Switzerland, they also reported a strength in that they had 'very big internal acceptance in [their] associations, and so the motivation to run the campaign is very well in regional

associations, and down to the gymnastics clubs'. However, they still felt that they were lacking external acceptance.

The Dutch project, *Beweegkriebels*, stated that once they gained positive recognition, it was far easier to find paying customers and spread their project; 'NISB was able to develop and experiment in the first stages of Beweegkriebels. Now it is a rather recognised programme and organisations and participants are ready to pay themselves it is easier to disseminate and spread it'.

Guided Reflections

A positive perception or confidence in the project will help with funding applications and the spreading and growth of the project. In large national programmes which are assimilated into society and very well accepted, good leadership may be vital to prevent project stagnation and the loss of objectives.

Guidance point 32; be aware of the internal and external perception of your project and the opportunities and risks associated.

Change

How does a HEPA project evolve and change?

The Swiss representatives were impressed with the Finish project and reflected that 'small projects have more flexibility to change, therefore this may be the way forward for national campaigns'. This was in response to the perceived inertia and bureaucracy associated with a large national project (see **Collaboration**). One of the changes that they wished to be free to make was to refocus the objectives, but due to the size and general acceptance of the project's work this was difficult (see **Ways of working** and **Perception**).

They went on to say that for successful change in a big project like *Youth and Sports* there was a need for formative evaluation; 'if you have something like the Youth and Sports programme, which is so huge, you cannot really based on the assumption of where the development might go, change the direction of the entire programme, because it's going to take five years until it has changed...I think what we should really have is within our evaluation a sort of continuous series of pilot projects, trying to anticipate future needs and developments, trying to react to them, not by changing the project as a whole, but by running a pilot projects on a very localised and limited scale, and then based on the results of these pilot projects do the same with the development of the whole thing...that has not been so clear in the past'.

The Finish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, reported that a big challenge for them is to 'keep it the same and renew without changing the campaign too much'. They reported that in the past, 'every day we were on TV, on radio with discussion on varied physical activity of children [however] now it's more difficult because [their project] is not new any more – they [TV and radio] are not so interested. We have to think of something new every year...the media has to stay interested in us'. The

Spanish project, *Move with Us*, agreed with this point reporting that they have the challenge of being an 'already known project: needing innovations and events to reach the (international) media'.

Guided reflections

It seems that change may be necessary to keep the project objectives relevant (see **Ways of working**) and to adapt to lessons learned. The projects reported a sense that smaller projects could be more flexible, and that big national projects could benefit from containing many smaller parts that could take different directions and target different audiences, styling these smaller parts as pilots with built in formative evaluation (see **Monitoring and Evaluation**).

Guidance point 33; projects that see the need for change but feel too big or established to implement this could find greater flexibility from launching small pilot projects to target different audiences and sub groups in different ways. Formative evaluation may show what initiatives are worth expanding to the whole project.

There was also a reported need for change to keep media interest and stay in the public eye without losing the successful components of a HEPA project, and this may relate back to the communication strategy of the project (see **Communication**).

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of a HEPA project

All projects agreed on the importance of having the ability to monitor and evolve. The German project, *Kampagne Kinderturnen*, reported that one of the key learning experiences of running their project was discovering the importance of monitoring and 'the opportunity to evaluate the data of a huge number of participants'. 'It's a strength to have 250,000 participants and 34,000 evaluated participants, and it's a strength to have respected researchers but it's a weakness to have too many different testers because evaluation is very complicated'. They learned that they must evaluate the effectiveness and that evaluation results can be used to renew the campaign.

The Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, discussed one of the challenges to monitoring; 'I think to some extent the fact that you work with volunteers also shapes the way you're doing quality control. You can't police them otherwise they just give up so the approach actually that is being taken is that when evaluation is done we ask the instructors how they feel, what has been actually transmitted to them during their training and whether they think this is useful in the actual work they are doing with youth...it's not the idea of going there and patrolling them or judging ourselves whether they are doing it right'.

The Finnish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, also felt that their project was an opportunity to create 'good registers' and post and email databanks for monitoring their project. However, they stated that in the future they would 'move the monitoring'. They learned that 'it's very important you analyse your project during the process; don't wait until the intervention is over to evaluate it. You have to evaluate it on the whole journey. To change; you have to be positive about the possibilities of change'.

This point was also made by the Swedish project, *Handshake with Sports*, who stated that 'next time they would want to include monitoring and evaluation from the beginning'. They stated that 'from the other projects we have learnt the importance of good monitoring and of being able to change the way of working and take new directions'. One of the problems was that some evaluation was conducted but not always used; '...we didn't look at the evaluation so we started the next period before we knew the results'.

They reported problems with getting funding for evaluation; 'we applied for funds for evaluation and instead of deciding on just a few studies to look into effects they distributed the money so we get very little money for each study...there was no really good study. There is a lack of effects studies - where you really see what the impact is when it comes to the children. We never go into the physical activity [in our evaluation studies] because there is so little money'.

Case Study – Move with Us The Spanish project found positive outcomes from committing resources to evaluation; 'In the end we have to evaluate the process, and few programmes handle this lack of process evaluation...25-30% of our budget is for assessment...in my region we have the unique programme that has its own staff for evaluation – evaluation is positive because you could be in the mass media more times, because you have results'.

The Spanish project completed an inventory of local sports programmes willingness to cooperate with evaluation and monitoring to help with this process.

The Swiss project, *Youth and Sports*, felt there was an opportunity to prove the high quality of the project through evaluation. They stated that 'it is important to keep flexible to adapt to changing circumstances or to improve generally. For example, establish an evaluation culture, or pilot projects to be introduced regularly to test out possible changes with built in evaluation'. However, they reported that there may be some resistance to monitoring; everybody wants to keep the programme running because they're relying on it but they don't really ask themselves are we actually achieving what we want to do or are we just keeping [it] going. Everybody wants to keep [it] going there's no question about that but hardly anyone ever asks is the machine doing what it is supposed to do'.

Developing this point they said; 'the problem, the challenge, for the management, is if we get new information from evaluation, how can we change the programme so that we achieve the goals, as stated everyone who is running this is depending on the

money and gains and if we change too much then we have opposition but if we don't change it we can't achieve our goals'.

However, they did report that the situation appeared to be changing for the better; 'There has been no evaluation for more than 30 years and looking at it now this definitely is a weakness. There was no perceived need for evaluation because people knew it was good, it was pure ideology, but I would put as a plus that there have been several evaluation studies recently...a few things have been done recently and there should be more. I wouldn't see it entirely negatively as there have been positive developments'.

Case Study – Sports Adventure around the Globe The Finnish project benefitted from well structured process evaluation, involving the teachers and target groups; 'I think we have a very important system, we have questionnaires every year with the participants and teachers and children...we feedback information and then conclude for the next time. In evaluation we always have a checkpoint: have we planned too many changes or important ones and ask the teachers in advance about the changes. And we also have proper reports from different areas of the campaign every year'. However, they felt a weakness was a lack of outcome evaluation; 'What we don't have is proper national research. It's a big failure for us because we don't know the amount of the physical activity of the children. We know about a lot of popular sports clubs and physical education in schools, but nothing about the total amount of physical activity'. They have 180,000 physical activity diaries so they have the data, but it is not analysed; 'we don't have money for researchers or to manage the information'.

The Spanish representative felt that an international watchdog that could come from another country and say "that project is okay or not okay" would help. The Swiss representative reported an 'Opportunity for international studies - within our country they have no more contrast - the project is everywhere and if you went to another country you could basically use the material, the curriculum that has been developed elsewhere and run it within a region; you can have quasi experimental design with a control region'.

Guided Reflections

Project monitoring was considered to be positive as it allows projects to see and direct the way that they may need to change (see **Change**). There was strong feeling that monitoring and evaluation should be planned and conducted from the beginning of the programme for effective results. Further, process evaluation may be a positive way to engage and motivate project volunteers as it shows a kind of pastoral support (see **Ways of working** and **Instructors and Implementers**). However, one of the potential challenges to monitoring is when parties are too invested and cannot risk negative evaluation results. For this reason an old programme with self-evaluation may lead to problems.

Guidance point 34; understand the reasons for and potential outcomes of different forms of monitoring and evaluation and be prepared to plan these in from the very beginning.

It may be a challenge to find funding and resources to conduct monitoring and evaluation, or to find the appropriate professionals to carry out this work. However, positive results are an opportunity to highlight successes and this may be a virtuous circle that leads to increased media exposure, improved perceptions and increased likelihood of further funding (see **Media** and **Perception**).

Guidance point 35; sell the value of evaluation to funders based on the knowledge generation and skills training of project workers and implementers, as well as the media exposure and positive perceptions evaluation results can generate. Involve implementers and teachers in ongoing project development using evaluation results.

Evaluation, Policy and Politics

The relationship between government and politics and evaluation of a HEPA project

The Spanish project, *Move with Us*, reported that 'long term evaluation of outcomes is a problem because politicians would like to show the results in less than three years; 'there are politicians who give money but they need to show something before the next phase. The politicians will ask you "when can you show results?" when you are preparing it. Could you give me results in one year? Yes = money, no = no money'.

The Finish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, reported that with Government money came the need to provide evaluation; 'Of course now the government give us also money they want to know the evaluation results, and now it's important that we have this system that can give them report every year'. However, the Dutch project, *Beweegkriebels*, viewed this differently and felt that political will was creating opportunities to conduct impact evaluation; 'The new policy document supporting effectiveness studies is an opportunity'.

Guided Reflections

There may be pressures for early impact evaluation results from Government and this can be an extra burden that a HEPA project does not need. However, it is possible that this could be turned into an opportunity to justify effects studies.

Sustainability

Sustainability and legacy of a HEPA project

The challenge of allocating funding for the longer term, and the associated difficulties such as planning evaluation and attracting the best professionals, has already been

discussed (see **Funding and Finance** and **Monitoring and Evaluation**). This section focuses on the different approaches to sustaining a HEPA programme.

Case Study – Handshake with Sport The Swedish project was praised at the workshop for staying positive and this was credited with keeping the project going; 'if you want to continue with a programme it's also important to stay optimistic and put emphasis on the positive things...of course it's important to be realistic and to hear a criticism but [you must] also have the courage to go on with positive sides of things'.

The project was able to identify the need to support the training of the leaders in sports associations for better sustainability. They stated that they 'would work a kind of training component into the campaign next time'.

The Dutch project, *Beweegkriebels*, did conduct training in their project but identified a challenge to ownership and protection of quality; 'we train people and then after some years we don't know exactly who is working with it and it is not a protected concept so it also has implications for us to monitor the quality...NISB wishes to closely monitor the quality and is at present developing a quality sign for organisations and institutes making use of our interventions. Sustainability is a key issue in the quality sign'. It is considered a future challenge for the project to protect the concept and quality of the intervention'. As discussed earlier (see **Media**) the Spanish project, *Move with Us*, said that mass media was needed in order to ask for more money to continue and sustain their project.

The Finish project, *Sports Adventure around the Globe*, reported that a good communication strategy had made ongoing communication with teachers possible, and this had resulted in a sustained and ongoing impact.

Guided Reflections

The projects referred to two different kinds of sustainability. On the one hand, the ability to keep the project alive, to keep it going and become a continuous entity. As previously discussed, a project may be more likely to be refunded if it has good media exposure and good perception within the population and government. On the other hand a project may wish to have lasting effects after completion through training professionals and educating target groups. By training the project implementers it may be possible to leave skills in the community after the project has gone. Monitoring of this is a challenge, to which the solution may be a quality sign.

Guidance point 36; if sustainability is an objective of a HEPA project be clear about the kind of sustainability that is desired and how this may be achieved. Ongoing communication with targets or implementers may be important.

6. Guidance Points

For new projects

Understanding and combining multiple factors of need may strengthen the case for your HEPA project (Guidance point 1).

A project that responds to and engages cultural and social needs may find support more easily (Guidance point 2).

Initially apply for a smaller grant to plan and pilot the study, before rolling it out full scale. This may be more likely to be approved, and come with less pressure to show instant results while also allow for learning and knowledge and skills generation within you team that will benefit the full scale roll-out of the project (Guidance point 3).

Communicate with government, understand the political schedule and align your project aims where possible. Think about the best time to make proposals and funding bids (Guidance point 5).

Understand the differences and challenges in gaining funding from either government or industry, and select according to your project needs and capabilities. Be able to make an appropriate and strong proposal (Guidance point 6).

When deciding on your project approach consider the relative reach and impact of school and sports club settings. Also, understand the possible competing interests and objectives of the two settings (Guidance point 11).

Involving target beneficiaries and implementers in designing and developing tools and resources may lead to better products that can engage and motivate participation in your project (Guidance point 19).

Involve the delivery groups (instructors and implementers) early and facilitate communication and their collaboration with project development. Understand their competing needs and the ways of supporting your project's instructors and implementers (Guidance point 24).

Use small teams early on to initiate larger networks, and always keep an open mind with respect to involving external partners and enlarging the team to manage increasing workload (Guidance point 27).

Understand the reasons for and potential outcomes of different forms of monitoring and evaluation and be prepared to plan these in from the very beginning (Guidance point 34).

For projects looking to change existing ways of working

Small pilot studies with built in formative evaluation and involving experts and the project implementers in design and development can benefit a HEPA project (Guidance point 4).

Assign money for the long term to allow for planned evaluation and for the recruitment of the best professionals (Guidance point 8).

Plan ahead for increasing capacity and ensure that the structure of your project is flexible enough to be able to add components in the event of success and further investment. This may require acceptance of adding personnel to the core team, of changing the ways of working to be appropriate to the increasing size of the target group or committing resources to the monitoring the number and standards of implementers and instructors (Guidance point 9).

Define your objectives well, and be prepared to be positive about continuing to reach active children and adolescents (Guidance point 12).

Be aware of all of your project outcomes such as skills training, experience gained and knowledge generation as these will benefit future projects and can be part of the funders' value for money (Guidance point 17).

Planning and implementing an exit strategy may be necessary for projects that take children out of their natural school or home environment (Guidance point 18).

Employ a strategy to make sure your project and message will be seen and heard above the competition (Guidance point 26).

Be aware of the internal and external perception of your project and the opportunities and risks associated (Guidance point 32).

Projects that see the need for change but feel too big or established to implement this could find greater flexibility from launching small pilot projects to target different audiences and sub groups in different ways. Formative evaluation may show what initiatives are worth expanding to the whole project (Guidance point 33).

Sell the value of evaluation to funders based on the knowledge generation and skills training of project workers and implementers, as well as the media exposure and positive perceptions evaluation results can generate. Involve implementers and teachers in ongoing project development using evaluation results (Guidance point 35).

If sustainability is an objective of a HEPA project be clear about the kind of sustainability that is desired and how this may be achieved. Ongoing communication with targets or implementers may be important (Guidance point 36).

General Principles for all projects

The collection and distribution of funds is very important to project intermediaries and should be well planned and executed (Guidance point 7).

Funding streams should be directed towards investigating the target groups and their behaviour. There is a need for the behavioural change models that this research can generate (Guidance point 10).

When working in sports clubs work hard to encourage participation and enjoyment in favour of performance and outcomes. When scheduling programmes consider the daily schedule and other commitments of children and adolescents (Guidance point 13).

Consider your implementers when deciding your delivery model. The more your project relies on volunteers, the more freedom you may want to give them (Guidance point 14).

Targeting all the domains of physical activity behaviour increases the potential for having a greater impact. Active travel and non-organised activities (i.e. play) are possible examples. Also, consider that physical activity is just one domain of a healthy lifestyle, and there are possibilities for partnerships with other sectors (Guidance point 15).

A short 2-4 week event with intensive media coverage and participation may be a good way to start a new project or inject life into an existing project. Incorporate engagement activities during the lead in (Guidance point 16).

When using a Mega Event alongside a HEPA project be aware of the raised profile and opportunities for government funding. However, also consider carefully the added burden of time pressure and the effect this may have on planning and preparation (Guidance point 20).

If working with sports clubs act to encourage buy in to your projects aim and objectives. Understand that the interests and objectives of sports clubs may differ to your own (Guidance point 21).

If working in schools remember to give consideration to how much school and classroom time your project can reasonably ask for (Guidance point 22).

The message of your HEPA project should be addressed to parents and teachers, with their role in the mechanism of delivery clearly defined (Guidance point 23).

Communication strategies can be key to securing and maintaining effective partnerships. Choose partnerships that will be mutually beneficial (Guidance point 25).

Have clear communication strategies for target groups, implementers, teachers, and involved partners, with an understanding of the best medium for each (Guidance point 28).

The popularity of the internet amongst children and adolescents makes it a key medium for communication and project delivery. Ensure your project has this capability and access to the necessary expertise (Guidance point 29).

Use the internet to communicate with and support teachers. Web based resources can be used to complement other classroom activities (Guidance point 30).

To gain media exposure choose a message that will interest the big media partners (Guidance point 31).

7. Strengths, Limitations and Next steps

The analysis process to produce this report was to some extent a pilot in itself. The project was commissioned to investigate if this sort of analysis method can be considered a viable way forward for the HEPA Children's Workgroup as they work towards their goals of increasing HEPA project documentation and the exchange of experiences related to the promotion of physical activity and sports in children and adolescents.

In the next section, we will report the strengths and limitations of such an approach, and give our research team recommendations for future work.

Strengths of the Analysis

One of the obvious strengths of this analysis method was the opportunity to interact and talk to the project experts face to face. This was a fantastic opportunity to conduct in depth qualitative research and interviewing that might be lost with other methods. The focus groups session allowed the researchers to find out why certain issues were salient, as well as what was salient about it, a known strength of this type of research (Morgan, 1988).

Further to this, spending the time in Orebro removed project workers from the distractions at home, and gave them a chance to get real perspective on their project.

"It was a good chance to reflect on your own project, and to step back and look at the bigger picture"

"It was novel to have the luxury of time to be able to think about your project"

"A new way of thinking about your project"

The workshop participants reported that they enjoyed the opportunity to interact and learn from each other in an atmosphere where they could be self-critical without fear of reprisal;

"I enjoyed the opportunity to ask [questions] and to be challenged by being asked"

They also felt that they had benefited from this experience and wanted to know how they could utilise what they had learned when they returned to their projects;

"How do we take what we learned back to the real world?"

The participants reserved special praise for the workshop venue;

"Super host! The workshop organisation and logistics were exceptional"

Another strength of this study was the diversity of the projects in term of size, approach and ways of working. This means that the lessons learned and experiences shared may be relevant to a large number of HEPA projects and project workers across Europe. This study was the first of its kind for HEPA projects targeting children and adolescents. The different age ranges targeted by the projects was also highlighted as a strength.

Participants reported positive feedback for the 'effective short discussions', 'the working atmosphere', 'the variety of sessions', 'the facilitation of participation', 'the opportunity for direct exchange' and 'the flexible structure of the working methods'.

When the results were presented to the HEPA Children's workgroup it was remarked that this method was able to 'open the black-box and translate the scientific literature'. The workshop participants praised the analysis for being able to 'go very close to the processes'.

Limitations of the Analysis

There are also some limitations to this analysis method. Due to the qualitative nature there is no metric of weighting the importance of the different learning points or way of telling the potential impact of applying the lessons learned. This was never the intention of the study.

All results were self-reported by the projects (and their representatives). While every effort was made to relax the participants and reassure them that there would be no recriminations or penalties, there is no way of telling if they were able to really tell the truth. Not only this, but the level of seniority of the representatives varied, and this would have impacted their knowledge of the inner workings and politics on one level, or what was really happening on the ground on another. While self-reported data from focus groups may be subject to certain limitations it is known to be an excellent method for developing a better understanding of more formal quantitative evaluation (Stewart et al., 2007) that the participants projects had independently undergone.

As highlighted in the project proposal, the geographic spread of the participant projects was restricted to North and South West Europe, with no representation from Eastern European countries. There was a clear selection sample bias here. Due to potential cultural differences this raises into question the relevance of the learnings to HEPA projects from Eastern and Southern European countries. Despite efforts to identify projects from these countries through the HEPA network and personal contacts, there was no project that could fulfil the selection criteria for analysis.

Further, without translation or translators this current method is restricted to English speakers. This is an important point for consideration.

Of the workshop itself, the participants reported that the time given to each presenter in session 1 was too short, and they felt challenged to prepare enough project material in English. They felt that some sessions 'were a bit too short as we had to break up when we still would have liked to say a few things'.

Next Steps

The next step is to disseminate the findings from this study to HEPA projects and workers focussing on children and adolescents. It has been suggested that by collecting further empirical findings to make the sample fully representative, a form of Delphi method may be employed using expert opinion and feedback to derive a blueprint for HEPA promotion in children and adolescents.

Recommendations

It is our recommendation as the analysis team that this study should be repeated with more projects around Europe. We feel that between 4 and 12 projects is the ideal number for a successful and suitably in depth workshop and report. Based on participant feedback we would recommend extending the workshop by half a day to 3 days to allow longer for presentations and more for complete discussions.

We recommend that strong efforts be made to sample from Southern and Eastern Europe. A data bank of all HEPA projects from all regions is surely the first step to achieving this. A significant challenge at this stage will be translation of material from national languages into one language for the workshop. English was appropriate for the participant projects in this investigation but this may not always be the case. We feel this area should be given much consideration.

8. Conclusions

This report is a response to the need for more detailed information on the different national approaches to promotion of physical activity and sport in children and adolescents in countries of the WHO European region. We have collected and interpreted the experience and learning of HEPA promoters from a selection of European projects. A full list of Guidance points derived from this data can be found in **Section 7. Guidance Points**.

The participant projects were drawn from culturally diverse regions and represent a wide range of approaches and settings. We therefore feel that the Guidance points we have suggested will be appropriate to a large European audience.

The principal results from our analysis suggest that the following are important areas for HEPA projects to consider;

Project planning and development; all projects reported that enough time should be allocated to project planning and development. Ideally, a pilot project with built in formative evaluation should be used to direct a full scale HEPA project.

Parents and teachers; both are crucial to the delivery and implementation of a HEPA project. They should be involved in the development of the project and considered an intermediate target audience as to reach children and adolescents it is often crucial to reach, engage and motivate the parents and teachers.

The Event model; running a shorter 2-4 week event type project gives flexibility and the opportunity to tailor approaches to the different target audiences. This can be considered a way to generate media coverage and raise public awareness, to launch a new project or invigorate an existing one. The Event model has been cited as a possible way to evolve and adapt a large national project, targeting new sub-groups without losing the positive aspects.

Reaching the active; HEPA projects might be deemed to have failed if they only reach those who are already active. However, given the documented drop out rates and decline in physical activity in children and adolescents with age, continuing to reach the active should be considered a success. To compliment this it may be that different and tailored approaches are needed to reach the inactive.

Drop out; it is possible that the drop out from sport observed in adolescents may be in part due to the pressures and commitments required from sports and sports clubs. Finding suitable alternative activities to competitive sport such as active travel and non-organised sports, and working with sports clubs to foster participation are possible solutions.

The Internet; the internet is emerging as an important tool for HEPA projects. It is a way of communicating with and supporting implementers such as teachers. It is also

a medium familiar to many in the target audiences and may be a good way to reach and engage them.

Project Setting; The primary settings for HEPA projects are schools and sports clubs. Results from this analysis suggest that schools are a good setting to reach many targets and certain sub groups, but that there are competing pressures for time and resources in the classroom. Sports clubs may not reach so many targets but may have a greater effect with those they do reach due to the resources and quality of facilities on offer. However, they may not have the expertise to work with obese children or those who are least physically adept.

Evaluation; HEPA projects are benefitting from evaluation findings. However, there is still room for improvement, especially with regard to early formative evaluation to guide and refine project design.

This analysis was also an attempt to identify and refine a viable method for investigating and documenting the HEPA promotion for children and adolescents that is taking place across Europe. We feel that this investigation can be considered a success and a valuable contribution to the research evidence of studies exploring national approaches to promoting physical activity and sport in children and adolescents.

In terms of next steps, repeating this type of study in more HEPA projects will generate an invaluable resource, making accessible for the first time and in one place, the experiences and lessons learned by HEPA workers across Europe. It is likely that a comprehensive databank of European HEPA projects for children and adolescents would be key to the success of this.

This report recommends that future analysis projects should look to select projects from a more geographically diverse region, focusing on Eastern and Southern Europe. The contacts and networks of central HEPA network staff will be crucial.

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Appendix 1 – Self reported strengths and weaknesses of HEPA projects

These strengths and weaknesses were discussed during group sessions at the analysis workshop. The sessions were recorded and transcribed and formed a crucial element of the data analysis.

		Planning and Preparation	Development and Design	Implementation	Evaluation
Sweden	Strength	Awareness of the problem Human resources e.g. leaders in sports organisations Political support (money)	Bottom up local planning		
	Weakness	Relationship between NGO and government (also a strength) Short preparation time More of the same No study of target group – lack of intervention mapping	Fair distribution of money Too many clubs not subscribing to the goals and wanting independence		Non-use of late evaluation Lack of effects studies
The Netherlands	Strength	Identification of target groups	Research of needs and possibilities Based on practice Financial support from the ministry Cooperation with partners from an early stage	Many attractive materials Wide range of products and workshops Involves and addresses parents Broadening cooperation – educational partners (curriculum) and other health promoting partners (nutrition)	
	Weakness		'Protection' Ownership of project		Difficult to get overview of quantitative results and effectiveness

			Not prepared for success – didn't plan a good evaluation Stand alone intervention with few links to other interventions		
Switzerland	Strength		Empowerment of instructors and trainers Training courses include elements on children's characteristics and development	Money and volunteers (instructors, coordinators) Starting to use IT Reaching low SES males with football Potential of using school setting to reach disadvantaged in 5-10 year group Normalisation	Internet National database Several recent evaluation studies
	Weakness		Lack of population relevant objectives	Sports clubs are too interested in best athletes – others not welcome anymore Not reaching girls (immigration, low SES, economic status)	No evaluation for thirty years Evaluation not included in budget Further development not included in budget
Spain	Strength	Social health system (economic) Obesity is a major social concern	Developers implement consensus Professional needs equity Local and Res involved Protocols control monitor Compatible system Consensus	Tools for other programmes Local and regional mass media Reinforce system	>30% evaluation Multi ev; Health, QoL, fitness, process
	Weakness	Competing interests of others Long term evaluation	Budget year 1 and year 2 Partners potential conflict Local resources – inequality?	Parents schedule	Time

Germany	Strength	Linked to 2007 WC	22 000 gym clubs 22 regional associations Media partners Strong tools	Internal acceptance Motivation Publications of partners Internal publications Good offers	250,000 participants – 34,000 evaluated Respected researchers
	Weakness	Time	Media partners (again) 'Get external partners' 'Less participation' Difficult to reach schools Other sponsorships 'Wrong' target group Ending tools	Non-persisting external publications	Too many different testers
Finland	Strength	Decision – 'we will do it' Good experience All were involved Big scale	Media cooperation Partners Courage to invest Target groups 'What do we want to change?' A risk to use new media (www)	Well designed marketing Good tools and idea Children participation	Question; teachers, children, parents Proper reports from different areas
	Weakness	No-one in charge	Teachers participation Ministry of Education – not with No government money No partners in local level	Help for teacher	No PA measure No national research Researchers are not interested No money in research

Appendix 2 Analysis questionnaire

Project Name:

Contact Name:

Email address:

Telephone:

Country:

Age of target group	
Setting (E.g. School, internet, home, etc)	
Approach (E.g. Sport, swimming, active transport, all physical activity, etc)	

Please answer the following questions with as much detail as possible. Type your response in the text boxes provided and return to paul.kelly@medsci.ox.ac.uk as an email attachment. You may use as much room as required.

Please describe the preparation, development and design of your HEPA project. Consider organisations involved in the development of your project (e.g. government bodies or private industry) and any developmental research by yourselves or external parties. Was your project reflective of any government policy? Please describe the approximate levels of funding, sources and timescale.

Type response here;

Please describe the aims and specific objectives of your HEPA project. What was the main message of your HEPA project?

Type response here;

Please specify the target group/s for particular components of your HEPA project (e.g. females, inactive children and/or adolescents, children and/or adolescents from migration backgrounds or low socio-economic backgrounds, etc)

Type response here;

Please describe the implementation and delivery of your HEPA project. Consider the organisational structure of the team used to manage the delivery of your HEPA project and the involvement of other organisations. Was the media used, and if so how?

Type response here;

Please describe the evaluation and results of your HEPA project. Please include any measures of your projects impact on participants' physical activity (e.g. pedometers, activity diaries, etc.). If your project targeted specific subgroups, how successful was your project at reaching these groups?

Type response here;

Please describe the most successful elements of your HEPA project

Type response here;

Please describe the legacy of your HEPA project. Consider any ongoing effects after project completion, or any anticipated effects if your project is still running. For example, did your project have any training initiatives for community members, or leave any permanent infrastructure such as children's play areas?

Type response here;

Please offer no more than three pieces of advice for another country planning to develop a HEPA project.

Type response here;

Appendix 3 – Örebro Workshop Schedule

Aims

Intensive data collection through note taking, sound recording and participant completed hand-outs.

Introduction

Introduce aims of workshop;

1. Learn about other projects from around Europe
2. Identify and investigate positive and negative experiences of PA promotion
3. Understand what are the lessons from these experiences, and their relevance to future and existing programmes

Session 1 (90 mins) – Sharing Experiences of HEPA Promotion;

we would like to invite participants to share their project story, aims and ways of working. Video presentations and course documentation are encouraged.

10mins per project + 5 mins questions

Suggested structure for presentation: How was the programme;

Prepared; Developed; Designed; Evaluated; Sustained

Session 2 (180 mins) – Project Analysis; research framework for identifying strengths and weaknesses of HEPA promotion approaches.

Particular focus on;

- How was the project financed? (Government or industry)
- What was the legal basis of the project?
- How successful was the project at reaching different subgroups?
- How successful was the project at promoting PA?
- How successful was the project at preventing PA drop in adolescents?

Identify strengths and weaknesses in selves and others projects. 6 stages Prep, Development, Design, Implementation Early and Late, Evaluation, Legacy

Session 3 (60 mins) – Identifying Challenges and Concerns;

project specific analysis of challenges and concerns. Investigation of solutions that were found.

Each project completes a project specific SWOC analysis of themselves and each other. Split into 6 project groups for SWOC. Each group gets a sheet of A4 with Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges as headers and fills it in.

How would you...;

- utilize **strengths** maximally?

- address **weaknesses** to neutralize or minimize effects?
- seize **opportunities** and make most advantage?
- identify **threats** early and act accordingly?

Session 4 (120 mins) – Project Learning...if I had a magic wand;
what would you do differently and the same next time?

Investigation of what was learned by the different approaches. One on one interviews between participants.

Session 5 (60 mins) – What I liked about the other projects...

Group session to discuss the results from Session 4.

End of the workshop – Overview and reflections

Evaluation;

Has this analysis worked?

Positives and negatives from participants

What do you want to see from the final report?

Follow up interesting results by phone and email.