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

Module 2 - Grünau Moves: a Best Practice to promote health and prevent obesity in children

Session 2.6 - Grünau Moves: Sustainability

Unit 2.6.1 - "Sustainability of the intervention: Basque Country region experience"

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Slide 1, 2

We are now going to talk about the sustainability of the intervention. In particular, we are going to talk about a case study which has been conducted in the Basque Country in a municipality called Erandio.

Slide 3 - Framework and guidelines

First of all, I'd like to state several aspects which are very important. We have used several guidelines to implement all the project in the municipality. But I want to state something which is very important, and it is that the guidelines are guides, are not rigid instructions as to how to establish a health network in a municipality.
In this sense there are many, many guidelines anywhere, and in particular, in the Basque country, we have some guidelines on the methodology of facilitating health networks, also methodologies to enhance participation of the people, and so on.
Also, there are 3 aspects talking about the framework which we consider really basic. We can call them prerequisites or conditions that are very important to make sure that the health network that we are going to create is going to be sustainable along the time.
One of them is the commitment of the municipality responsible, the mayor, and the other responsible from different areas, must have a clear idea of what is going to be the health network and how to enhance its utility.
Also, within the municipality a person responsible for health, promotion, or community action must be designed, and this person should be preferably someone who is within the structure of the municipality, not someone from the political part, because that would be risky in the sense that when the municipality responsible from one moment changes, maybe the project could be attributed to that municipality responsible and maybe it could, it would be risky for its sustainability.
And the 3rd aspect, which is really important, is the budget. Annually, a budget assigned to this network must be assigned from the municipality. This is because from the health network some necessities will be identified, then prioritized and then detailed in an action plan to be conducted by the person, by the people from the municipality, and a specific budget is required.

Slide 4 - 1. Municipality engagement

Well, now, I am going to talk about some aspects which are important for the sustainability. One of them is the municipality engagement. As I have already said, it is very, very important

that both the mayor, and also the rest of the person from the municipality responsible for sports, health, culture, and many other areas are very well convinced of the value of this health network. And before constructing the health network, we have to take into our minds that we require a lot of time. And that is time that is not going to be lost. It's very, very important that we have many conversations with those agents in order to make sure that they reflect about what this means, and they reflect about the interest of the municipality and of the people from the community on this kind of structure.

So, at least in our case, we conducted many dialogues and meetings and conversations with responsible from the Town Hall, from the health services, in particular the pediatricians, and also from the education centers, which are in the municipality, so those 3 aspects are very important.

Slide 5 - 2. Governance structures

The next aspect, which is very important, is the governance structures which have to be built. The main one and the very well-known one is the core group that is stated in every guideline, and it usually has representatives from the Town Hall, from the health area and from the education centers and from the community. And in our case, we had representatives from the city council, from some associations, from NGOs, social workers, many people, and we had regular meetings, a monthly regular meeting within the core group in order to get to know each other and to get to know what the project was going to, was going to deal with.

And again, we have to be patient, and we have to think that all the meetings that we are holding are going to be very positive for the sustainability of the project.

At one stage, one of the following steps is the formal constitution of the health network. And in order to prepare that network, at one stage we realized that the core group had too many representatives from the technical part, professional part, politicians, and not so many from the population. So, it was quite unbalanced. That's why we decided to incorporate and integrate the core group within the health network.

And this is something which is not specifically stated in the guidelines. Usually, one step is to the creation of the core group, and another step is the formal constitution of the health network. But that only means that we don't have to be very rigid as regards what the guidelines state. But we have to be flexible and adopt the normal going, the normal constitution of the health network with what we are finding along the way.

Slide 6 - 3. Project branding

Another aspect, which is very important, is the project branding. We designed a logo for the project. In particular, we called it "*ERANDIO mugitzen ari da*", which means in Basque that Erandio, the name of the village, is moving. And we created a web page which was integrated within the web page of the municipality. And this is good because it enables people to find what is going on within the health network quite easily, and also it facilitates its updating.

Slide 7 - 4. Dissemination activities

Another aspect which is important is the diffusion of what is going on within the network. At one stage, we realized that the health network, "*ERANDIO mugitzen ari da!*" was not very well known all around the municipality among the people. Although we had leld many, many meetings within the core group with different agents mentioned before —like the politicians, the education responsible, health professionals, some key agents from the community— the population as such from the community from the village was not well aware of what was the health network, they hadn't heard about "*ERANDIO mugitzen ari da!*". So, we conducted several dissemination activities in order to make sure that this project was well known within the municipality by the population. And in order to do that, one of the things we did was to prepare a press conference, at which the major attended, together with one of the pediatricians and some people from the municipality, a young person and another person from another network.

So many publications were made in local media, and people started to know the network. It's very important that one of the main dissemination activities that we decided to conduct was to organize a big party in order to show the people what was going on with this network, and we invited everyone to attend this meeting. We also used that party to prioritize the actions that had been identified as needs by the community through all the tools that we had been using from the beginning, such as interviews, questionnaires, the Healthy Living Tool, and many tools. So, we had a big pool of necessities identified. We organized them in groups from different areas like activity, healthy eating habits, mental health, and many other areas. We organized all the necessities, and we gave them back to the people in order for them to prioritize them, and to select which ones we were going to be able to prepare as actions for the action plan.

Slide 8 - 5. Integration with other community initiatives

This party was good, and more than 200 people attended. And it was attended by children, parents, young people, and many activities were held in that party like a painting phase, a workshop on healthy breakfast and sports activities and small competitions and things like that. Also, in that party we tried to integrate "*ERANDIO mugitzen ari da!*" with other community initiatives, and this is something which is of utmost importance for the sustainability of the project, because during the first stages —when you try to identify the key agents, and you make the diagnosis of what's going on in the municipality— it's very important to find out what is going on. And if there are any other projects which are going on, and participatory projects that have similar methodology and similar aims, the best thing is to integrate all of them together.

So, there's only one project that integrates everyone in the municipality, in this sense. In the municipality of Erandio there is a Children Council, Sports Council, Education Council, and also there is a project which is conducted and facilitated by another department of the government, and it aims at healthy aging. So, we tried to integrate all those projects within *"ERANDIO mugitzen ari da!"*, this project, even though our project poses the focus on children, and maybe the other one, *Erandio Lagunkoia*, is focused on the old people. They all have similar methodologies, and in all of them the purpose is to improve environments, so that people can have better health and well-being.

Slide 9 - 6. Budget

Another aspect, which was very important, and I mentioned before, is the budget. Once the action plan is prepared —in particular in this case the action plan has been prepared for a couple of years— a budget must be assigned within the municipality, because the main actions that have been selected for being implemented, some of them require —not all of them, but many of them— require a specific budget, and the municipality must assign a budget for them. The main source of budget in our case is the municipality. Also, there is some aid from the government, but the municipality must assign a budget for this.

Slide 10 - Municipality commitment

And now I just leave you with some words of the Erandio Major who tries to share with you what has Erandio's participation in the European Health4EUKids project meant for her and for the municipality. And we asked her if she could highlight any learning acquired through the project? And how does she see the future of the project? And that is it. Thank you.

Slide 11 - Municipality commitment (Some words of the Erandio mayor)

For all those affected, participation in the Health4EUKids project has been a great opportunity. Above all, it has sparked to carry out a reflection on health in our community. It has sparked not only institutional reflection, but also community population shared reflection. Different people in society, including associations and individuals, have had the opportunity to discuss about their health and about the health education. Therefore, I believe the greatest value we have achieved with health professionals in this whole process is the joint reflection. This joint

reflection has helped us determine where we should go and what our most important and concrete actions should be to obtain benefits. This relationship and network that we have created in this process is the future for the municipality because it helps to recognize the needs and the actions that make profit. In this sense, I believe we will continue to meet and use the network trying to integrate and include the health in all policies, fostering the participatory process and adding the learning acquired. I believe we will continue to use the valuable insights from the project in our policies, implementing in important areas such as culture, sports, and education.