

## **075: Turku**

### **Title: Promoting health and active lifestyle in the neighborhoods**

#### **Context**

Studies have shown that people who actively take part in physical and cultural activities and take an interest in active hobbies live longer compared to those who don't. Additionally, physical and cultural activities have a positive impact on one's quality of life and health. It is also well-known that physical activity improves health and reduces health risks. Therefore promoting health and active lifestyles in the neighbourhoods promotes wellbeing and health by encouraging people to take part in both culture and exercise.

Turku has strongly developed services and tools to promote health and well-being of inhabitants with culture and physical activity with the focus on the neighborhoods with lower socio-economic status. The goal is to offer the local people new channels and possibilities to be active in leisure time.

Studies made of welfare effects of participating in cultural and physical activities are combined by understanding that both communality and social interaction increase wellbeing. Studies also show that the more activities one has the better the impacts on health are. When studying physical activity it has been noticed that people exercise more and more but overall physical activity has decreased. Only half of people in working age exercise and no more than a fifth exercise their muscle tone enough. Decreased risk of cardio-vascular disease, reduced blood pressure or weight loss are benefits that exercise can have but one should also keep in mind other benefits, experiences and meanings that physical activity can have. The main focus is on these other experiences and meanings.

#### **Rationale**

Promoting health and active lifestyle in the neighborhoods has priority areas: 1) promoting social inclusion, capacity building, networking and participation in daily life and living environments, 2) physical activity and culture as part of social welfare and health promotion, and 3) physical activity and culture in support of well-being and health at work.

Promotion of the above mentioned includes a variety of actions geared to promote health and well-being through art and culture. They are grouped into actions relating to 1) legislation, administration and funding, 2) cooperation between the public, private and third sectors, 3) research and the knowledge base, 4) education between the public, private and third sectors, 3) research and the knowledge base, 4) education and training, and 5) information. The aim is to promote health and well-being through culture and to strengthen social inclusion at the individual, communal and societal level.

People are well-informed of positive health impacts of physical activity and culture. Still, information is not enough to motivate any of us, and therefore, more attention should be paid for the other effects: physical activity and culture can also provide strong emotions, learning and social interaction together with health benefits.

#### **Description and achievements**

The aim is to inspire and encourage all the citizens of Turku to take an interest in culture and physical exercise, give ideas where and how they can participate and how one can become involved and get those positive impacts on health and wellbeing. A special target group of the project is people socio-economically weaker position in neighbourhoods and special attention is paid on accessibility.

The action programme Eviva (“Enhancing Vitality with active Vacant time”) started in 2011 and has focused in tackling the inequalities between the residential areas. Developing a cross-sectoral co-operation model, involving residents in the neighborhoods, participatory service design and long-term effects in the neighborhoods have been in the core in 2012. Some practical examples of the innovative participatory activities are; Pop-up- Bike: a bike circulating in the neighborhood with books and physical activity equipment and Dream home environment where people are encouraged to develop their living environments.

In the Wellbeing in motion -programme various tools has been developed to present the welfare effects of culture in an easy and accessible way. The information was incorporated in web-based application in 2012. The website illustrates the effects of culture and physical activity on health [www.lahdeliikkeelle.fi](http://www.lahdeliikkeelle.fi)

The models to combine physical activity and culture were developed during the Turku 2011 European Capital of Culture. They represent examples of new municipal services, which offer activating and innovative combination of physical activity and culture. In 2012 the routes were implemented in the neighborhoods. The core ideas and content are collected from the inhabitants using various participatory methods and combining this information with historical facts and current services.

During the above mentioned programmes a communication and motivating tool presenting the welfare effects of the culture in an easy and accessible way. Literature review concerning culture and well-being was also made in the autumn 2010 and during 2011 feedback was collected and literature review about welfare effects of physical activity was made. Based on that information Culture Pie was developed further and welfare effects of physical activity were added on the pie.

## **Achievements**

The amount of physically and culturally active inhabitants is assessed with a population surveys in 2010 and 2013 to get the baseline and follow-up information. For adult population (20-85 years old) co-operation was done with National Institute of Health and Welfare (THL) in “Regional health and Welfare Survey” (2010) and in 2011 for children and adolescents (9, 12 and 15 years old) in co-operation with Children and Youth research Institute (CYRI) within University of Turku. The surveys will be repeated in 2013 and 2015 to follow-up the behavioral change.

Over 20 000 Culture and Exercise pies have been printed and project also designed Frisbees with the Culture and exercise Pie print to use in events and marketing, and the approach was presented in numerous events. Project has printed promotional materials as well as arranged workshops together with experts and researchers of culture and physical activity from University of Turku and THL where culture and exercise themes have been discussed. Feedback has been collected from the target groups.

## **Conclusion**

With these initiatives Turku seeks the ways to react promptly and flexibly to the neighborhood services and motivate the non-active people or people in a weak socio-economic situation. All activities require co-operation between the departments of the city, NGO's and residents. The outcomes are assessed with population surveys in co-operation with the National Institute of Health and Welfare.

People are well-informed of positive health impacts that physical activity. Still, information is not enough to move people. Together with health benefits physical activity can provide strong emotions, learning and social interaction. The challenge is how to use this knowledge to motivate and activate people.

Well-being through culture and physical activity is answering that challenge by approaching subject from experiences point of view. By combining culture and physical activity people can find new ways to have an active lifestyle and get those positive health impacts. It includes wide municipal cooperation but also cooperation with University of Turku. Wide cooperation has provided new opportunities to use scientific knowledge when developing tools to improve wellbeing and health as well as activate and motivate people. National Institute for Health and Welfare has also provided important scientific data to measure wellbeing, health and physical and cultural activity in Turku region.

Social effects of culture and art have been called the invisible social policy. Consumption of culture, cultural activities and participating in the arts has a positive impact on quality of life, life expectancy and health.