



Success story

Supporting Grassroots Sport and Community Physical Activity



Initiative type: Community | Funding programme

Sector: Health | Education | Sport | Children & Youth

Target group: Everyone, with a particular focus on schoolchildren and young people

Implementation stage: Scaling up

Transferability: Yes

About the initiative

In 2026, Latvia increased its support for grassroots sport and community-based physical activity, making it easier for people to take part in local sporting events and activities.

State financial support for organisers of grassroots sporting events has been doubled, while the number of supported events has also increased.

Supported activities include:

- Running events
- Orienteering
- Cycling
- Family hikes
- Other community-based physical activities

The initiative forms part of a broader set of measures to promote healthy lifestyles, including Latvia's action plan on overweight and obesity and the popular Whole Class Exercises school competition.

What is making it successful?

The strongest success factor is clear demand from both event organisers and participants.

By increasing financial support, Latvia is responding to an existing appetite for grassroots sport rather than creating participation opportunities in isolation.

The approach also allows communities and local organisers to provide a wide variety of activities, from running and cycling to family-oriented outdoor activities.



What could other countries learn?

A key requirement is the capacity to establish and manage grant schemes for grassroots sports organisers.

The Latvian experience demonstrates how relatively direct public investment can help expand the supply of community-based physical activity opportunities and respond to local demand.



Key challenges to promote HEPA

► Latvia's wider challenge for physical activity promotion

Latvia faces strong competition for public funding, with defence currently a major political priority.

As a result, resources are limited for the many sport and physical activity initiatives that could otherwise be supported.

There is a gap between well-defined policy objectives and their implementation in practice because capacity and resources are insufficient.

Other challenges include:

- Unequal access to sport infrastructure
- Limited cycling infrastructure compared with more advanced countries
- The need to translate policy commitments into practical action

► Country-level barriers to advancing HEPA

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



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

► What is needed?

Latvia identified the need for:

- Stronger political support for physical activity
- Cross-sectoral cooperation
- Sustainable funding and long-term political commitment
- Stronger advocacy and more visible leaders championing physical activity
- Continued public education and awareness
- More accessible sport and active-mobility infrastructure



► How can the HEPA Europe Network help?

HEPA Europe can support Latvia through exchange of good practices between HEPA Focal Points and policymakers, as well as guidance on effective approaches to physical activity promotion.

International examples can help demonstrate how other countries have maintained investment in physical activity despite competing political and financial priorities.



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