



# «GAINING HEALTH THROUGH LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION»

«Guadagnare Salute con le life skills»

Marche Region (Italy)



# OUTLINE

1. The context: Marche Region and the Healthcare System

2. Project development

3. Our practice

4. Opportunities and obstacles

5. Results achieved & impact

6. Success factors and lessons learned

7. Further developments

# 1. The context: Marche Region and the Healthcare System

# Our context

Marche region is located in the centre of Italy, with about 1,500,000 inhabitants and 25% of population over 65 years, representing one of the Italian region with the highest life expectancy.

Healthy life expectancy at birth (y, 2018)	
Marche	60.1
Italy	58.5

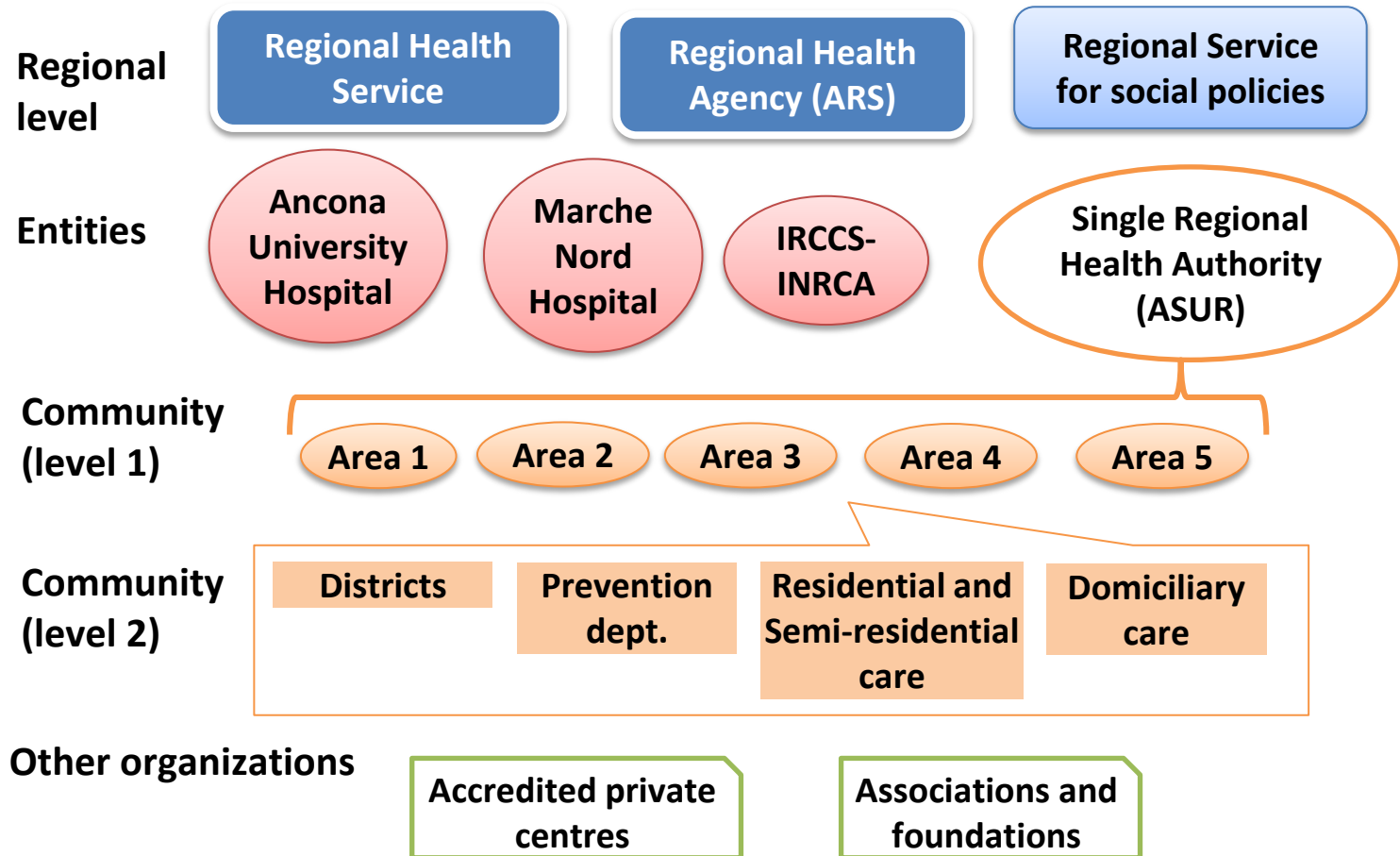


Majority of the population lives on the coast, especially after the earthquakes (since 2016).

In our region, young people (3-14 years) represent approximately 10% of the population.

# Marche Regional healthcare system (1)

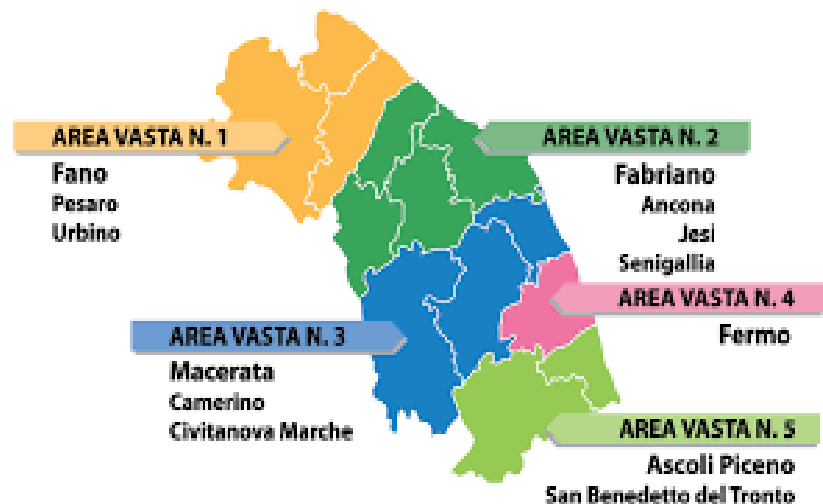
**Italy:** health right assured by the National Health Service (NHS) and implemented by each Italian region.



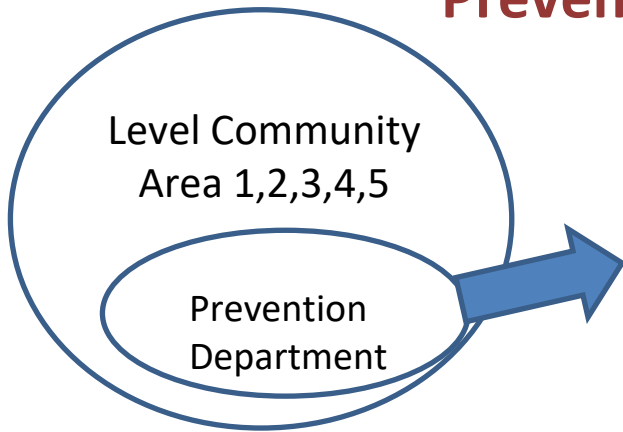
## Marche Regional healthcare system (2)

The Single Regional Health Authority (ASUR) is one of its component, having *many* competences in Public Health, Prevention, Primary care, Residential and Semi-residential services, Domiciliary Care, and Rescue and Emergency. It is divided in:

- 5 Areas
- 13 Districts covering specific areas corresponding to more Municipalities.

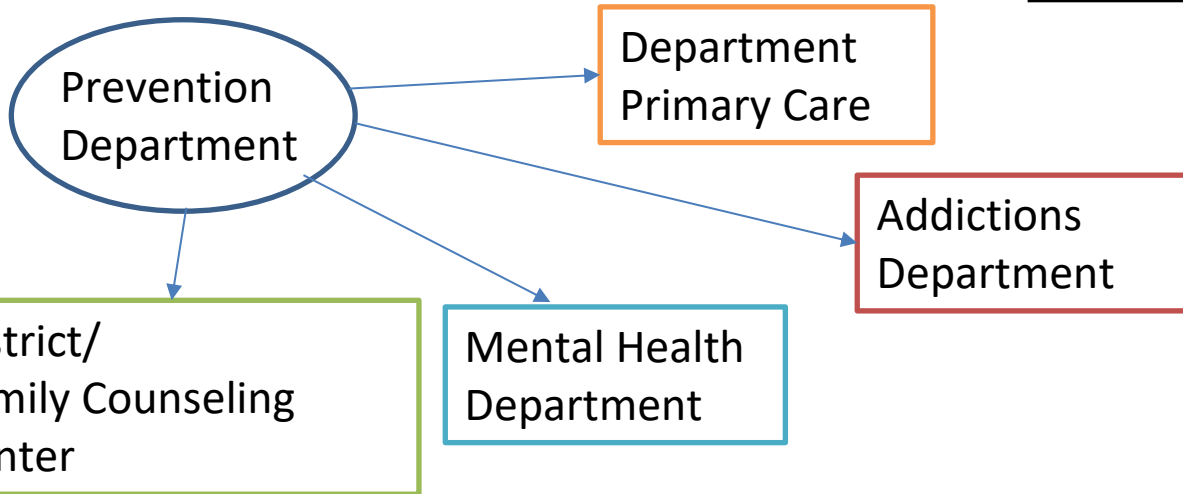


# Prevention Department



- Hygiene and safety in living environments
- Protection from environmental hazards
- Workplace prevention
- Prevention of chemical risk
- Infectious diseases and vaccination programs
- **Health promotion and healthy lifestyles**

## Objectives Regional Prevention Plan: Health promotion and healthy lifestyles



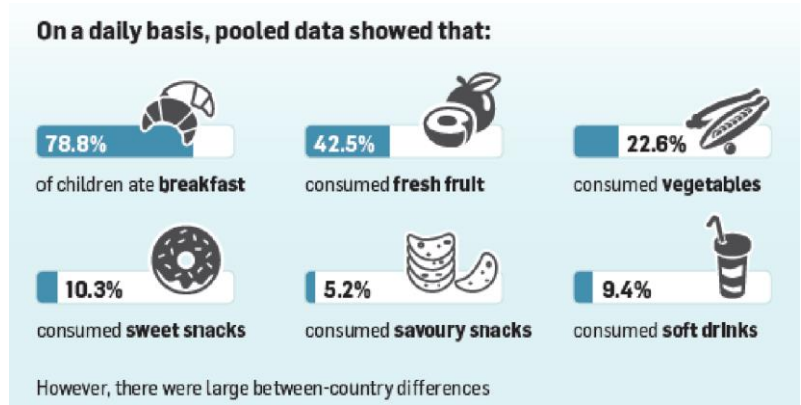
## 2. Project development



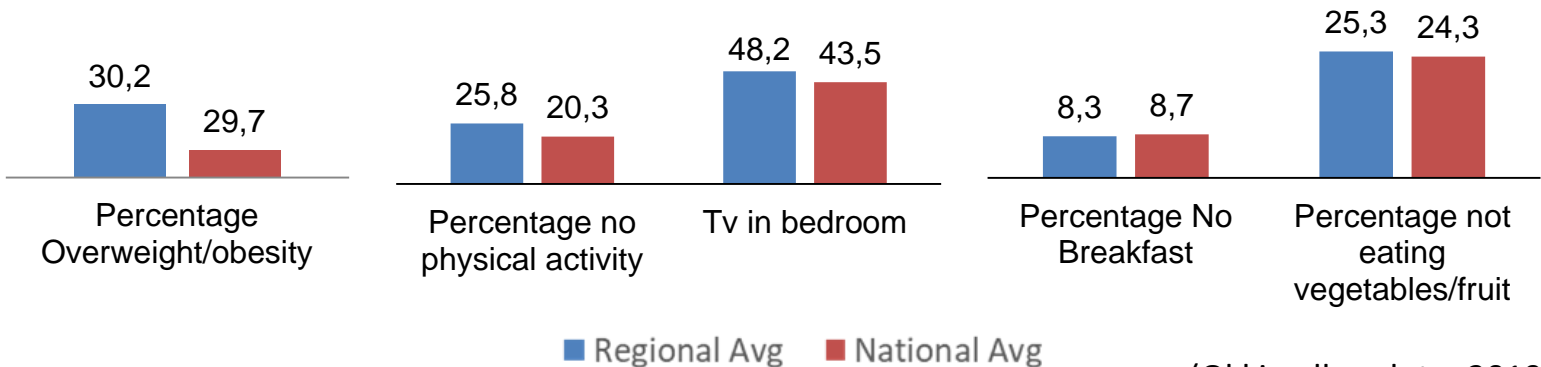
# Risks and unhealthy behaviours



WHO European region (23 countries), eating habits of 6 to 9-year-old children (2015-2017, n= 132,489 children).



Around 398,000 children aged 6-9 years (out of 13.7 million in these 21 European countries) are severely obese (COSI, 2019).



(Okkio alla salute, 2019)

# Why Life Skills Education?

- The "... WHO has defined a core set of skills that should be the focus of any prevention programme aimed at promoting the well-being of children and adolescents, regardless of the context...".
- WHO identified 10 fundamental *Life skills*, which are indispensable skills in everyday life, especially in school life skills:

AREA	SKILL
EMOTIONAL	1 Self-awareness
	2 Emotion management
	3 Stress management

AREA	SKILL
SOCIAL	4 Effective relationships
	5 Empathy
	6 Effective communication

AREA	SKILL
COGNITIVE	7 Critical thinking
	8 Creative thinking
	9 Problem solving
	10 Decision making

## Risks and unhealthy behaviours

- There is a **worsening trend** in the young people's **unhealthy/risky habits** like sedentarism, unhealthy nutrition, use of alcohol/drugs and time passed on media devices from the 11 to the 14 years (2018, Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study - HBSC)
- Life Skills are important for people for choosing correct lifestyles and their social and psychological well being



## Better in early ages!

- If Life Skills training is carried on in early ages (life course approach) and by teachers, it's more effective (Kwan et al., 2005; HEN, 2006; SHE, 2013)

## Overall and specific goals

- Promoting the **enhancement of protective factors** (life skills) and the **adoption of healthy behaviours** in the youth and adult population
- **Strengthening resilience** and promoting personal and social **empowerment** processes
- **Increasing risk perception** and empowerment of individuals to tackle non-communicable diseases.
  - **Develop training programs** to enhance life skills of children through actions **led by teachers** (and parents)
  - **Implement and evaluate training courses for pupils** (3-14 years old) to develop the empowerment and life skills and increase protective factors, risk perception and self-efficacy for the adoption of healthy behaviours and lifestyles.

# The programme development

Specific request from teachers to enhance emotive and social skills of pupils

Establishment of a Regional working group and a stakeholders network; development of the material

Embedded in the Regional Prevention Plan; new Stakeholders

2012  
Project design

2013/14  
Pilot study

2014  
Programme

From 2017  
Extended to the whole region

Laws and plans

National Prevention Plan (NPP) 2010-2013; Project «Towards schools promoting health»

NPP 2014-2019; Regional Prevention Plan (RPP) 2014-2019; Project «Schools & health»

...

# Stakeholders involvement



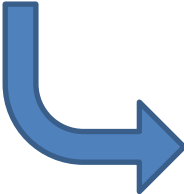
**Regional/local health and social authorities:** Public officers, psychologists, physicians, sociologists, healthcare assistant, educators



**School:** Regional School Office, Scholastic Provincial Authority, teachers



**Voluntary association: LILT (Italian League Against Cancer - Lega Italiana Lotta contro i Tumori)**

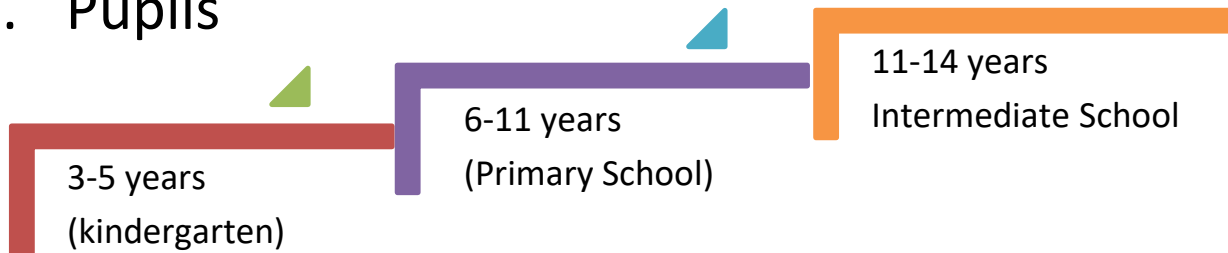
- 
- Prevention against cancer activities in schools
  - Promotion of healthy life-styles
  - Direct participation through the Regional working group
  - Development of the training materials
  - Training of the trainers and of teachers

### 3. Our practice

# Target groups



## 1. Pupils



## 2. Teachers



## 3. Parents

**Territory:**  
whole Marche region

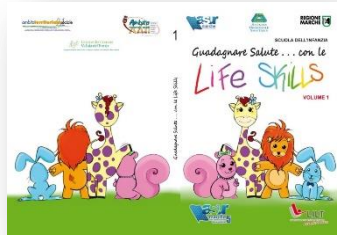




# Tools (1)

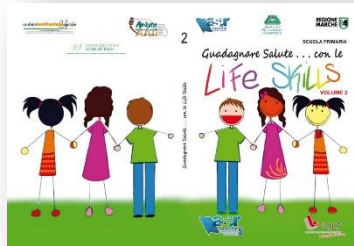
- **Manuals for teachers** (each including a theoretical part on life skills and attachments):

## Volume 1 (Kindergartens)



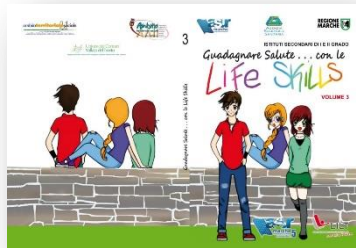
- 57 activities of 1 hour differentiated by class, covering 4 life skills

## Volume 2 (Primary school)



- 88 activities of 1 hour, covering 10 life skills

## Volume 3 (Intermediate school)



- 60 activities of 1 hour, covering 10 life skills

## Tools (2)

- **Manuals for senior teachers on life-style** (each including a theoretical part on life skills and attachments):

### Volume 4 (Kindergartens)



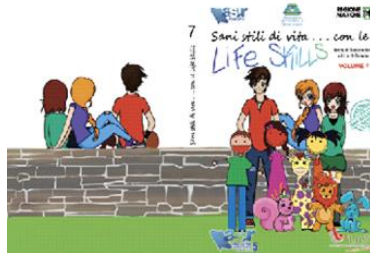
- 19 activities of 1 hour on "Health and well-being", "Alcohol", "Smoking", "Nutrition", "Exercise".

### Volume 5 (Primary school)



- 30 activities of 1 hour on "Health and well-being", "Alcohol", "Smoking", "Nutrition", "Movement".

### Volume 7 (Intermediate school)



- 50 activities of 1 hour on "Health and well-being", "Alcohol", "Smoking", "Nutrition", "Movement", "Affectivity and sexuality"

## Tools (3)

- **Pre- and post- training questionnaires:**
  - Teachers evaluate the life skills of the class before and after the training rating a list of "observable behaviours" on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much).
  - Activities of the manuals carried out in class (only after the training)
  - Satisfaction questionnaire: overall satisfaction, most/least liked aspects, interest of pupils, willingness to reuse the manuals, any adaptation made, and any other suggestion for improvement.



## Tools (4)

- **Manuals for parents** (each including a theoretical part on life skills and attachments):

**"Gaining health... with mum and dad. Healthy lifestyles" - vol.1**



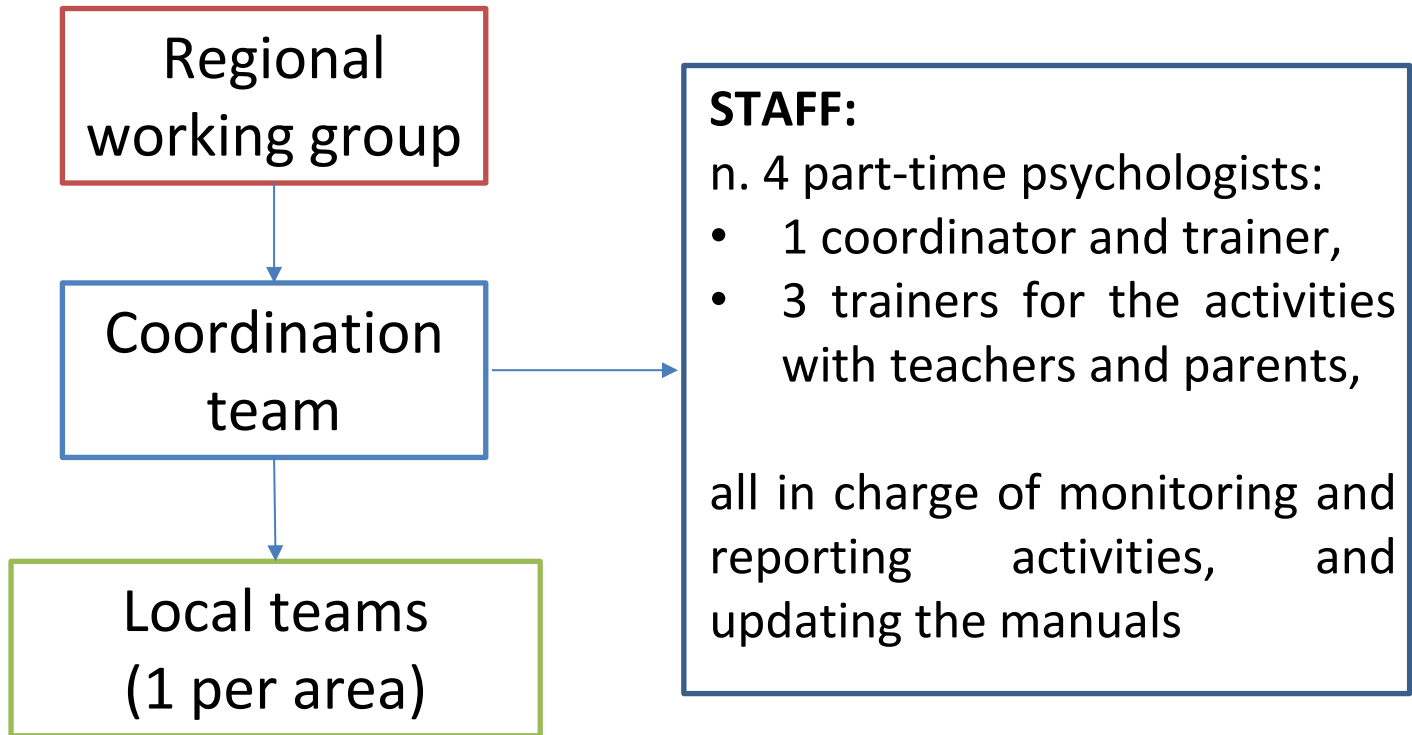
- information on the main health topics, to promote healthy behaviors for parents and children

**"Gaining health... with mum and dad. Life Skills" - vol. 2**

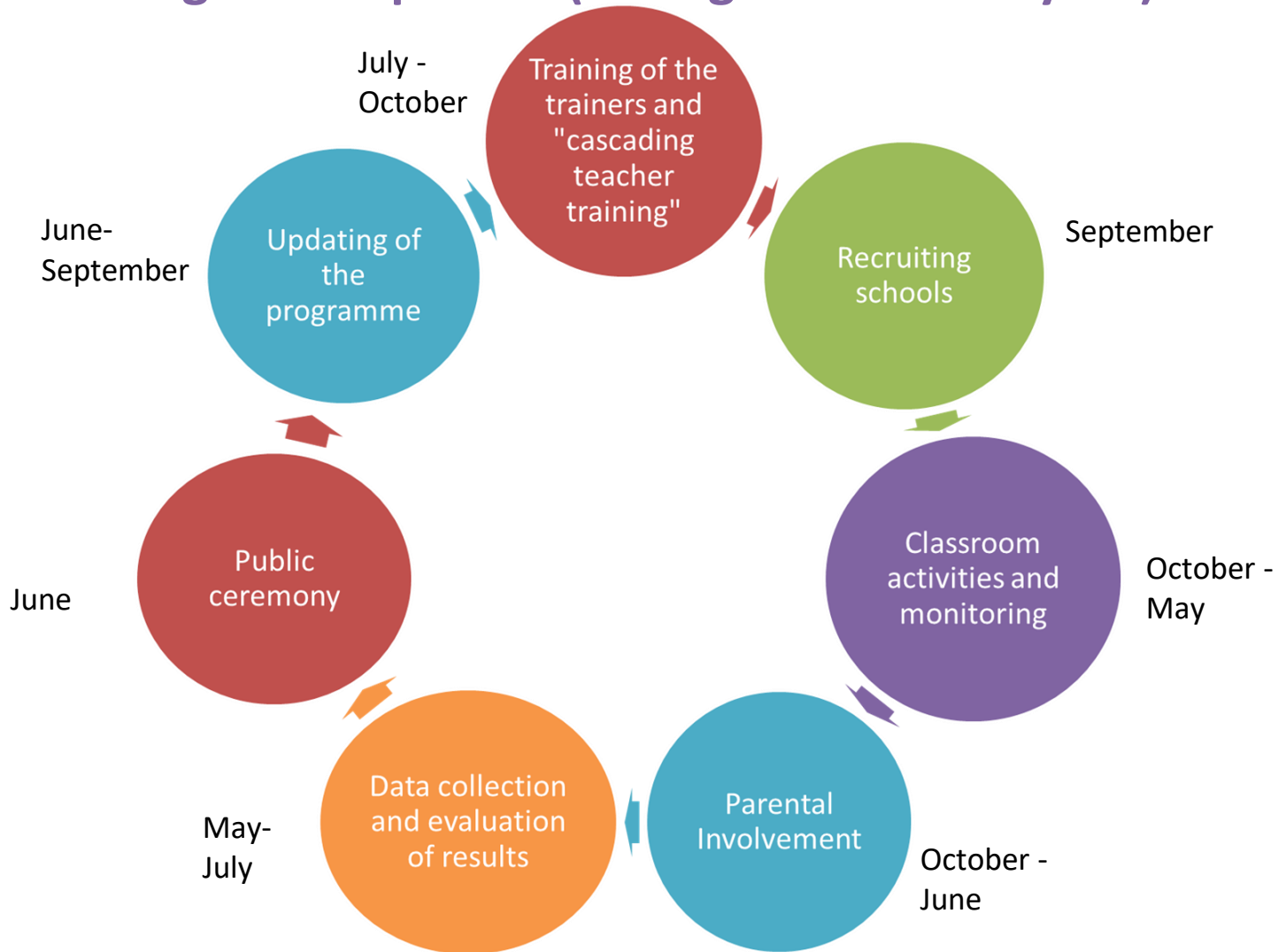


- Activities on life skills for children 0-3 and 3-11 years old

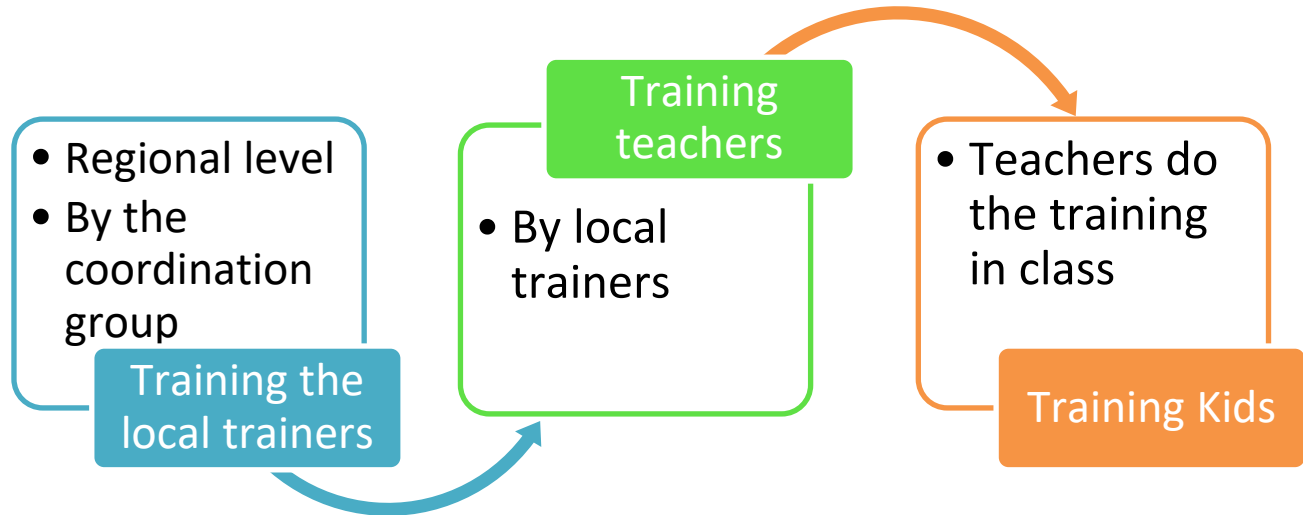
# Programme organization and staff



# Programme phases (during each school year)



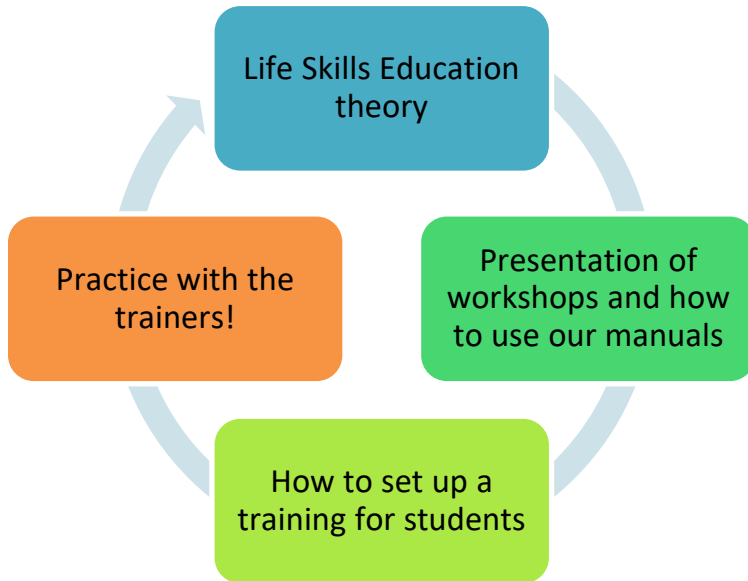
## Training the trainers and «cascading teachers' training» (1)



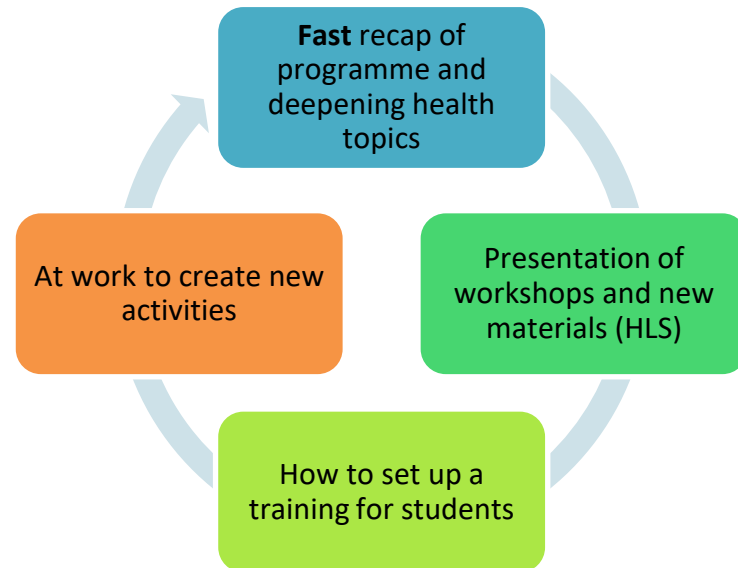
**Training teachers programme:** two modules, one school-oriented (12 hours) and one family-oriented (3 hours), each one foreseeing both theory and practice (e.g. roleplaying).

## Training the trainers and «cascading teachers' training» (2)

### Training of «junior» teachers



### Training of «senior» teachers





## Recruiting schools



## Classroom activities



## Parental involvement

- All schools are invited (e-mails)
- Participation is on a voluntary basis.
- Training for teachers
  
- Pre-training questionnaire
- Activities of the manuals
- Monitoring and supervision by local teams
- Collection of the works done by students in class (drawings, photos, stories, etc.)
- Post-training questionnaire
  
- Informative meetings with parents, to present the initiative and the manuals for parents

# Example of classroom individual activity (life skills)

Which animal am I?



*"I wish I were a WOLF because he goes around at night and I don't sleep at night"*

## Self awareness

Children draw an animal with the characteristics they feel to have or they'd like to have



*"I would like to be a DOLPHIN because it swims free in the sea"*



*"I'd like to be a CHICK because it's soft and everyone caresses it"*



*"I would like to be a WOLF because he lives free in the woods and everyone is afraid of him"*

# Example of classroom group activity (life skills)

## Everybody on the raft



## Effective relationships

Children are given a common goal and they have to collaborate to reach it

# Example of classroom activity (life skills and healthy life stiles)

**Let's tell the story together**

**Critical + Creative thinking-  
healthy nutrition**

Children create a story about healthy nutrition and then they perform it



# Data collection and evaluation of results

- **Online data collection**, quantitative and qualitative
- **Evaluation of:**
  - the level of *life skills* before and after the training
  - the teacher satisfaction
  - the activities performed
  - the suggestions made
  - the new activities invented by the teachers
- **Reports** sent to the Region for evaluation towards the Regional prevention plan objectives.





# Public ceremony

- All teachers and parents are invited to attend a **public ceremony** at their school to present their students' work and discuss the results.



# Update of the programme

The Coordination team periodically:

- updates the manuals with student work and new activities invented by teachers;
- plans for the following school year the Workshops for teachers based on their needs and requests.



## 4. Opportunities and obstacles



## Obstacles...

## ...and how they have been overcome

Limited funds	Alliances and collaboration with local organisations (cost-sharing or allocation of their own psychologists to the programme)
Lack of sensitivity of school staff to Life Skills Education	Meeting with school managers and teachers to explain the programme; proposing the programme in schools (or to teachers) that are more "sensitive" to health promotion initiatives
Limited knowledge of local realities and school needs	Meetings with teachers and school managers to understand needs

# Trasferibilità

1. The training methodology
2. The manuals and questionnaires
3. The model: the programme and its governance



## TO DO LIST:

- Mapping one own's services and identify interested schools
- Translate manuals
- Print manuals
- Train new trainers and....
- Experience the programme!



# Sustainability

- The programme needs a small number of trainers (Financial Sustainability)
- The programme needs a small number of meetings
- «Senior» teachers could become trainers themselves
- Manuals do not get old quickly
- Creation and implementation of new activities (Temporal Sustainability)

## 5. Results achieved & impact

# Our Indicators from the Regional Prevention Plan

## Process/output indicators and target

Regional working group: establishment

Production of training materials: 1 manual for each target group

Training of the trainers: 1 training course

Training of educators (“cascade” approach): 2 courses for each school year, 10 hours each

Meetings with parents: 1 meeting for each participating school

Dissemination of results: 1 conference each year

## Outcome indicators (target)

N. of schools participating to the initiative: 25

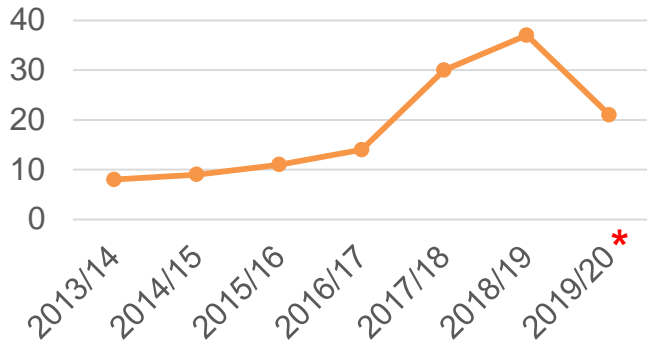
% of participating schools that use the manuals: 100%

Satisfaction of teachers: 90% satisfied

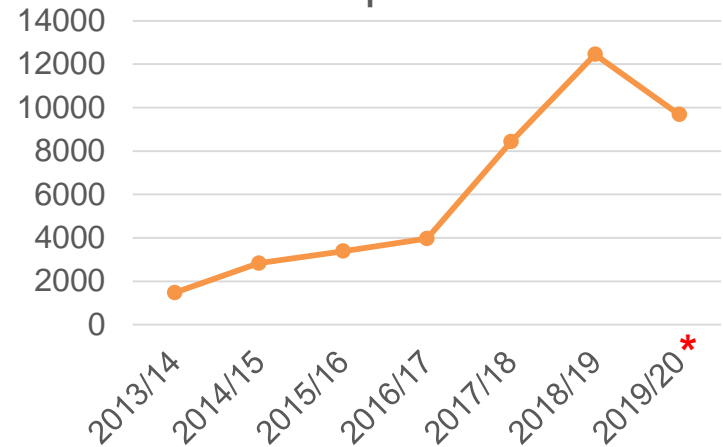
Development of life skills of pupils: Increased level after the training

# Participants

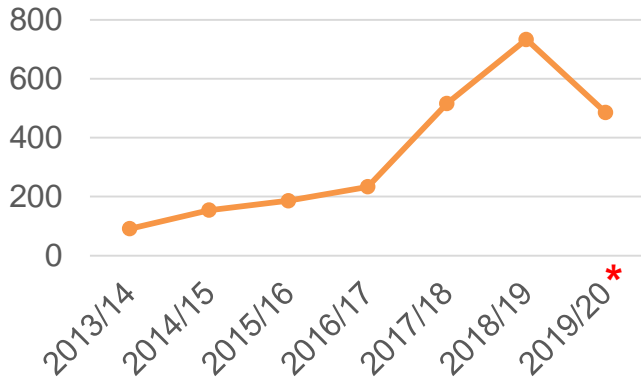
## Schools



## Pupils



## Educators



Overall, over **40,000** children participated in the programme, since its start.

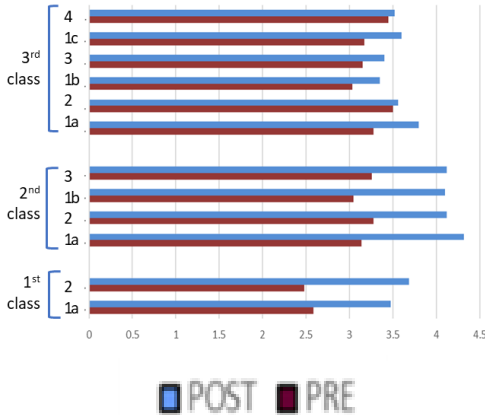
We reached **almost 50%** of schools of Marche (70/151)

\* The decrease is due to school locking during COVID-19 (Data refer only to activities concluded)

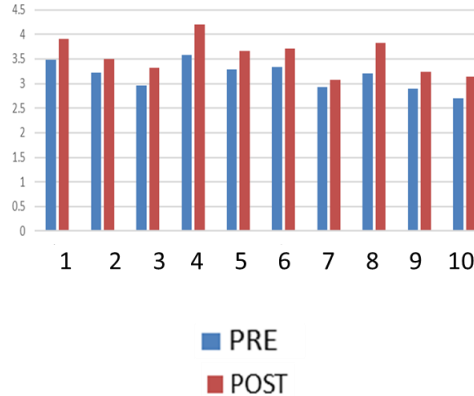
# Pre-post questionnaires

## Area 5, 2018/19

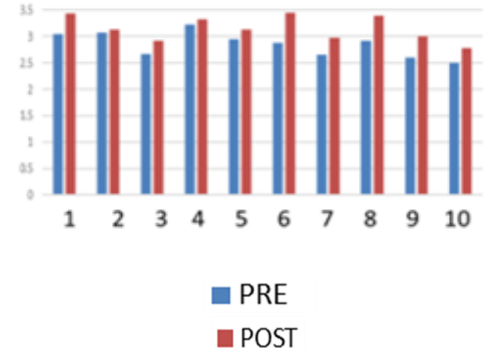
### Kindergartens



### Primary schools



### Middle schools



- Overall, data show a general **increase in the life skills** of the students after the training.
- Pre-training data comparison among the three school orders show a progressive, substantial increase in the mastery of life skills of the pupils, which appears to grow gradually and steadily from kindergartens to intermediate school.

# Satisfaction questionnaire

## Most liked

- Easy to use and clear manuals
- Collaboration with other teachers
- Flexibility of the programme
- Monitoring activities by the local team

## Areas to improve

- Need of more workshops for the development of their life skills
- Involving more colleagues in the training
- Not enough hours of lessons and find it difficult to do the training by themselves

- ✓ Happiness of the **students** to carry out the training activities
- ✓ Better **classroom mood**, better relationships among pupils, and better relationship with colleagues
- ✓ Positive evaluation of **parents** using the manuals, better communication and experienced a good time in family



# COVID-19 activities



- Development of a new manual **“At home with mum and dad. Activities for the development and strengthening of children life skills”**, including activities on life skills for children aged 3-5 and 6-10 years

- Teachers proposed activities to pupils and their parents using 'distance learning'
- Training activities for trainers and teachers were carried on online

## 6. Success factors and lessons learned

# Success factors...

- **Partnership** with the voluntary organization
- **Collaboration** among the stakeholders, and among teachers and operators
- **Involvement** of the families (multiplicative effect)
- **Flexibility** of the programme:
  - teachers can select the activities based on the characteristics and needs of the pupils
  - each manual includes worksheets/attachments of the activities
  - Teachers can integrate the activities in their regular programme

## ...and lessons learned

- If the programme is carried out by two or more teachers has a greater impact on the target class
- Teachers initially need to be followed up and reassured by the trainers
- Better implemented training is carried out by teachers more trained (working on oneself's life skills improves the ability of working on students and vice versa)
- Due to COVID-19, we discovered that online involvement of parents and teachers is more successful

## 7. Further developments

# Further developments

## National Prevention Plan (NPP) 2020-2025



- Intersectionality
- Adopting the lens of equity in health
- citizen empowerment
- setting approach
- lifelong
- sustainability, good practice, effectiveness

**2019**

SR MIUR / Ministry of Health Agreement  
Guidelines for Schools that Promote Health  
Adopted by Marche Region in 2019



**National and Regional Prevention Plans  
2020-2025**



Program «Schools for Health  
in Europe»



**S·H·E**

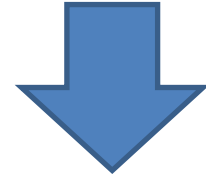
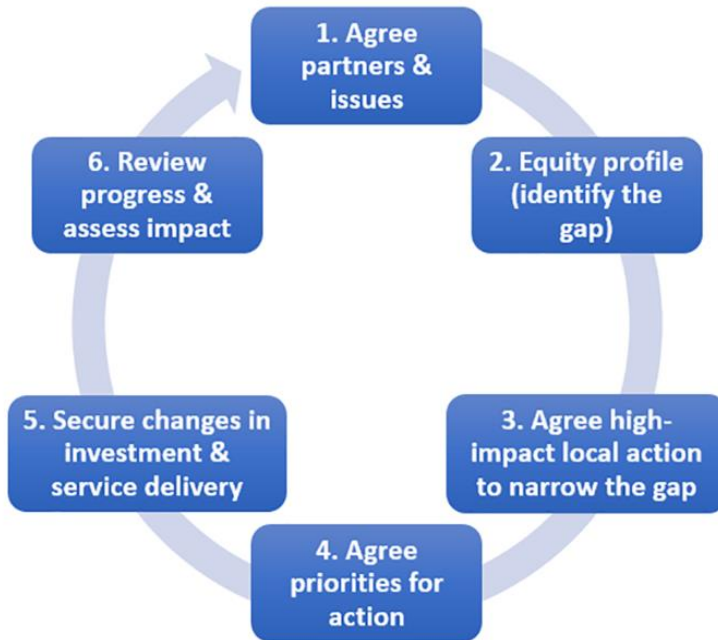
Schools for Health in Europe

[SHE | Schools for Health in Europe Network Foundation](#)

Our «GAINING HEALTH THROUGH LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION» programme will be continued, by its inclusion also in the new Regional Prevention Plan 2020-2025.

# The National and Regional Prevention Plans: the Health Equity Audit

The plan is equity-oriented and each programme must contain an equity-oriented action



Programmes are evaluated through the **Health Equity Audit** cycle

**Our programme has been taking this approach since the beginning so we are fully ready for the HEA guidelines**

## Equity in «Gaining Health through Life Skills»

- Life-course approach
- Joint and transversal actions involving all strategic stakeholders of school, health, and social sectors
- Actions based on the capacity of individuals to self-determinate themselves and on the participation of the local community;
- Impact on the whole population, regardless of their starting condition

The programme also addresses **inclusion in the society**: children with disabilities participate in the programme together with their peers, sided by an educator and carried out on a "one-to-one" basis



# COVID-19 activity



**At home  
with mum and dad  
...at the time of Covid.**



[https://drive.google.com/file/d/17UGJIBFEMvo6gy5OjIFW\\_QN2wy22IRR/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/17UGJIBFEMvo6gy5OjIFW_QN2wy22IRR/view?usp=sharing)



**Thank you  
for listening!**