Project “INFORMA A SCUOLA”: Healthy lifestyles promotion to prevent overweight among children in primary school

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Principles

WE HELP THE CITY 'WHO WANT TO BECOME HEALTHY!'

The Healthy Cities project is promoted by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations specialized agency for health, which operates since 1948 with the aim of ensuring to the world's population the highest level of health.

Healthy Cities is a movement of cities on all continents. In Europe it is present in 1,400 cities and in 30 countries which have a national network that today work side by side on the priority chosen by WHO.

In Italy, the project started on 1995 as a movement of Municipalities, and on 2001 became a non-profit association, then a legally recognized Association on 2012: today the city members of the Network are 75.
Steering Committee of Italian Healthy Cities Network WHO –
January 20th 2017

Head/Presidency/Coordination
Modena Municipality

Steering Committe
Municipalities of: Bologna, Milano, Torino, Udine, Venezia, Alfianello (BS), Ancona, Cremona, Cortona (AR), Firenze, Foggia, Genova, Molfetta (BA), Padova, Palermo, Regione Emilia Romagna, Sacile (PN), Siena
The lines of work of the Italian Network are:

- sustainable mobility
- healthy and right eating
- physical activity
- healthy lifestyles
- relationship between environment and health / city planning
- healthy aging
HEALTHY CITIES TO PROMOTE HEALTHY AND RIGHT EATING

Milan, 15th October 2015 "Health and nutrition in healthy cities: from good practices to good policy"

Cities brought their best good practices on 5 themes identified within the "Milan Urban Food Policy Pact":

• Urban agriculture;
• Local food - production, market, logistics;
• Sustainable diet - health, nutrition, social protection;
• Food and poverty - (soup kitchens for the poor, social shopping, social enterprises);
• Food waste.

On the same day the mayors of 16 cities of the Network have signed the URBAN FOOD POLICY PACT
HEALTHY CITIES TO PROMOTE HEALTHY AND RIGHT EATING

Modena, 7th October 2016 "Expo one year after: good practices and good policies from the cities“

The city brought their best good practices on 5 themes identified within the “Milan Urban Food Policy Pact” one year after the signature. How projects have been developed in one year?

Coordinator Cities that collected best practices from other cities of the network

- Urban agriculture: Torino Municipality
- Local food - production, market, logistics: Palermo Municipality
- Sustainable diet - health, nutrition, social protection: Ancona Municipality
- Food and poverty: Modena and Bologna Municipalities
- Food waste: Udine Municipality
A final document of proposals has been sent to Ministers (of health, agriculture, environment) to FAO and to ANCI President to stress on the engagement of local authorities

- the implementation of the Food Pact can only pass through **local policies**: working for a more sustainable, fair and healthy food means transversal policies;
- **food education** can only be done through a strong alliance and sharing between schools, healthcare, community, local producers and distribution;
- talking about food means taking on a **public health priority**;
- **waste reduction practices** such as re-use of food are very strong social inclusion policies;
• **environmental issues** are strongly related to the theme of urban planning;
• talking about food is also about redesigning our cities and **recovering urbanized soils**;
• culture of the value of food can be made also through **local, regional and national regulations and laws**;
• talking about **local food** means enhancing the link that individual citizens have with their territory;
• **Mediterranean diet** has to also to be promoted in collective catering;
• the role of **collective catering** is very important and needs to be regulated at the national, regional and local level to make it a service that must be considered educational and essential, and no longer a "service to demand".
Evaluating projects on food habits among children in Italy

Over the last four decades, BMI and prevalence of obesity in children and teenagers are increasing (1) worldwide.

In the European Region, the estimated prevalence of overweight (including obesity) among these groups approximates 20%, with significant differences among countries and socioeconomic groups (2).

Italy remains one of the European countries with the highest rate of child obesity despite efforts in fostering the life styles (3).

References:
According to the Italian surveillance named “OKkio alla SALUTE”, 30.6% of children aged 8-9 years are overweight and/or obese with higher rates among children from families with lower educational attainment and lower income.

This phenomenon represents a severe public health problem because of overweight children are more likely to become obese during adult age (4).

Unhealthy eating and sedentary behaviors are strongly associated with increased childhood obesity rates, and parents who fail to recognize their child as overweight show less readiness to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviors (5, 6).

“OKkio alla SALUTE” is the scientific base we use as cities to monitor the changes of the trends according to the population involved in our projects.

References:
Example of evaluation from the city of Modena