



Success story

Swimming 3 to 5



Initiative type: Early childhood physical activity and swimming programme

Sectors: Health | Education | Sport | Transport | Urban planning | Environment | Social affairs |
Children & Youth | Civil society/community organisations

Target group: Children aged 3–5

Implementation stage: Early implementation

Transferability: Yes

▶ About the initiative

Swimming 3 to 5 provides swimming sessions for all children in Malta aged 3 to 5 years. The programme aims to ensure that young children develop essential water skills. For Malta, as an island nation, swimming is viewed as an important practical life skill as well as an opportunity for physical activity.

▶ What is making it successful?

The initiative responds directly to Malta's island context, where swimming and water safety are very relevant. Providing swimming opportunities at an early age also helps establish physical activity skills and confidence from childhood.

▶ What could other countries learn?

The key condition identified is access to public swimming pools capable of supporting regular sessions for young children.





Key challenges to promote HEPA

► Malta's wider challenge for physical activity promotion

The main challenge identified is time which is a practical barrier to incorporating physical activity into everyday life.

► Country-level barriers to advancing HEPA

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



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

► What is needed?

Malta identified easier commuting facilities as one way of helping overcome this challenge and making active lifestyles easier to incorporate into daily routines.



► How can the HEPA Europe Network help?

The Network could contribute through raising awareness of the importance and benefits of physical activity.



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