



A youth led social marketing approach to encourage healthy lifestyles

Interim Project Briefing

EYTO is an exciting project led by the UK-based National Children's Bureau (NCB) in partnership with organisations in Spain, Portugal and the Czech Republic. With funding from the European Commission, we have developed innovative peer-led social marketing campaigns promoting healthy eating and physical activity to help stem the rise in obesity amongst young people. The project is transcending cultural barriers to connect with young people and is increasing their motivation to lead healthier lifestyles.

22 million children in the EU are overweight or obese. Historically, not enough attention has been given to addressing this major health inequality and public health challenge, which is linked to reduced overall life chances particularly amongst those living in our poorest communities, with teenagers. We wanted to explore the potential in supporting those young people who are living in some of the most deprived areas to use social marketing techniques, proven to be effective in bringing about positive behaviour change on other health topics, to engage their peers.

To date the EYTO partnership has:

- > Reviewed learning from past and current social marketing interventions to promote healthy lifestyles, to inform the development of our campaign creation approach.
- > Our [systematic review](#) highlighted that social marketing can be an important tool for the design of interventions, and that inclusion of the National Social Marketing Centre (UK) [eight benchmark criteria](#) in the design can induce optimal behaviour change.
- > A review of the grey literature and materials provides an [overview of previous initiatives](#) from the four partner countries and a [summary of the important factors](#) that contribute to success – identifying key messages across six areas; Overview, Audience, Message, Channel, Mechanics/Delivery, and Evaluation.
- > Look Up – London, UK. Designed to motivate and be aspirational, Look Up is about living a healthy life to feel good. www.facebook.com/LookUpIslington @LookUpIslington
- > Som la Pera – Reus, Spain. The campaign title means 'we are astounding' and is a pun on the word 'pear'. This campaign uses events and activities to encourage healthy living. <https://www.facebook.com/somlapera>
- > Nebud' pecka – Prague, Czech Republic. The campaign title meaning relates to being active, moving and having an interest in life. <https://www.facebook.com/Eytocz>
- > Hoje o cozinheiro sou eu! (Today, I am cooking!) – Lisbon, Portugal. The family contexts shaping young people's diets are central to this campaign <https://www.facebook.com/EytoPortugal>

Hosted two project exchanges which supported young people across the partnership to share ideas and replicate campaign activities. All project partner staff and young volunteers met in London in October 2014 and again in Reus in April 2015. These sessions were important to the young



The project runs from September 2013 - September 2015 and has received funding from the EU Executive Agency for Health and Consumers in the framework of the Health Programme 2008-2013.

volunteers and helped them to: share experiences and ideas, understand the importance of the project, place their work in a wider context, develop skills and confidence, and make new friends.

Emerging findings

The NCB Research Centre is leading the evaluation of the project; evaluating the impact of the campaigns on outcomes for young people and those working to support them. The [EYTO interim evaluation report](#) considers data from: an online survey of 139 young people across the four partner countries who had engaged with the EYTO campaigns; focus groups with the project's young volunteers; and focus groups with the project staff. Findings can be grouped into three areas...

Perceptions of obesity among young people:

Overwhelmingly young people have identified internal, emotional factors as the main barrier to making healthy lifestyle choices. Across all partner nations, young people feel that messaging to tackle the issues of overweight and obesity with their peers needs to be grounded in how young people feel about themselves and their lives. Early indications are that addressing self-confidence, resilience and life skills may be an effective route to empowering young people to make healthy lifestyle choices.

The power of social marketing approaches:

The majority of young people responding to our surveys felt that the campaigns were effective in:

- > Encouraging young people to eat a more healthy diet and be more physically active (88 per cent).
- > Both motivating and showing young people how to eat more healthily and be more physically active (83 per cent).
- > Communicating why this is important (90 per cent).
- > Improving young people's motivation to make changes; 96 per cent overall had discussed the campaign; thought about making a change to their lifestyle, or tried to find out more about living healthily.

Supporting successful youth-led work:

The EYTO project has developed a youth-led approach to using social marketing techniques to address lifestyle issues with adolescents. The model has young people's participation and co-production at its heart, which has ensured the work is engaging and relevant for their peers. It has also taken an ecological approach – promoting good nutrition and physical activity within the contexts and environments of young people's lives as whole: where they live, study, work and hang out. Supporting our young volunteers to take creative control, grounding the work in their lives and showing them how they're influencing their peers has enabled them to develop new skills and confidence. The model is also developing a more coordinated approach to tackle obesity at a local level. We believe that our innovative approach has the potential to be replicated and to be used to address a wide range of other public health issues affecting young people.

What's next?

Over the remaining 6 months of the project we will be:

- > Disseminating our learning including pan-European campaign messages, associated tools and resources.
- > Continuing evaluation activities and reporting on the impact of the campaigns on outcomes for young people and those working to support them.

To find out more please contact
Amy Davies on adavies@ncb.org.uk
or calling 0207 843 6305

