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Project title: Testing of systematic step-by-step implementation model introducing healthy school menus and enhancing physical activity in primary schools and preparing guidelines for its use in other school environments

Project acronym: ZDRAVKO

Work package number 3 - Evaluation of the project

Project document: PROJECT EVALUATION FINAL REPORT

Reporting period: 1 January 2015 – 31 August 2016

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I. BACKGROUND

This paper covers the whole implementation period for project ZDRAVKO, funded by the European Commission within the Call for proposals for preparation action on Healthy diet: Early years and Ageing Population.

This project evaluation included both aspects of the evaluation:

- Formative evaluation focusing on the learning aspect and
- Summative aspect with the purpose of accountability and control.

Its aim was to evaluate the quality and consistency of the project and its outcomes. It has been conducted to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the project and above all to strengthen the accountability of the main partner Ljudska univerza Kočevje both to the donor and the public. The donor can follow up on evaluation findings to determine whether grants provided correspond to the results achieved. The expert and general public can evaluate the quality of project results.

The project ZDRAVKO was covering the issue of health in schools. The evaluation was directed in assessing the changes in understanding health and achieved progress in everyday activities that stakeholders were expected to make. The project was initiated because of a big gap between declarative recognition of health as a value and practical action supporting every-day activities that require new attitude, skills and knowledge. Regardless of many EU and national recommendation for implanting healthy school menus and enhancing physical activity majority of school staff finds it difficult to accept and follow them.

The purposes of the evaluation activities were above all to help the main partner and collaborative partners to improve the project and to take decisions. Nevertheless, the project's evaluation concentrate not only on the question if all activities have been carried out as planned but also if their conduction leads to the achievement of the project's objectives.

A mid-term and a final report were prepared during the project. The first evaluation report in the middle of the project was prepared with the ambition to support the decision making process and enable better implementation of project activities. The majority of evaluation activities were executed in the second evaluation report in the last months of the project.



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II. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

According to the project aims and objectives the evaluation assesses:

- Product quality, especially the guidelines for using the project model in other schools;
- Evaluation of the promotion activities and dissemination and exploitation success;
- Main and collaborative partner cooperation and communication.

III. FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The bases of the evaluation are the objectives defined in the project application. We have divided them into short and long-term objectives and put them into sub groups according to the topics.

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

The evaluation measured if the following short-term project objectives have been reached:

Objectives regarding healthy diet:

- **Objective 1:** Raising awareness about the importance of healthy diet and good nutrition status of school-age children among the children, their parents, principals, teachers, kitchen school staff and general public;
- **Objective 2:** Increasing awareness of the importance and advantages of locally grown food and self-supply of food (also because of greater nutrient values).
- **Objective 3:** Raising the individual "self-care" and responsibility for healthy living.

Objectives regarding physical activity:

- **Objective 4:** Contributing to greater physical activity in the school environment;
- **Objective 5:** Increasing awareness of physical activity as a prerequisite for happy, independent old age;



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Objectives focusing on professional work of kitchen school staff:

- **Objective 6:** Informing, educating and supporting key actors that are responsible for school diet;
- **Objective 7:** Promoting and strengthening the use of online tools, designed to help the organizers of school meals with nutrition values of specific foods and with composition of healthy school menus; nutritional values of specific meal/food and consequently when planning a balanced meal;

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

If a follow-up evaluation will be made after the completion of the project also the following general objectives could be measured:

- **Objective 8:** Raising the individual "self-care" and responsibility for healthy living in the future;
- **Objective 9:** Reducing possibilities of diseases, linked to unbalanced diet, inadequate nutrition intake among young population (overweight, obesity, high cholesterol levels, high blood pressure etc.);
- **Objective 10:** Contributing to better health, general well-being of school-age children (greater mental and physical ability) and subsequently to active ageing in middle as well as in old age;

IV. METHODOLOGY

Main methods of the evaluation were questionnaires, observation techniques and interviews.

The steps of the evaluation process were:

1. Definition of evaluation priorities: the priorities were defined in the project application
2. Definition of quality criteria/indicators: the quality criteria and indicators were defined in the project application and elaborated during project implementation
3. Data collection and analysis: implemented during the project implementation
5. Data interpretation and preparation of recommendations: in mid-term and final project monitoring reports



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Final evaluation report is based on the following documentation:

- Project application
- Internal annual narrative and financial reports prepared by the project manager
- Analysis of the questionnaires on school food completed by pupils (June 2015)
- Analysis of the questionnaires on workshops completed by organizers of school menus (June 2015)
- Analysis of the questionnaires about introducing new dishes on school menus completed by school children (June 2016)
- Analysis of the questionnaires about the cooking workshops in schools completed by parents (June 2016)
- Analysis of the final questionnaires for mayors of the municipalities involved in the project, school principals, organizers of school menus, cooks, gym teachers, other school teachers, pupils and parents (June 2016)
- Project website zdravko-luk.si
- [Project Facebook profile](#)
- Webpages of the main partner and collaborative partners
- Audio recordings of the final project conference

V. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS MATRIX

In the evaluation we were interested to examine the changes in attitude of different stakeholders. Since there is a big difference between objective and subjective interests regarding health – people support it as a value but are often against health enhancing activities the project has carefully defined its stakeholders and was careful in choosing suitable approaches to introduce the project activities.

Stakeholder group:	Interests and how effected are they by the problem:	Capacity and motivation to bring changes:	Actions to address stakeholder interests:
Mayors of municipalities	Have a general interest in long-term health effects.	Have limited capacity to influence the project success.	Ask for support and Inform about the project results.



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School principles	Have a general interest to address healthy life-style in schools.	Are under pressure because of introduction of novelties in school life.	Meetings to discuss progress and difficulties in the project implementation.
School teachers	Their personal views are not always in line with the general interest for healthier activities in schools.	Teachers vary in their interest and support of the project activities.	The project has to be very careful to gain their support with awareness rising activities.
Organizers of school menus, kitchen staff and gym teachers	As the main target group they will benefit most from the project in their daily work.	Have limited capacity. Need to change their attitude, working habits and invest extra work in project activities.	Trainings and workshops for additional knowledge and motivation.
Pupils	Most effected by the project activities – a change in their attitude towards health in their life span is expected.	With the right approach can be easily motivated to participate.	Set of activities during and after their school classes.
Parents	Are aware of the long-term benefits for the children.	Have an indirect but powerful influence.	Workshops and promotional activities to present positive outcomes and health benefits.



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VI. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The evaluation is comprehensive since it includes all the criteria that are standard in the international evaluations: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Evaluation includes a combination of descriptive and normative questions that are listed below. Some of them are predefined already in the project application and some were added during project implementation.

Evaluation criteria 1: Relevance

Evaluation questions:

Question 1.1: Is the project relevant in relation to Donor's goals, strategies and policies

Question 1.2: What is the project objective from perspective of different target groups?

Question 1.3: Do the project activities address the needs of target groups?

The project corresponds to the first priority under the Call for proposals for preparatory action on *Healthy diet: early years and ageing population, under which the project is financed* that is "promoting a balanced diet and adequate nutrition status in all ages".

The project contributes to the following objective of the Call for proposals: ... »support public, effective educational campaigns to make the general population (whether children, adult or elderly) aware of the need of adequate nutrition and balanced diets and to educate the public on how to adjust their nutrition to their status habits, tastes and needs, while keeping in mind that an adequate level of physical activity is key to promote health and well-being¹.«

The expected results under the call are to ... »Promote awareness of the importance of good nutrition, of an adequate level of physical activity and of the problem of malnutrition by developing the competences of health professionals and informing care-givers and general population on the need for a balanced diet

¹ Call for proposals for preparatory action on Healthy diet: early years and ageing population, Page 5,
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_food-safety/funding/docs/decision_c20143039_call_for_proposals_en.pdf



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and a good nutrition status in the general population, children, adults or older people². «

The rationale in the Call is the following:

- *A balanced diet with an adequate level of physical activity helps to maintain or improve the health status of the individual, whether children, adult or old person. A balanced diet plays a role throughout the whole life-span.*
- *Currently too many children are consuming diets with too many calories and/or unbalanced nutrients and many older people are consuming diets with too few calories and/or unbalanced nutrients.*
- *Unbalanced diets and malnutrition lower the probability for a long, active and healthy life. A balanced diet with an adequate level of physical activity and a good nutritional status contribute to the prevention of certain diseases, to more favourable clinical outcomes and assure good quality of life and may prolong an active, healthy and independent living of the elderly³.*

We have checked with pupils and organisers of school menus – two main target groups - about the project relevance:

PUPILS

In the starting phase of project implementation the evaluation questionnaires were prepared and filed in on-line by pupils of 5 collaborative schools. Their answers present their opinion about school food and healthy habits. The questions tackle beverages, breakfast, school snack and school lunch. The pupils explain what are their favourite and less favourite fruits, vegetables and dishes.

Health is an objective goal for the school children. Pupils are very eager to participate in all project activities and from their engagement and work done in this project we conclude that they understand very well that health issues are important in their life. In the questionnaires they were asked if their schools follow the guidelines for healthy menus and 74% think they do. They were also asked which dishes are in their opinion healthy but are not on the menu frequent

² Call for proposals for preparatory action on Healthy diet: early years and ageing population, Page 6,
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_food-safety/funding/docs/decision_c20143039_call_for_proposals_en.pdf

³ Call for proposals for preparatory action on Healthy diet: early years and ageing population, Page 5,
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_food-safety/funding/docs/decision_c20143039_call_for_proposals_en.pdf



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enough. The pupils gave many different answers. When the question if schools follow the guidelines for healthy menus was repeated at the end of the project 80% of responders said yes (N=10).

ORGANIZERS OF SCHOOL MENUS

They have filled in the questionnaires in the first period of project implementation and at the end of the project. All of them claim that the workshops have fulfilled their expectations (80% said yes and 20% said partially, N=5). They also claim they are satisfied with knowledge that they have gained during project implementation (100% said they are satisfied, N=5).

Evaluation criteria 2: Effectiveness

Evaluation questions:

Question 2.1: How was the project implemented?

Question 2.2: To what extent has the project achieved the indicators of success?

In the project implementation the following activities were implemented:

- Project website and Facebook profile operating,
- 4 meetings with school principals,
- 12 workshops for organizers of school menus,
- 6 workshops for school kitchen staff,
- 3 meeting of school gym teachers,
- 4 growing vegetable gardens: 2 growing vegetable gardens and 2 gardens with garden beds (first and second year),
- 10 parent meetings (two on each collaborating school),
- 50 cooking workshops for pupils and their parents on cooperating schools,
- 5 minute physical activity brakes in schools,
- 13 new dishes introduced on school menus (10 of them will stay on the menus),
- Booklet with 58 recipes,
- Guidelines for using the project model in other schools,
- Final conference of the project.

According to the narrative reports prepared by the project manager the project implementation followed the timeline envisaged in the project proposal.



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In June 2016 we have given simple evaluation questionnaires to the following target groups: mayors of the municipalities involved in the project, school principals, organizers of school menus, cooks, gym teachers, other school teachers, pupils and parents. Here are the results of these and other questionnaires used in the project.

MAYORS

One of three mayors who were involved in the project participated in the survey. He/she stated that project ZDRAVKO contributed to awareness raising about the importance of healthy diet and good nutrition status of school-age children in his/her municipality. In his/her opinion the project also increased the awareness of the importance and advantages of locally grown food and self-supply of food.

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

According to their answers (N=2) project ZDRAVKO contributed to the awareness raising about the importance of healthy diet and good nutrition status of school-age children in their schools. The project has also increased the awareness of the importance and advantages of locally grown food and self-supply of food. When asked about the cooperation and communication with the main partner - Ljudska univerza Kočevje - they confirmed successful cooperation.

Two principals also give speeches at the final project conference in which they expressed their thankfulness to the main partner for introducing new activities regarding health in their schools. They explained the project has brought many positive changes in schools that were appreciated by school staff especially school cooks who rarely have the opportunity to attend professional trainings.

ORGANIZERS OF SCHOOL MENUS

In their answers they agree that project ZDRAVKO contributed to the awareness raising about the importance of healthy diet and good nutrition status of school-age children in their schools (N=5). The project has also increased the awareness about the importance and advantages of locally grown food and self-supply of food.

60% of them stated that they are using more the online tools, designed to help with nutrition values of specific foods and with composition of healthy school



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menus and with nutritional values of specific meal/food for planning more balanced meals.

SCHOOL COOKS

10 school cooks answered the questionnaires about the ZDRAVKO project. 80% of them agree that project ZDRAVKO contributed to the awareness raising about the importance of healthy diet and good nutrition status of school-age children in their schools. 70% cooks agree that the project has also increased the awareness about the importance and advantages of locally grown food and self-supply of food.

GYM TEACHERS

Two gym teachers participated in the survey. They both agree that at the end of the project the children were more aware of the fact that physical activity is crucial for healthy living.

SCHOOL TEACHERS

They were asked if the school children raised their individual "self-care" and responsibility for healthy living during the project. 68.2% of them think they have (N=22). 72.7% of them agree that the project contributed to the awareness raising about the importance of healthy diet and good nutrition status of school-age children in their schools. 68.2% of teachers agree that the project has increased the awareness of the importance and advantages of locally grown food and self-supply of food.

PUPILS

The most crucial moment in evaluation of project effectiveness came with the Analysis of the questionnaires filled in by school children. In the period from March to June 2016 the children gave their opinion on introducing new dishes on school menus. 174 pupils who attend the five partner schools of the ZDRAVKO project responded to the on-line questionnaire. They have evaluated new dishes that were cooked for them during the project implementation. The pupils generally liked the dishes that they have tried and all the dishes got good marks - best of them being Pasta Bolognese with vegetables. When asked if they would like to eat those dishes again the children gave a green flag to the majority of the dishes.



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All school children who answered the final questionnaire agreed that it is necessary that they look after their health (N=10). They gave the following suggestions how to do it: to eat healthy, not to eat sweet and salty snacks, to eat enough vegetables and fruits, to move and sleep enough, to be active in nature, to get enough fresh air and to brush teeth.

They have listed the following advantages of having an own vegetable garden (in school or at home): we know the origin of food, we have vegetables at hand, we don't need to buy food, we save money, we can enjoy healthy, fresh and seasonal home grown vegetables and fruits that have more vitamins and less harmful chemicals.

Children have listed the following advantages of eating locally grown food: it is fresher and healthier, has fewer chemicals and more vitamins, we pollute less the environment, we support local farmers, we know the source and quality, it has not been imported from distant counties and has not travelled many km.

PARENTS

Groups of parents joined cooking workshops held in schools in the afternoons together with their children. 32 of them answered a questionnaire. All responders were very satisfied with the chef and the cooking results and said they will try new recipes at home.

All parents - responders to the final questionnaire - agreed that project ZDRAVKO contributed to the awareness raising about the importance of healthy diet of school children (N=12). 91.7% also believe that the project has increased the awareness about the importance and advantages of locally grown food and self-supply of food. 81.8% are convinced that the school children have raised their individual "self-care" and responsibility for healthy living.



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Evaluation criteria 3: Efficiency

Evaluation question:

Question 3: Were activities cost-efficient?

To evaluate the financial efficiency of the project we have checked the final financial reports prepared by the project manager.

Staff costs were charged according to the wage classes of employees working for the main partner who is a public body. In this way no extensive spending for salaries was possible.

Travel costs generally covered local trips to meetings made by project manager and project coordinators and by gardeners for establishing and maintaining the gardens. All travel costs were justified for the purpose of implementation of the project activities.

The budget for equipment covered the costs for seeds, soil, gardening tools, plants, garden beds and other equipment for establishing and maintaining the garden and no particularities regarding the spending is noted.

Costs for consumables covered the material for all cooking workshop that were organized during the project implementation. All costs are clear and well managed.

Sub-contracting and other costs contain various costs that correspond to the market values. Costs for establishing the project web-page were transferred from the staff costs.

We conclude that cost-efficiency of the project was ensured and the costs of the intervention were justified by the results. All costs are in adequate categories and are justified. Financial management of the project was solid and no unnecessary or extensive spending was noted.



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Evaluation criteria 4: Impact

Evaluation questions:

Question 4.1: How many people were reached by the project?

Question 4.2: Did the dissemination activities reach the EU target audiences?

This project had two main project audiences:

- Local general public that needed to understand and support the project in order to ensure its success on the local level and
- Interested public all over EU that can benefit from project results and can copy the model of introducing healthy school menus and enhancing physical activity in their primary schools.

Promotional activities included:

- Regular promotion on local radio and in local newspapers,
- Regular news on project development on project website and main partner website, project Facebook profile,
- Cooperation of teachers, involved in the project on the eTwinning platform.

An extensive project web site in Slovenian and partially English language and Facebook profile was developed during the project. News about the project was regularly put on the main partner's website and Facebook. Also collaborative partners have put information about the project on their websites. The majority of collaborative partners do not have Facebook profiles.

LOCAL GENERAL PUBLIC

There was a media conference and press release prepared at the beginning of the project. Local radio, TV and web and newspapers have all reported/published articles about the project.

An interesting promotion event was organized twice in September on the local food market. Vegetables from the school gardens and plans to include new healthy dishes in school menus were presented and well received by the visitors. School children (1st, 5th and 7th grade) from two schools included in the project joined the event. We can conclude that the local general public was informed well about the project.



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The final project conference was held on 17 June 2016 in Kočevje where activities, results and guidelines were presented to the general public.

The project ZDRAVKO was presented at the Lifelong Learning Week on the 19 May 2016 organized by the Development Education Centre Novo mesto.

We estimate all people living in Municipalities that are collaborative partners in the project (Municipalities of Kočevje, Sodražica and Kostel) – aprox. 19.000 people - were informed about the project listening through the web pages, local events and local media.

NATIONAL EXPERT PUBLIC

Presentation of the project activities and results was made at the conference "Role and mission of the people's universities for tomorrow" held on 14 June 2016 and organized by the Association of training and advisory centres in Slovenia in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERT PUBLIC

Project partners regularly posted news about the project implementation on the eTwinning platform throughout the project duration. By cooperating in the platform the teachers and pupils have gained many contacts and build cooperation with their colleges/friends across the EU.

To upgrade the cooperation and build a foundation for further active involvement in other projects, the teachers and pupils involved in the ZDRAVKO project have decided to become engaged in a similar project called "We are what we eat". Pupils have exchanged information about their eating habits, knowledge on healthy eating, recipes and news about the work in the garden. The project goal was to raise awareness about the nutritional value of foods, the importance of a varied and balanced diet and the importance of physical movement. It included schools from Italy, Georgia, Latvia and Slovenia.



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Evaluation criteria 5: Sustainability

Evaluation question:

Question 5: To what extent are the benefits of the project expected to continue after the completion of the project?

We have gathered the answers from the final questionnaire filled in by different target groups. The question about the sustainability was the following: *To what extent are the benefits of the project expected to continue after the completion of the project?*

The mayors, school principals and organizers of school menus all replied that the benefits will be used in the future to a greater extent. Also 55.6% of teachers agree. 50% of cooks and gym teachers replied "to a greater extent". The majority of parents were not so sure about the benefits - 58.3% of them said that the benefits of the project will be used to a lesser extent in the future.

The main partner has committed to update the project website for at least 5 years after the project completion. All public project deliverables will remain available on the project website. This gives reassurance about the accessibility of project results and also on their future engagement in these topics. They are also committed to present the successful project implementation and know-how to all interested expert public with the prepared document "Guidelines on the implementation of the project ZDRAVKO" in other school environments.

With the support of the project webpages in English language and the recipes booklet "WHAT'S cooking ZDRAVKO" in English language that is available on-line the possibilities for knowledge transfer in other school environments is made easier and more accessible.

All collaborative project partners have stressed the importance of future development in the field of health. The two principals who gave speeches at the final project conference presented their commitment and actual plans to continue with the project activities in the school year 2016/17 - after the conclusion of funding from the EU.

If the funds would be made available in the future it would be interesting to evaluate the sustainability of the project after a year and in a longer time-period.



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