

LITHUANIA. IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL HEALTH PROMOTION IN THE TIME OF COVID-19.

Nowadays schools have wide possibilities to develop own personalised education models and philosophies. Schools which are focused on their communities social physical, psychological and social health and wellbeing have chosen Health Promoting Schools Model (HPS), which is know for 27 years in Lithuania. National health promoting schools program is monitored by the Centre for Health Education and Diseases Prevention (CHEDP). Currently there are 524 schools, in 59 municipalities out of 60, in Lithuania, which have adopted this model. The aim of these schools is to improve pupils' and other society members' physical, mental and spiritual health, extend the healthy lifestyle knowledge and with common efforts create integrated, inclusive healthy environment.

HEALTH PROMOTING SCHOOLS IN LITHUANIA



Strict regulation and criteria are confirmed in Lithuania for schools which want to pretend to Health-Promoting Schools model. New nomination – Active School (AS), was introduced in spring of 2019, while updating the regulations. The purpose of new nomination is to attract schools' attention to physical activities including formal and informal education. School which wants to become HPS or AS, must evaluate their current situation and prepare Health promoting plan for 5 years. Committee once evaluates the program and the plan can nominate the school as HPS or AS. Annual workshops and seminars are organised for school members according to Nacional recommendations on how to plan and evaluate health promoting activities and goals. Schools which enter for the first time are advised to use and reference old version SHE online school manual and other materials for support. Following SHE scholl manual 2.0 we focus on Co-design and Co-creation importance. We recommend improving National HPC evaluation standards and indicators for 2021 by adding indicators for school leadership and assessment of positive impact on pupils' health, well-being and academic achievements. CHEDP has compiled all valuable experiences and examples in their website, which includes more than 800 exemplary cases.

presented in school exhibitions. Older students organised various quizzes related to healthy eating habits. Police officers also got involved, they organised lectures about safe traffic and provided light reflectors for safe trips. Public health specialists taught how to provide first aid, how to help choking or injured people. Meanwhile, for the week of silence students organised silence hours, discussed why silence is so important, listened to relaxing music and drawn pictures of homes and schools full of relaxation. At schools, groups of pupils and teachers created relaxation spaces, where they could spend time in silence, relax and meditate.

Since 2016 every year the project „Run Around the School“ is carried out, following the good practice in Scotland. The aim is to encourage all children to move more and strengthen their bodily capacities at a very early age. Feedback is being collected now for this year’s project. Last year around 300 schools in almost all Lithuanian municipalities took part in this project on voluntary basis, most of the participants were primary school pupils, who walked or ran around their schools for two weeks of autumn. Besides the schools of general education, the project involved kindergartens, pre-schools, multi-functional, rehabilitation, vocational training centres, as well as institutions working with people with disability.

As everywhere in the world, our Health promoting schools were looking for ways of how to work by keeping safe distance and how to spice up daily routines by focusing on improving health during pandemic lockdown. During these difficult times the most valuable resource was smart IT and digital technologies. They enabled us to continue our work without leaving our homes as well as to continue formal and informal remote learning. Main attention was put on children's physical education, psychological well-being and personal hygiene, also for explaining the epidemiology of the virus during Covid-19 pandemic. These are some of the examples.

Nursery ‘Vaivorykštė’ in Marijampolė proposed health initiative for all city nurseries to join in morning exercises between 20th and 24th of April. Exercises were for all family members and could be performed indoors or outdoors using suggested music from youtube.com or their own ideas.

Nursery ‘Vaikystė’ in Šiauliai during May organised distance move called ‘Clean Hands’. The aim of seminars was to teach children about infectious diseases, microbes, and how correctly wash their hands.

School ‘Aukuras’ in Kelmė encouraged public to thank all medical staff by drawing flowers and decorating home windows with them.

Members of nursery ‘Dobiliukas’ in Klaipėda participated in distance challenge “Choose Healthy Snacks’. Participants were posting their healthy snacks ideas and recipes in Facebook groups.

Gymnasium in Neringa made face masks for all community members, this influenced many positive emotions during gloomy quarantine period, by focusing on creativity and supporting others.

‘Salomėjos Nėries’ school in ‘Vilkaviškis’ organised art competition and virtual gallery ‘Sign that Stops Corona Virus’. They aspired not only to showcase pupils’ self-expression but also to portray their emotional state during this difficult period. Children were also encouraged to write and express their emotions.

‘Jovaras’ gymnasium in Šiauliai was focused on children mental health and invited them to join virtual afternoon teas, where they were able talk to each other, express their worries and concerns.

HPS have gained valuable experience during the years and their main goal is to encourage health promotion, physical activities, community spirit and support to others despite all the uncertainties and difficult times. As most important is to stay healthy!

