



Success story

Move from Screens to Real Life – Hungary's National Active Childhood Programme



Initiative type: National prevention / community programme

Sector: Health | Education | Sport | Environment | Social affairs | Children & Youth | Community | Private sector

Target group: Children aged 0–12 and their families

Implementation stage: Scaling up

Transferability: Yes

▶ About the initiative

Move from Screens to Real Life is a nationwide, cross-sectoral initiative designed to reduce recreational screen time among children aged 0–12 while promoting active and healthy lifestyles.

Led by Bethesda Children's Hospital and supported by the Active Hungary Programme, the initiative brings together health promotion, education, family support and community-based physical activity as part of a broader prevention approach.

A major achievement is the Screen Time Reduction Charter, endorsed by more than 40 governmental, professional and civil society organisations. The Charter establishes a shared national commitment to healthier digital habits and more active childhoods.

The initiative is complemented by Active Hungary programmes, sports activities and inclusive, nature-based programmes that give children and families practical alternatives to recreational screen time.

▶ Who is it for?

The primary target group is children aged 0–12 and their families.

The initiative also engages the wider network around children, including:

- Teachers
- Health visitors
- Healthcare professionals
- Kindergartens
- Schools
- Sports and community organisations

Complementary programmes extend to older children and adolescents, with particular attention to disadvantaged children.

▶ What is making it successful?

The initiative's strength is its broad national coalition.

Health, education, sport and civil-society organisations are brought together around a shared objective, while Bethesda Children's Hospital provides scientific leadership and professional credibility.

The Screen Time Reduction Charter creates a common national framework and shared ownership across sectors.

The initiative combines screen-time reduction with accessible and enjoyable alternatives, including physical activity, outdoor experiences and community participation.

A nationwide conference series held in seven locations has also engaged more than 1,000 professionals, helping to build awareness and implementation capacity.

▶ What could other countries learn?

The practice is considered transferable to other countries. Countries adapting the approach would benefit from establishing a shared framework that connects health, education, sport, families and communities, while ensuring that reducing sedentary screen time is accompanied by positive alternatives for active living.





Key challenges to promote HEPA

► Hungary's wider challenge for physical activity promotion

A key challenge is the lack of clear ownership of the HEPA field.

Traditional sport structures have historically placed less emphasis on health-enhancing physical activity, while sport is nevertheless a major area of responsibility for HEPA within European policy structures. This can make it difficult to establish clear roles and responsibilities for HEPA promotion across the wider system.

► Country-level barriers to advancing HEPA

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



BARRIER

IMPACT

Political prioritisation

MAJOR

Public engagement challenges

MAJOR

Insufficient monitoring/data

MODERATE

Regional/local implementation gaps

MODERATE

Inequities in participation/access

MODERATE

Limited funding/resources

NO IMPACT

Weak intersectoral coordination

NO IMPACT

Lack of workforce capacity

NO IMPACT

Limited research translation into policy

NO IMPACT

Other

NO IMPACT

► What is needed?

Hungary identified the need for:

- More practical examples showing how traditional sport organisations can integrate HEPA into their everyday activities.
- Stronger connections between sport and wider health-promotion objectives.
- Joint platforms bringing together HEPA stakeholders.
- Clearer national coordination and shared understanding of responsibilities.



► How can the HEPA Europe Network help?

The HEPA Europe Network could support countries in building stronger national HEPA networks connecting policymakers, researchers and practitioners.

A useful resource could be a stakeholder-mapping tool or directory identifying organisations and actors committed to HEPA promotion in each country.

This could make it easier for countries to identify potential partners, share expertise and develop cross-sector initiatives.



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