



## **Best Practices in action: how to transfer, implement, and sustain effective health promotion interventions for children (0-12)**

Module 1 - Transferability and Sustainability of Best Practices in Health Promotion and Childhood Obesity Prevention

Session 1.2 - Health4EUkids: Overview of the context for supporting Best Practice implementation

Unit 1.2.2 - “Data overview from SWOT Analysis on Transferability, Sustainability and Scalability”

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### **Slide 1 & 2**

Hi everyone! I am Vittorio Palermo, a psychologist and researcher at the Italian National Institute of Health. I'm part of the Health4EUkids Joint Action, and today I'd like to share with you the main findings from the SWOT analysis we carried out.

Our goal was to explore the transferability, sustainability and scalability of two Best Practices, Grünau Moves and Smart Family, designed to prevent childhood obesity and promote healthy habits among families across Europe.

### **Slide 3 - Background**

The Health4EUkids initiative focuses especially on vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, aiming to reduce inequalities through health promotion.

With Grünau Moves, we work on encouraging physical activity and Smart Family focuses on responsive parenting during the first 1,000 days of life.

This SWOT analysis helped us to understand what helps or hinders the success of these interventions when implemented in different countries and local settings.

### **Slide 4 - Methodological Overview**

Let me quickly walk you through how we conducted the analysis.

We used a participatory approach, involving voices from all levels: researchers, local implementers, policy actors, and community members.

We collected input from four main groups: Best Practice owners, implementation teams, WP5 and WP6 leaders, and, specifically for Grünau Moves, municipal representatives.

They answered tailored online questionnaires about five key areas: planning, implementation, evaluation, communication, and recommendations.

We also held a discussion group with selected Member States to dig deeper into the main themes that emerged.

### **Slide 5 - Results**

In total, we gathered input from 31 stakeholders across several countries.

What emerged is a rich set of common strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that apply across both Best Practices, alongside very practical recommendations for improving their implementation.

### **Slide 6 - Overview of BP's Strengths**

Let's start with the good news: the strengths.

First, we saw the real value of a transdisciplinary approach. Involving educators, health professionals and local actors helps create more integrated, effective responses.

The use of existing networks makes integration smoother and builds community trust.

And because the interventions are participatory and flexible, they're more likely to be adapted, and adopted, in different local settings.

### **Slide 7 - Overview of BP's Weaknesses**

But of course, there are also challenges.

Limited funding and overreliance on EU start-up resources raise concerns about sustainability.

Coordination can be tricky when stakeholders have different priorities.

Many teams face staff shortages, and a top-down approach sometimes prevails, reducing the community's voice and involvement.

### **Slide 8 - Overview of BP's Opportunities**

On the bright side, there are several opportunities to tap into.

New funding possibilities at national or EU level could help scale up efforts.

Public and political awareness around childhood obesity is growing, and this could bring in more support.

Also, aligning these Best Practices with existing health initiatives could amplify their impact and help share resources.

### **Slide 9 - Overview of BP's Threats**

But we also need to be realistic.

Bureaucratic delays often slow down implementation and expansion.

Data gaps, especially in local epidemiological data, make it harder to tailor actions effectively.

And resistance to new health models from traditional institutions can block integration into existing systems.

### **Slide 10 - Key Insights - Planning Phase**

When it comes to planning, the message is clear: involve stakeholders from the very beginning, especially local communities, professionals, and policymakers.

Use mixed methods to understand local needs: surveys, interviews, existing data.

Make sure you have the resources, people, funding, technology, not just to start the project, but to carry it forward.

Also, important: have a clear action plan, assign roles, and be ready to adapt.

Lastly, align your work with local policies and infrastructures, and always keep an eye on equity, especially when working with vulnerable communities.

### **Slide 11 - Key Insights - Implementation Phase**

In implementation, theory meets practice.

Community engagement is key: activities should be meaningful and fun to boost participation.

Be flexible and responsive, adjust strategies based on what's working and what's not.

Keep it simple and scalable, small actions like improving local spaces can have a big impact.

Use what's already there, schools, health centres, parks, and build on it.

Invest in training and supporting local professionals so they feel confident and motivated.

And ensure there's strong leadership to keep teams focused and supported.

## **Slide 12 - Key Insights - Evaluation Phase**

Evaluation isn't just something you do at the end.  
Start by defining clear goals and Key Performance Indicators early.  
Take a long-term view, especially for complex goals like reducing obesity.  
Use mixed methods, quantitative and qualitative, to get the full picture.  
Make evaluation participatory, include communities and local actors.  
And make sure it's context-sensitive, what works in one place may not fit somewhere else.  
Finally, use regular feedback to adapt and improve as you go.

## **Slide 13 - Key Insights - Internal Phase**

Good internal communication holds everything together.  
Have regular meetings, clear channels, and shared platforms so everyone stays aligned.  
Use digital tools, especially for teams in different regions.  
And provide templates and shared formats across the consortium to avoid duplication and confusion.  
It may sound basic, but when internal communication works well, everything else runs more smoothly.

## **Slide 14 - Key Insights - External Phase**

External communication is just as important.  
Focus efforts at local level, using simple, targeted messages that match the community's context.  
Share your results and lessons learned widely, through reports, events, or social media.  
Stay in touch with local authorities and stakeholders, and provide structured ways to exchange feedback.  
Use a mix of online and offline tools, and whenever possible, rely on existing communication channels, don't reinvent the wheel.  
Tailored communication builds trust, and trust is essential for sustainability.

## **Slide 15 - Key messages**

So, what are the big challenges?  
For transferability, top-down approaches and misaligned goals often cause trouble. The solution? Start with a good context analysis and involve local stakeholders from the beginning.  
For sustainability, the risks include short-term funding and staff turnover. We also see weak intersectoral collaboration and inconsistent political support. The answer here is to strengthen local structures, keep stakeholders involved, and invest in long-term capacity building.  
And for scalability, we face human resource limits, slow bureaucracies, and lack of local health data. The best approach is to start with pilot actions, ensure flexibility, and involve key actors to support scaling both politically and operationally.

## **Slide 16 - Conclusion**

To wrap up, our key recommendations are:  
Use participatory planning to align with local needs.  
Empower and build on existing resources to create lasting impact.  
Test scalability through pilot programs before full implementation.  
These strategies can help overcome the most critical barriers we identified, and increase the long-term success of health promotion practices like Grünau Moves and Smart Family.

## **Slide 17 - Thank you all for your participations!**

Thanks so much for your attention and your participation.