



Success story

Ball Box Initiative



Initiative type: Community | Environmental intervention

Sector: Education | Sport | Urban planning | Children & Youth

Target group: Children and young people, with potential benefits for everyone

Implementation stage: Evaluation phase

Transferability: Yes

▶ About the initiative

The Ball Box Initiative makes it easier for people to be active spontaneously by placing containers with a selection of balls in parks and sports fields.

People can simply take a ball, play and return it afterwards. The message on each box is simple: "Take. Play. Return."

By making sports equipment freely available where people already spend time, the initiative removes the need to plan ahead, bring equipment or own a ball.

▶ What is making it successful?

The strength of the Ball Box is its simplicity and low cost. The initiative removes a practical barrier to participation while requiring very little planning from the user.

People can decide to play when they are already in a park or sports area, making physical activity feel more spontaneous and accessible. It's a simple model also makes it relatively easy for communities to adopt and adapt.

▶ What could other countries learn?

The practice is considered transferable to other countries.

The initiative demonstrates that relatively small environmental changes can help create opportunities for everyday physical activity without requiring people to join a club, register for an activity or purchase equipment.





Key challenges to promote HEPA

► Estonia's wider challenge for physical activity promotion

Estonia currently faces strong competition for political attention, particularly given the emphasis on defence and security.

At the local level, investment in the physical environment can also be challenging. Green spaces and cycling infrastructure are not yet a priority in many municipalities, despite their potential to support physical activity, active transport and healthier communities.

► Country-level barriers to advancing HEPA

The following barriers are most persistent to advancing HEPA policy in the country.



BARRIER	IMPACT
Political prioritisation	MAJOR
Regional/local implementation gaps	MAJOR
Inequities in participation/access	MODERATE
Public engagement challenges	MODERATE
Limited funding/resources	MINOR
Weak intersectoral coordination	MINOR
Lack of workforce capacity	MINOR
Insufficient monitoring/data	MINOR
Limited research translation into policy	MINOR
Other	NO IMPACT

► What is needed?

Estonia identified the need for:

- Stronger advocacy for physical activity and related causes
- More visible and vocal leaders championing physical activity
- Stronger connections between physical activity, sport and environmental priorities
- Greater political attention to active transport and supportive public spaces

Some wider pressures are dependent on circumstances outside the physical-activity sector, but stronger advocacy can help keep physical activity visible within the policy agenda.



► How can the HEPA Europe Network help?

The HEPA Europe Network could provide stronger support for advocacy and policy engagement, helping countries make the case for physical activity when competing with other political priorities.

Sharing evidence, examples and effective advocacy approaches could help strengthen the visibility of HEPA among decision-makers.

