

Lifestyle and Healthy Weight

Teaching children more about the value of a physically active and healthy lifestyle

To coach school children towards a healthy lifestyle over a three year period.



Location	Enschede, Netherlands
Organisation	Beweeg Wijs B.V.
Start-end date	September 2013 – June 2016
Target group	Primary school students between 6 - 12 years old and their parents
Reach	Approximately 2,100 children across the 3 year lifespan of the programme
Partners	Menzis Health Insurance, GGD Public Health Provider, TNO Research Institute, local primary schools and sports clubs, the Stichting GKGK Foundation for Healthy Children and numerous local healthcare partners
Key facts	Within a year of entering the programme, obesity rates among participants declined by 24%. The programme has also noted that a lowering in the Body Mass Index of participants as well as an improvement in general physical and motor skills.

Summary

Lifestyle and Healthy Weight is a two-part programme specifically designed to get children more active and engaged in healthy lifestyle choices. It is the culmination of efforts from the City of Enschede and a host of other community partners active in the field of healthcare.

The programme involves two separate initiatives delivered simultaneously in local schools over a three year period. The first of these is called Beweeg Wijs (Move Smart). This involves an additional hour of physical activity and movement at school being given to children each week. Beweeg Wijs takes place in the playground of the school and teaches participants to be fully comfortable playing alongside and against one another in a participative environment. The second initiative is Leef Wijs (Live Smart). This involves an hour a week of theory related to engaging in healthy lifestyles decisions delivered in a classroom environment.

Throughout the three years, the children are tested on their physical condition, coordination, weight and motorial skills.

Keys to success

Integration with school curriculum

The programme methodology has been specifically designed to be absorbed into existing school programming. This ensures that all the children are within reach and that maximum impact is generated. It also ensures that the delivery is regular and consistent, crucial factors in maintaining engagement with younger audiences.

A community-level approach

Lifestyle and Healthy Weight adopts the ideology that 'it takes a whole village to reach a child'. A huge number of interested community parties were consulted and involved in design and delivery. This includes not only the local schools, but also the parents, local health organisations and insurance groups, sport clubs, doctors, physiotherapists, dieticians, school teachers and remedial teachers.

Involving participants as coaches

A fundamental part of the Beweeg Wijs methodology is the involvement of children as 'junior coaches'. Children from the older classes of the schools are selected to help coach the younger children. This helps to generate more buy-in and to develop social skills amongst participants, both young and old.



Sport for All objectives

Promote sport and physical activity

The Beweeg Wils component of the programme focuses on ensuring children are physically active. It prioritises a gradual progression towards becoming fully comfortable in a participative sporting environment amongst peers. Through the involvement of local clubs, children are being introduced to several new sports, helping to identify new and potentially more suitable sporting alternatives for their future.

Improve public health and well-being

Alongside the practical and theory courses, a healthy lunch regime has been implemented at participant schools. There are also cooking classes organised for interested parents. Furthermore, teachers have remarked that the children have become more concentrated in class. All these benefits combine to generate a more physically, mentally and emotionally healthier community.

Support active societies

By involving schools, children and parents, two generations are directly engaged in a nurturing and productive environment. Bringing local sports clubs on board helps children to gain exposure to many different sports and opens up a dialogue through which they can remain active for many years after exiting the programme. The involvement of local healthcare and research bodies ensures that the broader issue of community well-being are always at the heart of what the programme is about.

“We are so happy that the programme has become a part of the school curriculum. I have less conflict at home about food and about what we eat for breakfast. This makes eating together a lot easier and a lot more pleasant.”

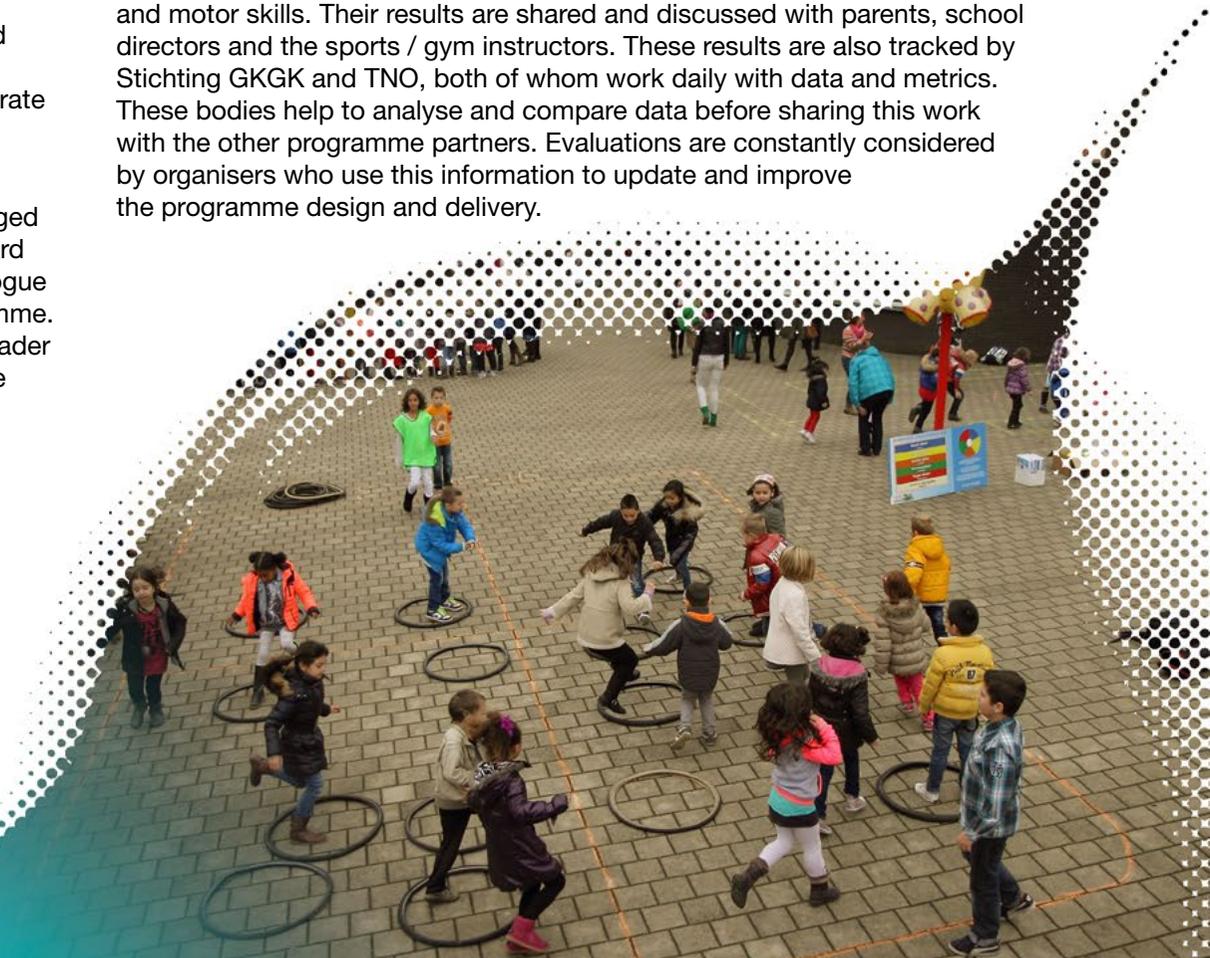
A parent of one of the participating schools

How is the programme communicated?

The Lifestyle and Healthy Weight programme communicates mainly by way of newsletter. The project publishes its own regular newsletter developed by the organisers. This is reinforced by individual newsletters produced and distributed by participating schools. These are targeted at both children and parents. These communications are also supported through coverage in the local newspapers.

How is the programme evaluated?

Every year children are tested on their physical condition, coordination, weight and motor skills. Their results are shared and discussed with parents, school directors and the sports / gym instructors. These results are also tracked by Stichting GKGK and TNO, both of whom work daily with data and metrics. These bodies help to analyse and compare data before sharing this work with the other programme partners. Evaluations are constantly considered by organisers who use this information to update and improve the programme design and delivery.





Join the sporting society!

Globally, 1 in 4 adults is not active enough and more than 80% of the world's adolescent population is insufficiently physically active (World Health Organization). Let's reverse the trend and get moving.



Promote sport and physical activity

Recent changes in leisure and work practices, diet and a host of other trends has led to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle amongst the world's population. Sport for all programmes aim to promote sport and physical activity to mitigate the negative effects associated with these developments.



Improve public health and well-being

Sport and physical activity plays an important role in making societies healthier, happier and safer into the future. Successful sport for all projects help to stimulate these common benefits across entire communities.



Support active societies

Active societies involve many stakeholders such as parents, coaches, schools, local clubs, sports organisations, event organisers and grassroots activities, to name but a few. They can all be hugely influential in promoting healthier lifestyles within a community. Programmes that support and reinforce their efforts are vital for the encouragement and promotion of active societies around the world.



Provide equal access to sport

Every member within a community should have equal opportunity to live an active and healthy lifestyle. Effective grassroots programmes place a heavy emphasis on ensuring that all of their participants can enjoy this opportunity regardless of physical condition, race, gender, social conditions, geographical location or otherwise.



Foster Olympic legacy

The Olympic Games provide a source of inspiration and a vibrant expression of the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect. This unique power can energise communities to develop projects enabling and inspiring people to become and stay physically active into the future.

Become a key player in your community

A useful platform has been designed for organisations across the Olympic Movement that are managing Sport for All programmes, providing them with the knowledge, understanding and tools needed to improve existing programmes worldwide, as well as to create new ones.

Get inspired by more than 45 projects around the world

Learn more about best practices with our toolkit

Create your project based on proven academic research and experience of organisations

Share your experience and lead the way to inspire more projects

Connect with a vast network fueled by inspired partners

Find more information

- Sports and Active Society Programmes
- A Guide to Implementation
- www.olympic.org
- activesociety@olympic.org