



Marketplace for Best Practices in NCD prevention

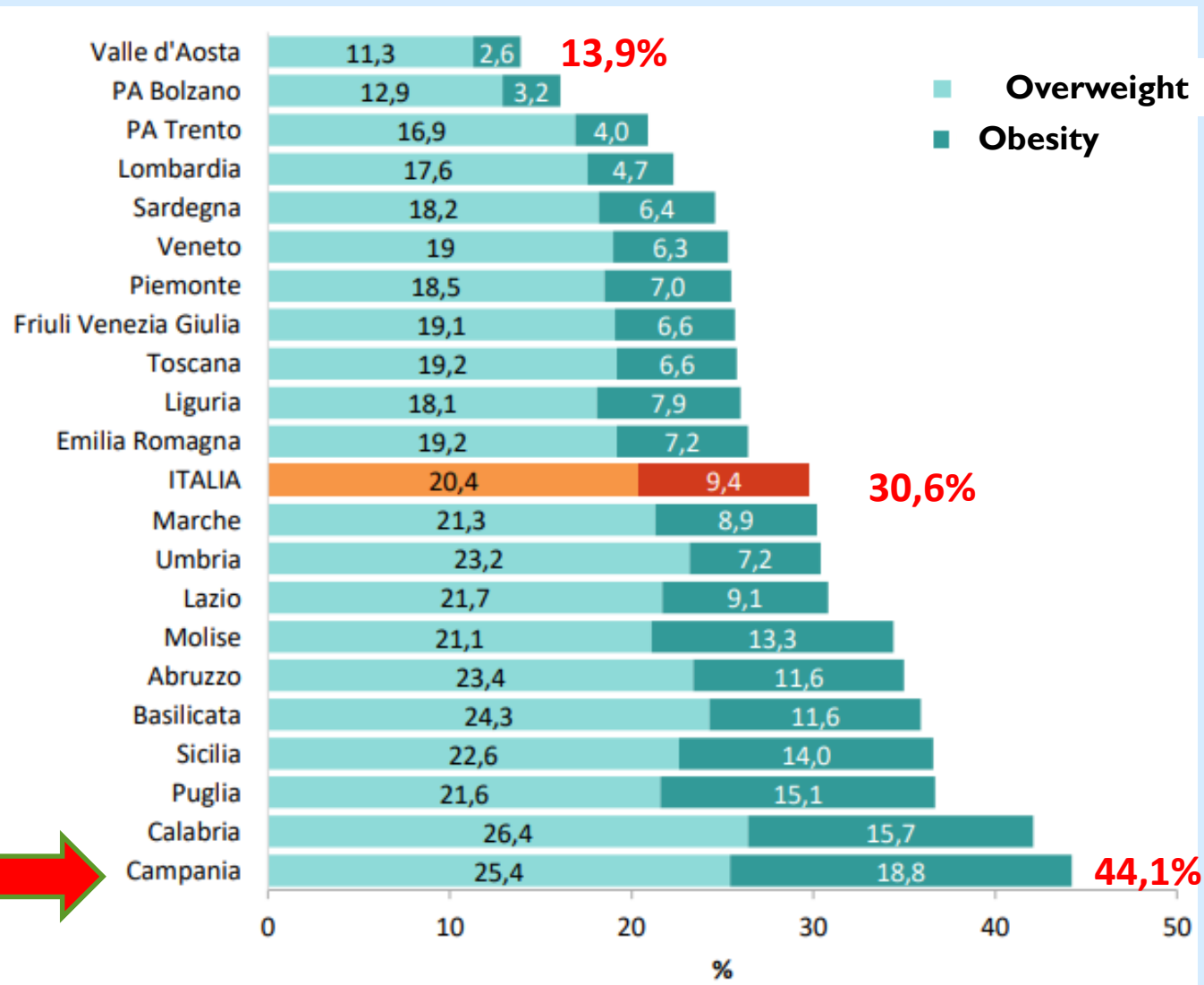
Mothers as peer-educators in a low socio-economic status school-setting in Southern Italy

Nutritional Service, Department of Prevention Local Health Unit Napoli I Centro

Italian National Institute of Health Unit

1 July 2021

Childhood Overweight and Obesity: Campania Region over the top



Inverse care law and Inequalities In Health

Child obesity prevalence

Children of
high social class mothers

10.6%



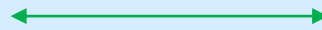
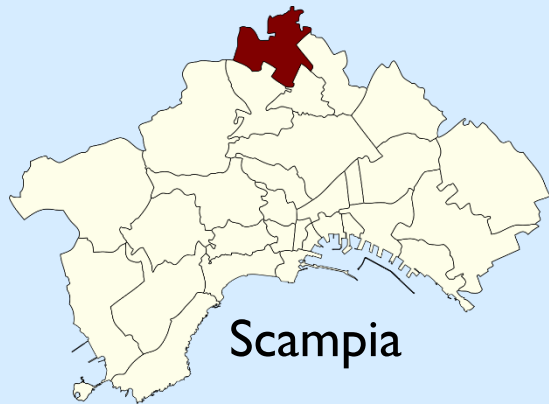
Children of
low social class mothers

24.7%



Context Analysis

Suburban areas in Naples



Area	School drop-out Rate	Unemployment Rate
Scampia	25%	30%
Secondigliano	23%	39%
Naples City	22%	27%
Campania	18,5%	20,9%
Italy	14,5%	13,1%

School Canteen Service

Naples



Service on individual demand through fee-payment



serves lunches to around 30.000 children/85.000 children
attending kindergarten, primary and middle school



play a crucial role in promoting healthy foods and creating a
school culture of healthy eating

School Canteen Service



- School canteens and other school food services are important educational resources as well as being an integral part of the school environment;
- When consumed daily, the food provided through the school canteen may comprise a third of a student's total daily intake and have a significant influence on their health and nutrition.

A screenshot of the Australian Government Department of Health website. The header features the Australian Government logo and the text 'The Department of Health'. Below the header is a navigation menu with options like 'Ministers', 'For Consumers', 'For Health Professionals', 'About us', 'Media Centre', 'Programs & Campaigns', and 'Resources'. The main content area shows the breadcrumb trail: 'Home / For Consumers / Education and Prevention / Nutrition and Physical Activity / Nutrition and Healthy Eating /'. The title of the page is 'CANTEEN MANAGER TRAINING PART 1' and the subtitle is 'Role of the School Canteen in contributing to a health promoting school'.

A screenshot of the GOV.UK website. The header shows the GOV.UK logo. Below it is a navigation bar with the text '→ Coronavirus (COVID-19) | Rules, guidance and support'. The breadcrumb trail is 'Home > Education and learning > Schools and curriculum'. The main heading is 'School meals - healthy eating standards'.

Netherlands Nutrition Centre | The recognized authority in the field of healthy, safe and sustainable food

Guidelines for Healthier Canteens



School Canteen Service:Actors

Nutritional Service, Department of Prevention
Local Health Unit Napoli I Centro

Planning a menu by promoting a Mediterranean Diet



Health promotion practice about a proper nutrition



School Canteen Service: Actors

Parents (Family)

School lunch: 5 lunches/week
Home lunch: 16 lunches/week



Vs.



Threat:

Prejudices on quality of service

Opportunity:

Acceptability of school menu by parents

Mothers play a crucial role in the nutrition of their children, being the ones who attend to their care, go grocery shopping and prepare meals (within both parents-employed couples the asymmetry index in preparing meals is 82% - ISTAT data)

School Canteen Service:Actors

Teachers as Role Modelling

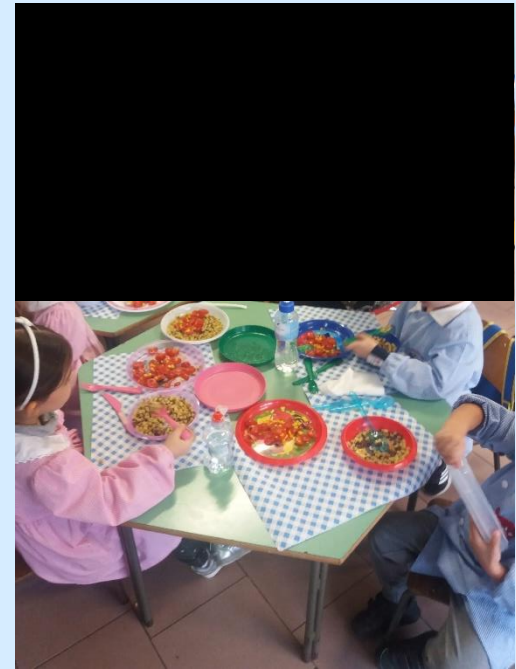
Teachers who play a role as model of healthy behaviors in their classrooms can have an enormous impact on children eating habits.



Threat:

Low level of awareness about the important role of the service

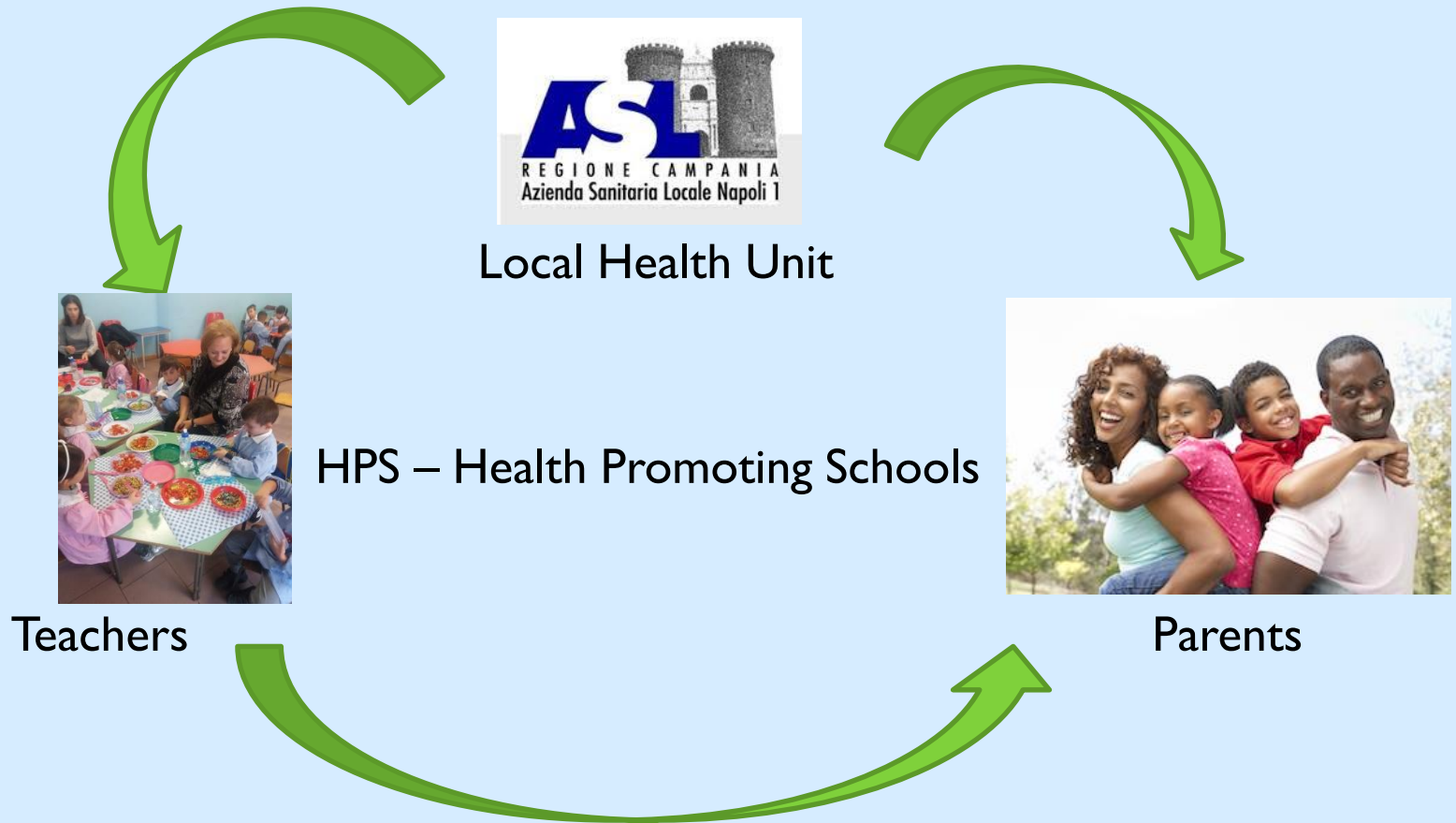
Vs.



Opportunity:

Children learn by watching and copying the behaviour of others. So a teacher who makes healthy choices – including healthy eating – can have a good influence on the health of children.

School Canteen Service: Actors



It is important that Local Health Unit, parents and teachers work together to support a whole-school approach to building a school culture in which students actively choose nutritious foods and a healthy lifestyle

Aim of the practice



- Effect of Mothers as Peer Educators (MPE) in promoting knowledge about healthy behaviours towards other mothers
- Outcome: children's eating habits at school (and at home)
- Very low socio-economic status school-setting

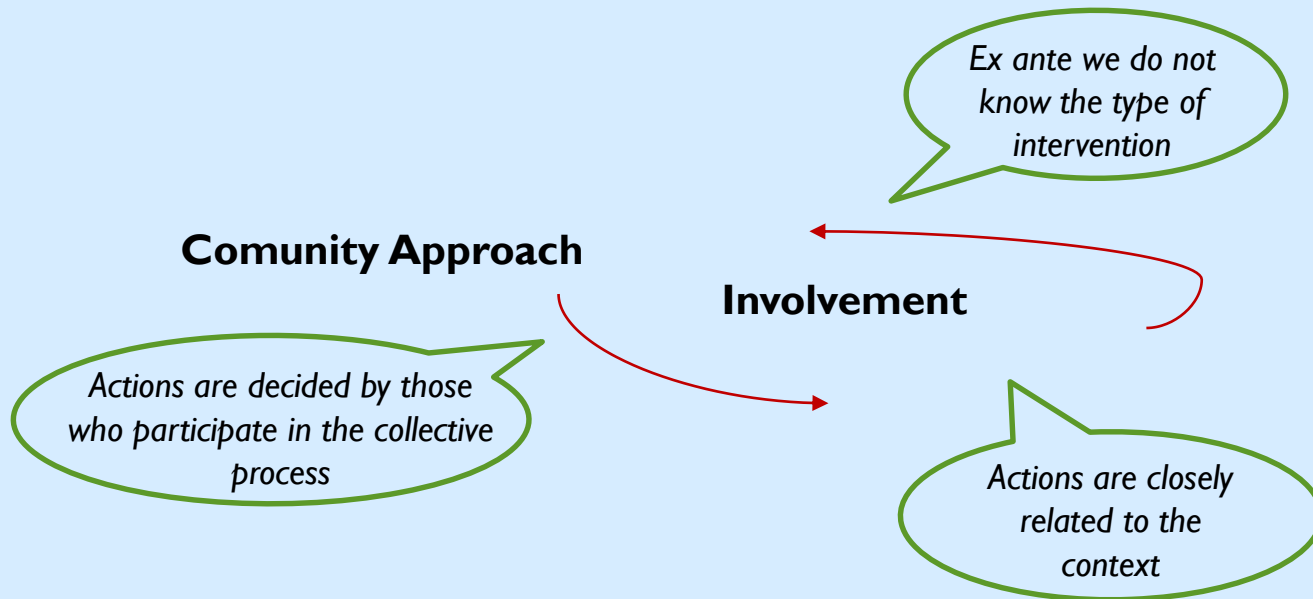
Method



Target: 8 schools, 109 classes, 992 children aged 3-8 years

- Step 1 → evaluation of children's eating habits at school (T0-baseline)
(through direct observation)
- Step 2 → Mothers as Peer Educators (and teachers) involved in:
 - Problem analysis (“Problem tree”)
 - Solution proposal (“Objective tree”)
- Step 3 → Mothers as Peer Educators shared the acquired knowledge with other mothers through small-groups meeting, social network
- Step 4 → Outcome (children's eating habits) evaluation:
T1= 5 mths T2=12 mths T3=16 mths
- Step 5 → Process evaluation through qualitative study

...talking about a practice different than usual, why?



Evaluation
Quali-Quantitative

Mothers analysed problems

Step 2: How to build a Problem Tree?

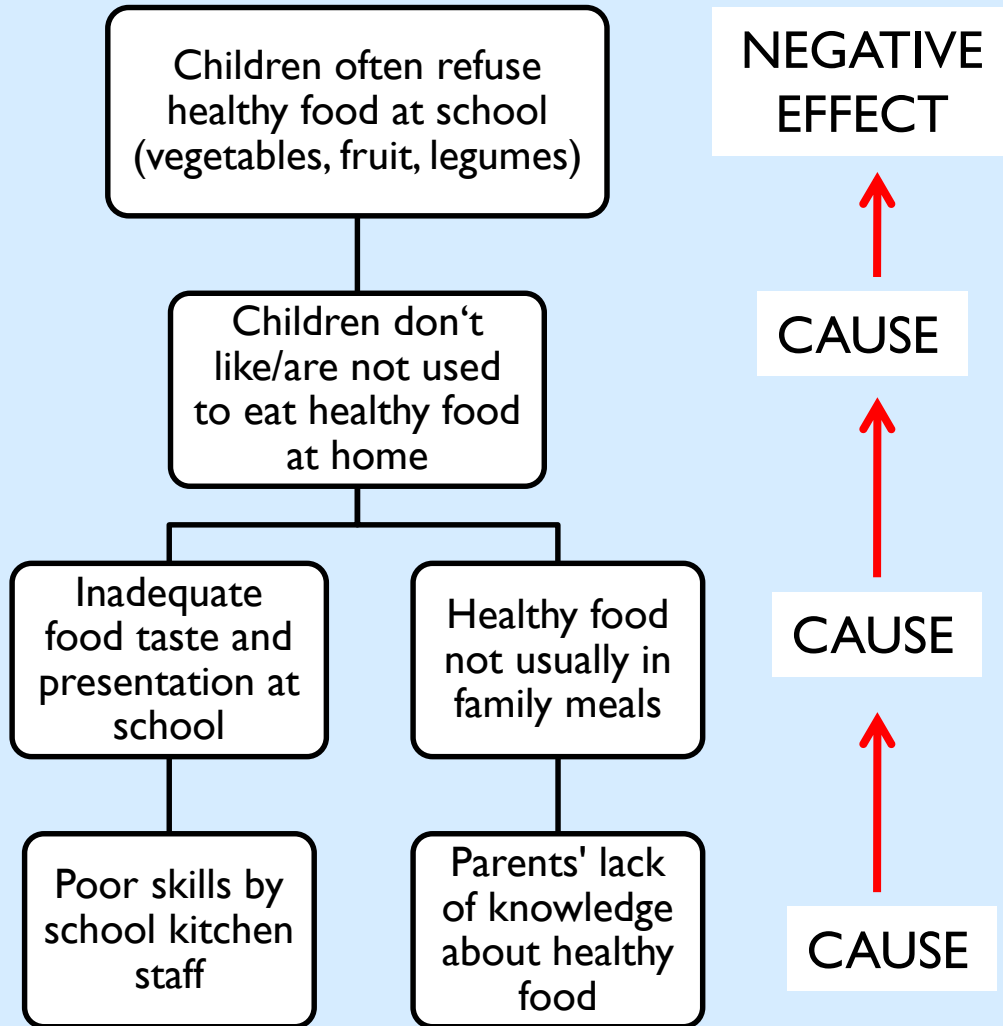
- sheets with the same problems were put together;
- similar problems were placed close to each other;
- different problems were placed distant;
- problems that were the consequence or the cause of another problem were placed respectively above or below the problem they were related.



Mothers analysed problems



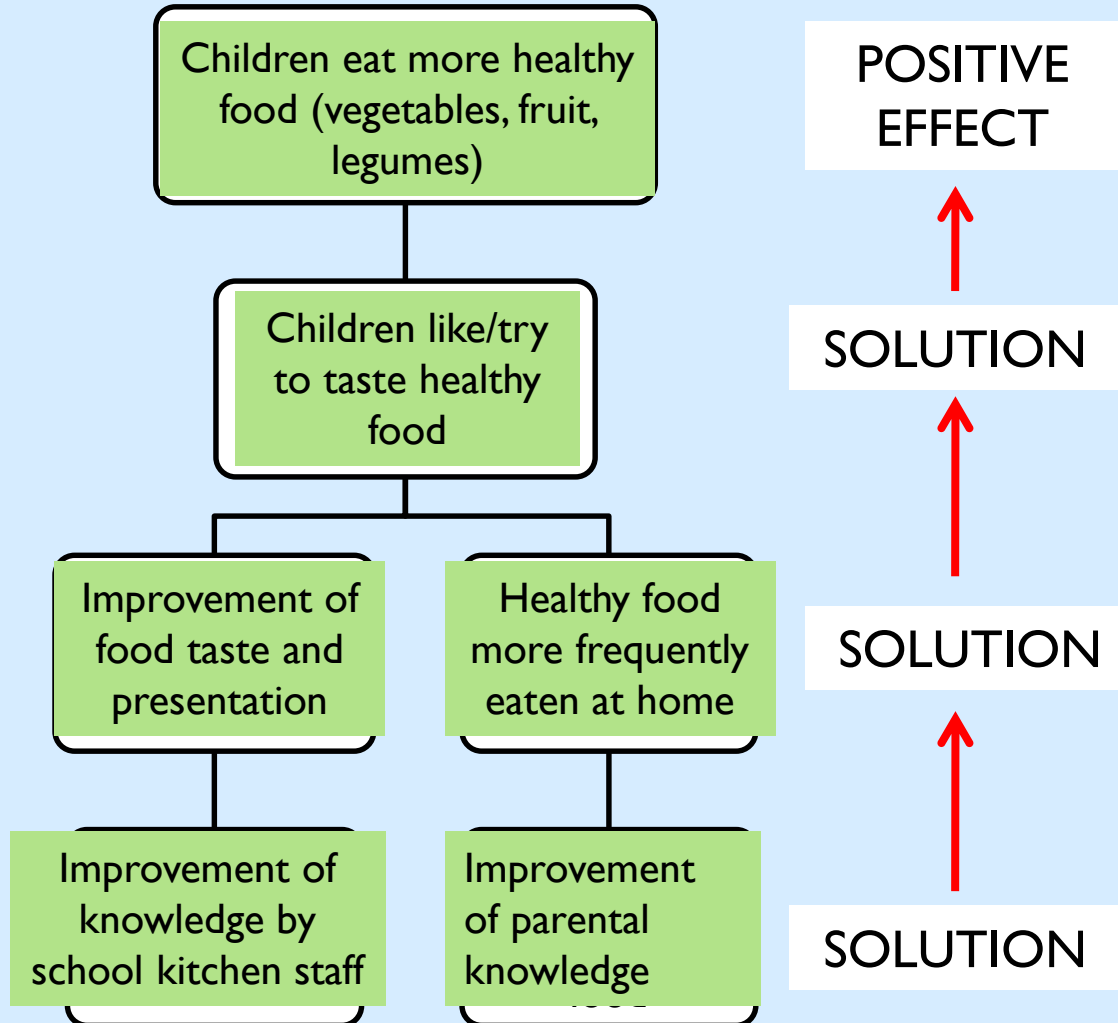
“PROBLEM TREE”



Mothers proposed solutions

Step 2: How to build a Objective Tree?

“OBJECTIVE TREE”



Solution proposed

LUNEDI'	MARTEDI'	MERCOLEDI'	GIOVEDI'	VENERDI'
Frutta	Biscotti secchi	Yogurt	Pane e olio	Biscotti secchi
				

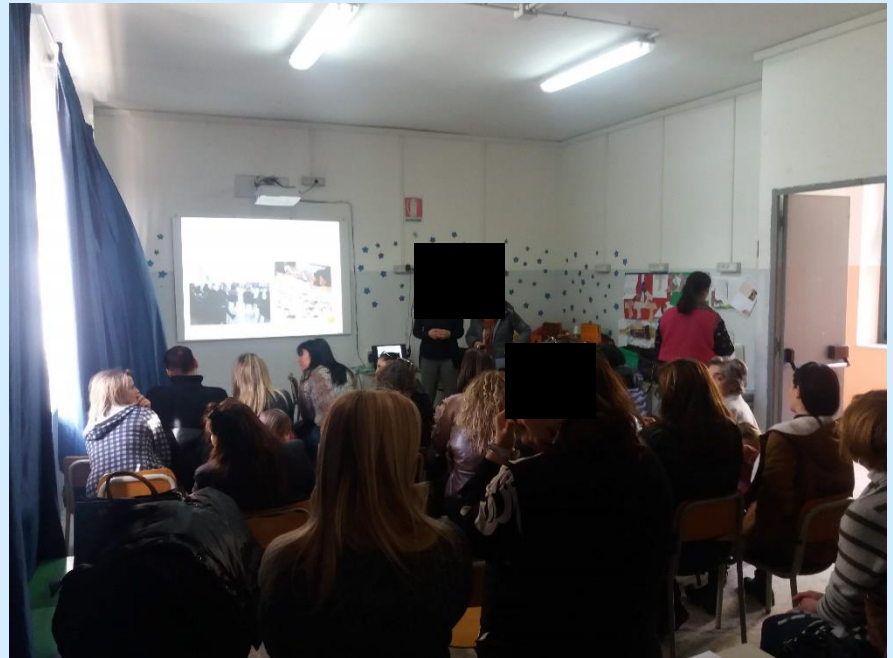
Monday	Thursday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Fruit	Hypocaloric Biscuits	Yogurt	Bread with oil	Hypocaloric Biscuits



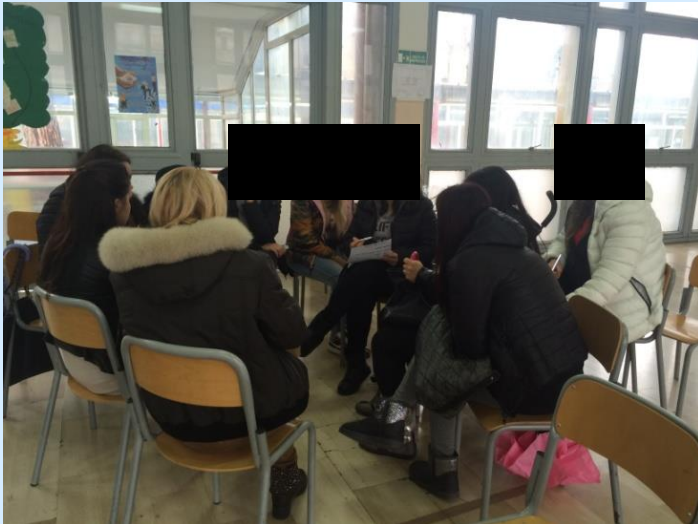
Involving Mother as peer educators

Step 3: How to identify a peer educator mother?

- more suitable at playing a “leader” role (with teachers’ suggestions);
- usually stands up for her interest in healthy nutrition;
- fights to improve school services;
- shows a good leadership talent.



Mothers Peer-Educator at work



Main results

RESULTS

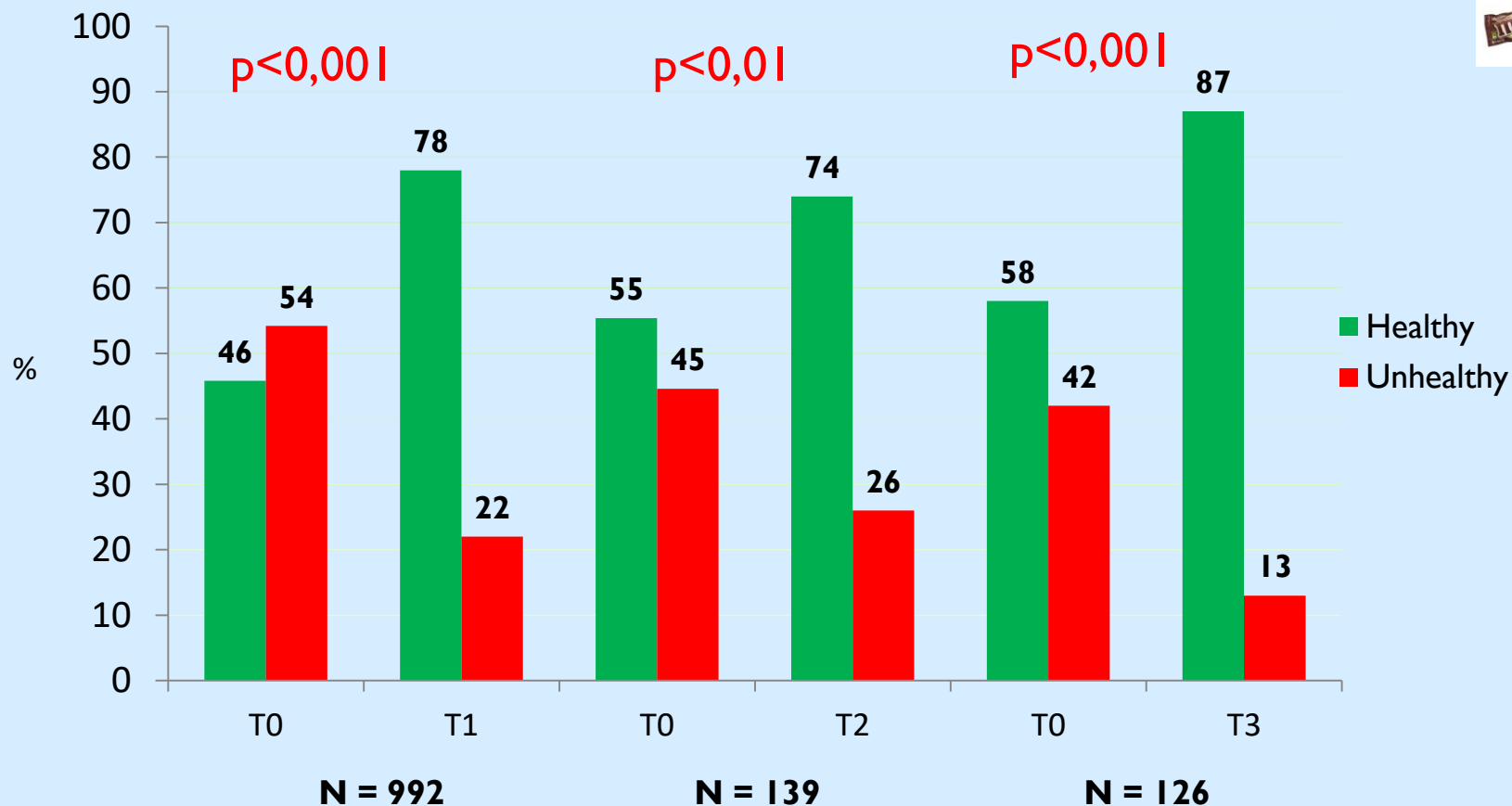


Outcomes: healthy eating habits evaluated by direct observation:

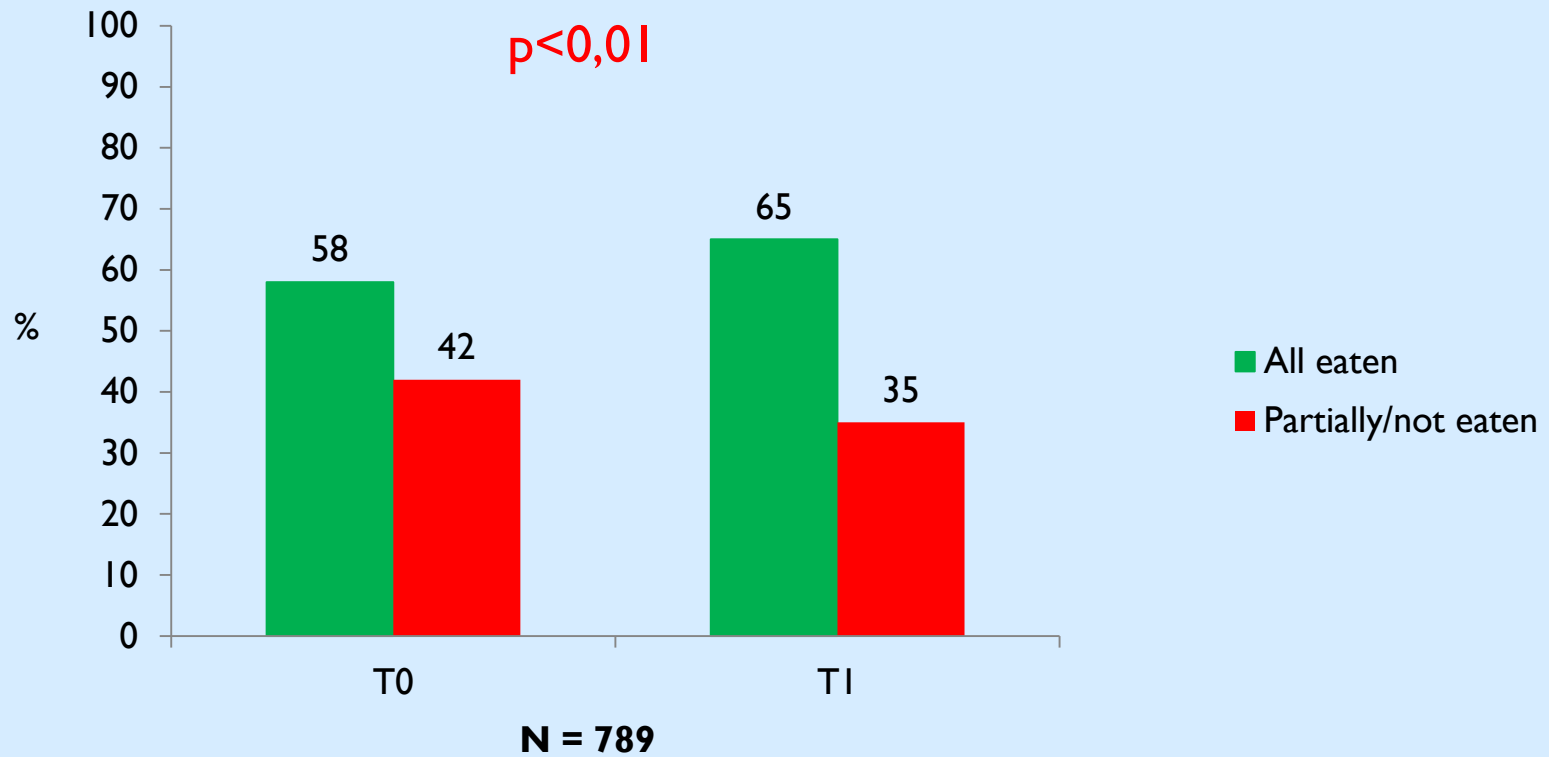
- Snack (Mid-Morning)
- Main course
- Side dish
- Fruit

McNemar test to verify differences in eating behaviours for paired-samples analysis was performed.

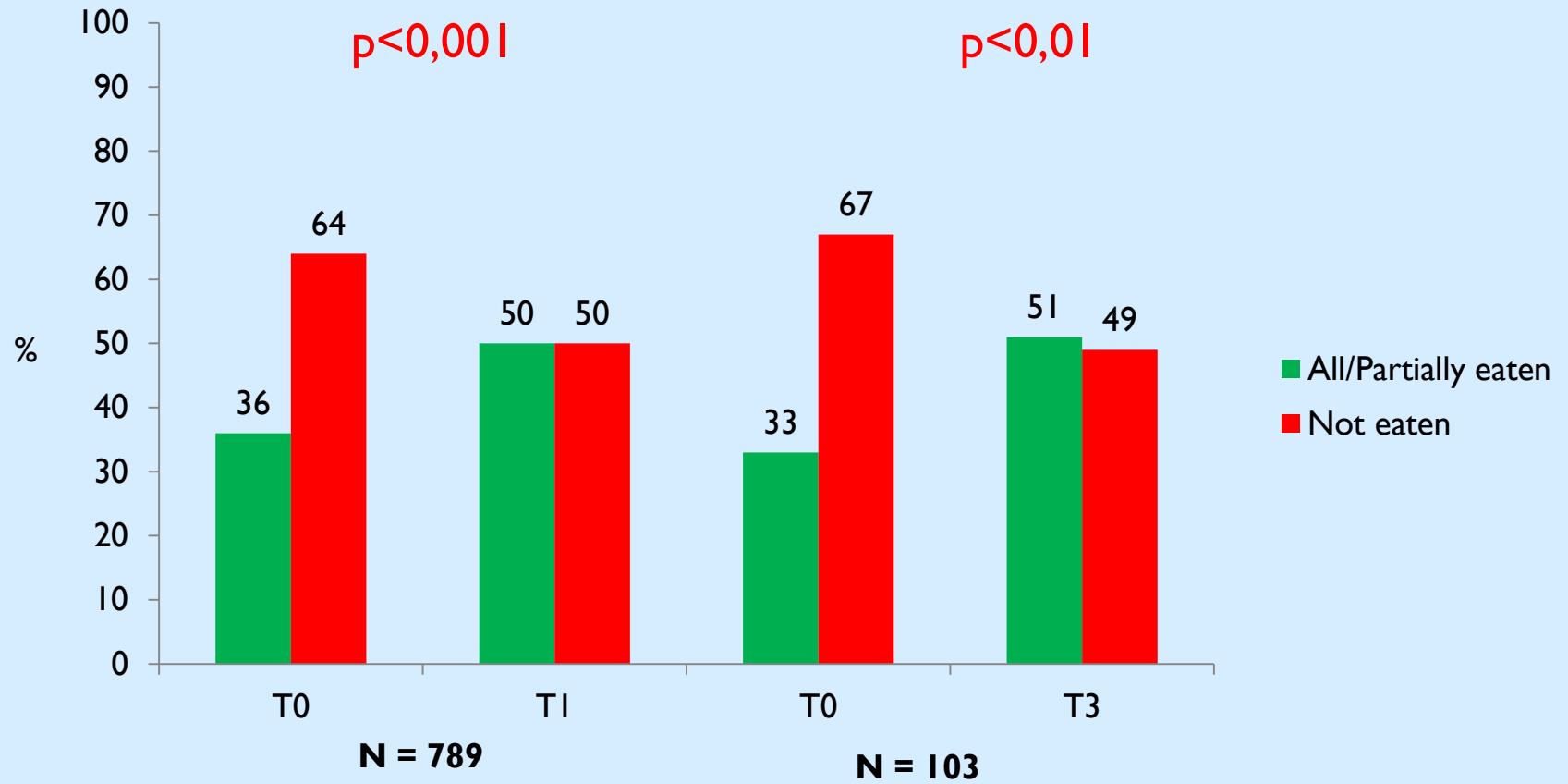
Snack (Mid-Morning)



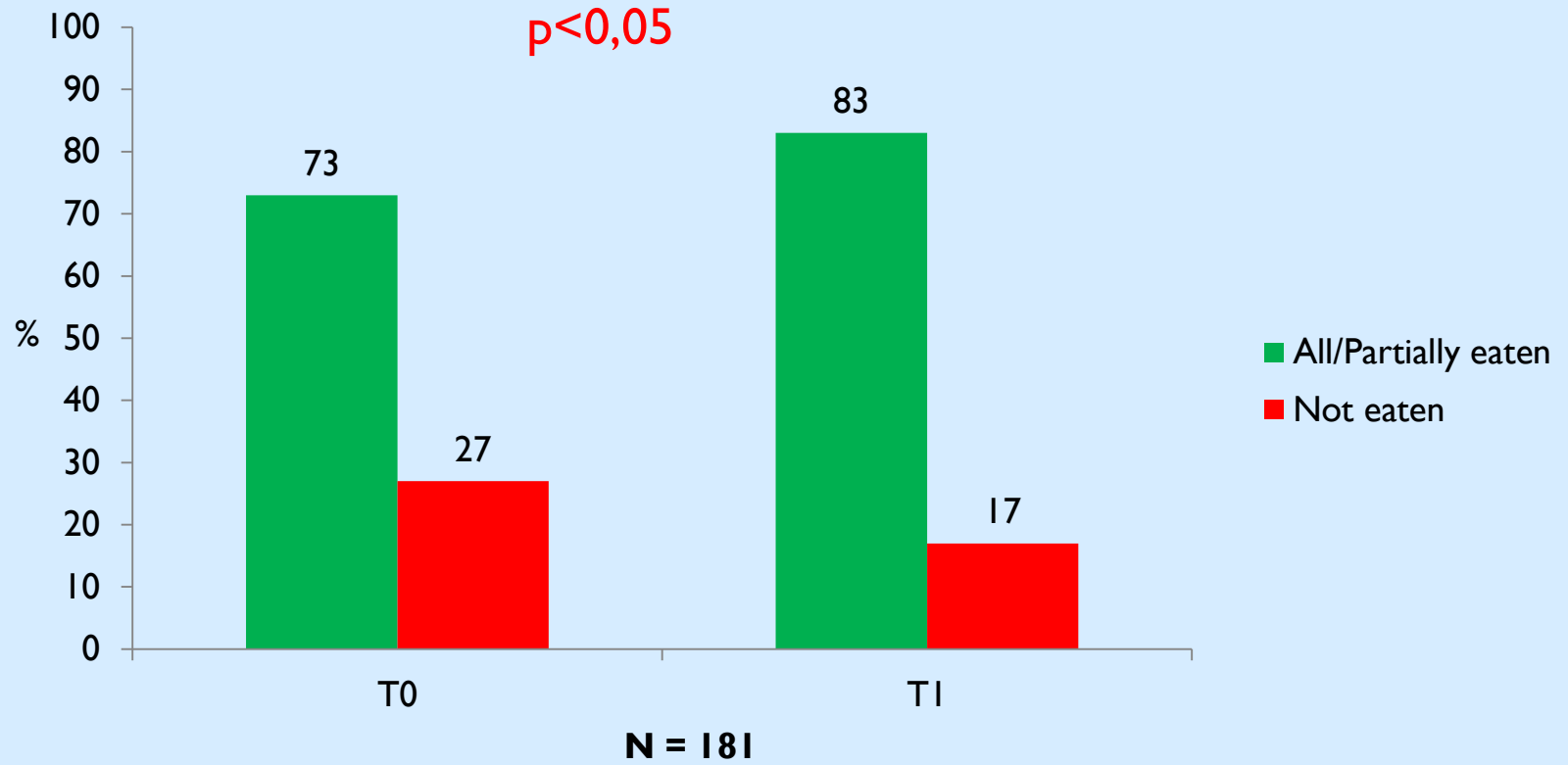
Main Course



Side Dish



Fruit



Qualitative process evaluation

The main objective was to «Explore the points of view of the participants in the "Mothers as peer-educators" project to better understand the obstacles and factors facilitating the implementation of peer educators action in schools»

This objective was reached through the Qualitative study using Focus Groups (FG):

- group discussions led by a moderator
- sharing and comparison of participants' knowledge and experiences on specific topics
- the duration between 1 and 2 hours
- 5-15 participants

Participant

4 FG were made, one for each type of group involved in the project:

- health workers in direct contact with the school (n° 12)
- teachers involved in the activities (n° 8)
- Mothers as Peer-educator (n° 7)
- NON Peer-educator mothers (n° 8)

for a total of **35 subjects**

	Average Age	Education		Employment		N. Kids
		Middle (n)	High (n)	Yes	Not	
Mother Peer	37,4	3	4	2	5	2
Mother not Peer	37,5	6	2	0	8	2,6

***Planning*: facilitating factors**

- Approach
 - Participatory and community approach
 - Attentive to the needs and the ‘requests’ of the various interlocutors
- Working group
 - Group with shared goals and information
 - Multidisciplinary group (doctors, dieticians, veterinaries, etc.)
 - With highly motivated people
- Interinstitutional collaboration and network construction
- The involvement of teachers and headteachers
 - is essential for the success of the intervention (specific meetings with teachers)
 - Listening position/Collaborative point of view
 - Creation of a climate of mutual trust
 - Definition of the real problems of the specific context

Planning: barriers and hindering factors

- Great commitment required by the type of approach proposed
 - Especially in terms of time to devote to building the network and collaborations
- Poor motivation of the working group
-

Implementing: facilitating factors

- Meetings with parents
 - Preliminary observation phase during the school lunch (know the specific context)
 - Create a welcoming and non-judgmental atmosphere and trust
 - Answering / accepting requests from parents
 - Listening as a way to encourage openness
 - Get parents into processes, make them understand how things work (e.g. canteen)
 - Use a stimulus / starting point to develop discussion with parents
 - Overcoming worry and fears

Implementing: facilitating factors

- Implementation of solutions
 - Actions that are " within the reach " of the various actors
 - Graduality of change: starting with small actions
 - Sharing of " solutions "
 - Defined and shared rules
 - within the entire school staff
 - within the students
 - and parents...but flexibility not just rules
 - The activity becomes a school routine
 - Children also have a central role, to make them participate

Implementing: facilitating factors

- Identification of peer parents
 - “sometimes they are the most controversial, the least convinced. To welcome a need... that could also be to contest”
- To communicate progress and results within the different actors of the project to sharing experience and strengthening motivation:
 - At school: posters, artefacts, etc.
 - At home: with photos, drawings, etc.
 - And involving the community: open day, events, etc.

Buzzword... have fun

Implementing: barriers and hindering factors

- Actively involve all project participants
- Difficulty breaking down established habits
- Fears and distrust
- Poor motivation
-



Conclusions



- Low social class families are hard to reach and to be involved in prevention programs (Inverse Care Law)
- In a very low social class school setting Mothers-Peer Educator involvement in promoting knowledge and behaviours on healthy habits towards other mothers did improve children's eating habits
- Long-term follow-up research is needed



Conclusions



Up-scaling

- Quantitative evaluation (2014/15 – 2016/17) was carried out in two suburban areas of the city;
- The practice is still ongoing and was extended in all areas of the city.
- School Years 2017/18 – 2018/19 (pre-Covid Situation) were involved:
 - 57 schools;
 - 7683 children;
 - 1157 mothers;
 - 501 teachers.



Conclusions



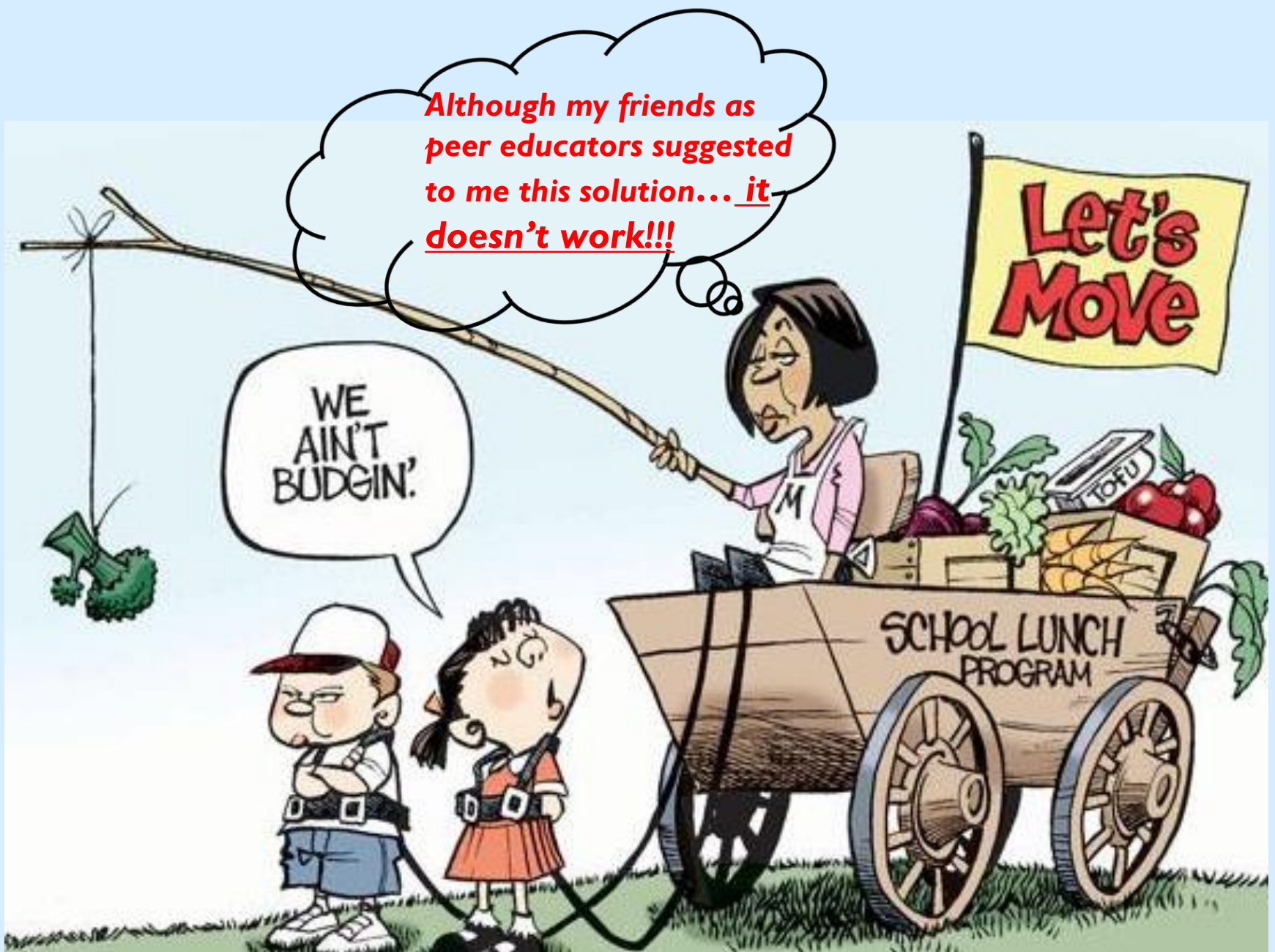
Regarding sustainability:

- once the process is triggered, the schools go ahead independently
 - Need booster sessions with school staff and parents

Regarding transferability:

- the importance of participatory actions is widely recognized in the literature
- from a methodological point of view, the intervention could allow to "work" on different aspects (for example physical activity) and in contexts other than socioeconomically deprived ones

CCM BIG Practice to verify the transferability



Thank you for your kind attention