



We  love eating!
Enjoy being healthy

Guide to creating a local healthy diets project



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1. PROMOTING HEALTHIER LIFESTYLES

If you are reading this guide, you have probably decided to take an active role in promoting healthy lifestyles in your local community. As you know, the "We Love Eating" pilot project aimed to show citizens how good it can feel to eat healthily, and it did so through the collaboration of community organisations and associations like yours. It was an innovative European healthy eating project that was completely carried out at local level.

Its objectives were to test different ways to bring healthier lifestyle habits to three key target groups: children, pregnant women and older people. While it is important for people of all ages to eat healthily and undertake regular physical activity, these three groups are at moments in the life cycle when good health is of special importance.

From 2014 to 2015, "We Love Eating" was carried out in seven European cities:



We worked with local community actors to create opportunities for healthier diets and better health for members of the three target groups, with a focus on several key messages:

- Enjoy shopping for a healthy meal
- Enjoy cooking
- Enjoy eating together
- Enjoy drinking water
- Enjoy colourful fruit and vegetables
- Enjoy physical exercise

This guide is a roadmap to help you incorporate the “We Love Eating” approach in your own community project. It describes the objectives and main messages of the project, as well as the “We Love Eating” tools and proposed activities, which can be adapted by cities undertaking healthy lifestyle projects. It outlines how to develop and implement your project, and how to evaluate the results. We also share some important lessons learnt from “We Love Eating” that are worth considering if you aim to develop similar projects in your cities, using your own means.

We hope that you will find the information in this guide useful in developing your own healthy lifestyle project. We are confident that you will find the experience enriching, rewarding and – very importantly – great fun!

P.A.U. Education

2. A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH

Part of what made "We Love Eating" a unique project was its approach, implemented by local communities at town or city level. It facilitated experiences that empowered citizens to choose a healthy lifestyle in their own lives and households. It did this by bringing together community actors in Local Promoting Groups (see below) to design and implement activities to promote healthy lifestyles.

This meant not only changing individual behaviour, but also changing environments to help individuals make healthier choices. By involving all levels and areas of the community – from healthcare providers to social workers to municipal gyms to supermarkets – it ensured that change was sustainable and accessible to all. You may wish to incorporate this approach into your own community-based project.

Keep in mind that actions achieve the greatest and most lasting effect when they influence the community and social environment. Health interventions that fail to create a feeling of true ownership among the target audiences often have ineffective results. This means that it is of the highest importance to directly involve members of the target audiences in your actions, from the beginning and throughout the entire project duration.

2.1. Local Promoting Groups

As a community-based "grassroots" project, Local Promoting Groups (LPGs) and their collaborators were the true implementers of "We Love Eating". Each community's LPG brought together different actors to design and implement a local "We Love Eating" action plan that suited their target groups' specific needs. You may wish to bring together a similar group to design and implement your project.

LPG members came from diverse backgrounds (e.g. teachers, midwives, doctors, social workers, community actors, local authorities, etc). Members of the target groups (children, pregnant women and older people) were also involved from the beginning and throughout the project.

Each of these groups has different capacities and can participate and engage in your project in unique ways. This ensures that healthy eating reaches all areas of society, especially the most vulnerable groups, becoming a part of the local culture, shaping the local environment and bringing healthy habits into everyday life.

Each LPG developed and implemented a communication strategy (see section 3.1). It is important to be clear about the role that each local actor can play, what their strengths and specific capacities are, and what they wish to accomplish through the project.

LPGs will begin from different starting points, either built upon or integrated in already existing structures (operating projects, collaborations or other type of functioning schemes), or created from scratch.

It is worthwhile to carry out a preliminary analysis of your community to identify potential LPG members and the different ways that they could participate in your project. Of course, each member will also bring their own ideas to the project, and they should be encouraged to brainstorm on potential activities and collaborations.

2.2. Target groups

"We Love Eating" focused on children, pregnant women and older people because these groups are at crucial moments in their lives, where adopting healthier diets can have a very strong impact. However, based on the feedback of the LPGs and other stakeholders involved, we recommend that you choose to focus your own project on one or two of these groups rather than all three of them. This will help to ensure that you are able to effectively reach your target groups, without spreading resources too thin.

No matter which main target group or groups you choose, it is important to reach the most disadvantaged members. Disadvantaged communities often face added challenges when it comes to choosing a healthy lifestyle.

This guide contains a selection of suggested activities (see section 5.2.) that you are encouraged to use, always adapting them to your target groups. The effectiveness of your project will depend largely on how well you are able to develop activities that are attractive and useful to your target groups.

Working with disadvantaged groups

Remember - place special importance on reaching and involving disadvantaged members of your target groups. As the demographic makeup of each city is different, so are the disadvantaged groups within them. In some cities, the most vulnerable populations might be ethnic minorities, while in others they may be socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Thus, there is no single way to approach them - it will depend on your particular city. You should analyse your chosen target group or groups together with the LPG members to design or adapt the methods and activities to best reach and involve them.

This will be an enriching part of your project but can pose some challenges. We suggest focusing on:

EMPOWERMENT

Invite organisations and actors from disadvantaged communities to become part of the LPG, to share what they are already doing and help develop your project. It is an opportunity for different institutions and organisations in the city to collaborate and build bridges between communities that might otherwise have little interaction.

RESPECT

When working with disadvantaged groups it is very important to appreciate their cultures - a respectful attitude is key. Acknowledge and celebrate diversity and cultural differences. Learn about new customs and ways of thinking. Take this knowledge into account in communications so you don't unintentionally say or do something that is insensitive.

REACHING OUT

Go to places where members of your target groups already meet rather than expecting them to seek you out. Try working with those who play an active role in their lives like local canteens or food banks; religious or community organisations; and community leaders, service providers and social workers. Strengthen your action plan by including representatives of disadvantaged groups at all stages - from planning to evaluation.

These tips can also help you when identifying, getting to know and working with disadvantaged communities:

- Focus groups and interviews can help you gather insight about how to most effectively reach target groups, and gain information about their attitudes, knowledge, behaviours and specific contexts and needs. These findings can be used to frame messages and select interventions;
- Examine the whole social environment of each group to identify its issues and optimise communication. For example, in some ethnic communities you may find that the husband, family and friends play a strong decision-making role in the (future) mothers' lives, so these people should be considered in communication;
- Integrate representatives from each target group into health promotion projects from the beginning, and involve them in all stages of programmes;
- Work with disadvantaged and vulnerable groups' community leaders and advocates. These people are already respected in their communities and can be helpful in introducing new ideas or activities;
- Identify ways to build an environment that is supportive to making healthier choices. Consider the specific areas where disadvantaged groups live in your city and their particular needs (e.g. better access to fresh produce, more options for exercise, etc);
- Many women from disadvantaged groups face challenges beyond nutrition, exercise and breastfeeding. Link the focus of the project with larger social concerns like income, housing, education and rights;
- Every group has its own customs and behaviours, and programmes need to be tailored appropriately. For example, when discussing healthy diets with disadvantaged groups start with the foods they already eat rather than immediately introducing new ones.

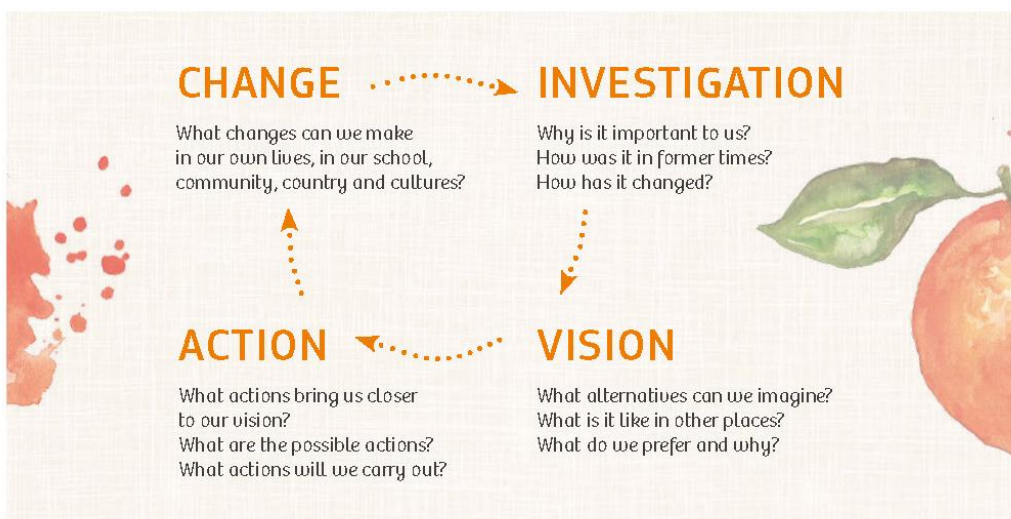
3. PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

The "We Love Eating" project focused on changing individual behaviours, but also on working together to change community environments. Communication actions were based on participatory methods, analysing habits and environments, envisioning ways of changing them and finding strategies to do so.

What is most important about the approach is that it encourages children and adults to better understand their own reality, develop their own specific actions and act.

Here are some additional tips for participatory communication:

- Start with what people know: Start with a brainstorm of community members' opinions, views, ideas and understandings of the concepts of "healthy eating". Some of the possible questions could be the following: What do "health", "eating" and "physical activity" mean to them? Follow the investigation-vision-action-change scheme to plan and carry out further project work.
- Focus the dialogue on action and change: Think of actions to bring about positive changes to some aspects of healthy eating – at classroom level, at school level and at community level. Participants' ideas should play a crucial role, as well as their visions how the classroom, the school, the street outside, the community, etc. can bring about behavioural change.
- Ensure results and use difficulties as a learning experience: It can be demotivating if results or consequences of their involvement are not quickly forthcoming. Be careful to avoid patronising, follow through on their ideas and integrate them in the project planning. Always give feedback especially to young people whether and how their work will be used in the project. For children, facing problems and understanding how "real life" works is a valuable learning experience, they will appreciate discussing them.
- Use a variety of expression methods: Visual, verbal, play (e.g. draw and write; discussion in small groups; community observation; photo-taking; guided tours; mapping the area; dramatisations; timelines; body maps; modelling).
- All should be involved: Use primarily visual, play and body movement methods to involve younger children, and verbal and written expression with older children and adults. Consider a variety of methods for people of different gender, abilities, age, school achievement, social skills, socio-economic and cultural background, etc.



The Action Competence or IVAC model might help guide you in designing your participatory communication actions.

Here's an example of how it works: Children in one school used the IVAC model to investigate the advertising during the shows they watched, and realised that most of it was either for toys or "fast food". This motivated the children to envision alternative types of advertising and they decided to create their own ads promoting "healthier" options. They acted by writing their own scripts, rehearsing and filming them. They then played the ads to other students and family members to inspire them to change.

3.1. Communication objectives

"We Love Eating" addressed citizens at an individual level, in their daily lives, to change individual behaviours, overcome prejudices, stereotypes and the negative image surrounding "healthy diets". In this way, changes took place organically at an individual level, at a community level, and possibly also through health policies at local, regional and European level.

The strategy was based on three overall objectives:

- To ensure that decision-makers, stakeholders, target group members and the media were informed about the importance of healthy diets for a healthy life.
- To increase awareness of healthy diets among the target groups.
- To develop a dialogue between the stakeholders and the general public.

Designing a communication strategy

- Activities are the core of any participatory project. Designing the right activities is crucial, and so is making sure that your target groups know about them! To do this, you'll need a communication strategy. The following tips can help you.
- Know your target group(s) and think about where you can reach them. In schools? Through local health care providers? At elderly care centres? What about the disadvantaged members?
- Decide which methods are best to raise awareness of your activities. If you are collaborating with schools or elderly care centres, for example, you may simply be able to ask a teacher or carer to tell your target group members about your project and its upcoming activities. You can also ask local community centres, religious centres, supermarkets, etc. to display posters publicising your project events. There are many different options to consider!
- In some cases, like with pregnant women, social media may be an effective means to reach your target group and you may wish to open a Facebook page.
- Map out your local stakeholders and existing healthy lifestyle initiatives. Think about possible collaborations that could be developed to reach your target audience.
- Think about how you can involve the media. This may include launch events or other special activities that are attractive to the press. Build a relationship with local journalists.



3.2. Key messages

The "We Love Eating" project proposed six basic and important recommendations for adopting a healthy lifestyle, which were created based on the input of the cities and the scientific board. The recommendations emphasise not only nutritional suggestions, but also ways to enjoy eating and the associated activities, forming an integral part of communication materials and activities.

Surveys revealed that "We Love Eating" participants were aware of the messages that the project wanted to convey, and clearly understood them. This was considered to be a great success within the project.

It also appeared that the messages would continue to reach target groups after the project finished, because local representatives and stakeholders were committed to continue sharing them. Of course, this is more likely to prove true if funding and assistance can be provided to help them do so!

Unfortunately, evaluations did not show with certainty that the project created lasting change in target groups' behaviour. In part, this was due to the length of the pilot project: one year was not an adequate amount of time to create behavioural and environmental change. We recommend that you keep this in mind when planning your project.

We also recommend that you choose one or two of the six key messages as the focus of your project, rather than all of them, to have the greatest impact. You will see that each one of the key messages described below offers a wealth of opportunities to connect with diverse target groups through dynamic and engaging activities – so you can feel comfortable keeping things simple!

Enjoy shopping for a healthy meal

Making healthy food choices when shopping and eating out is key to a well-balanced diet. Your action plan may include different ways to help your target groups take advantage of this opportunity. For example, you may wish to design materials or activities that teach how to read labels, or help people to make a [healthy shopping list](#) based on specially selected recipes.

You might try to convey to your local food retailers that they play a crucial role in the availability and affordability of healthy options for citizens. You will often find that they welcome the opportunity to take an active role in building a healthier community by hosting or participating in healthy lifestyle activities.





Enjoy cooking

Cooking was very important for "We Love Eating" activities, due to its high potential for bringing family members together at home, as well as groups of people in schools, community centres, etc. Cooking can be a great bonding experience; it can be an opportunity to share some time, talk and have fun with children and adults together.



Eating is much more economical and healthier if we cook rather than just consume ready-made or prepared food. A good rule to share with your target groups is that the more a food is processed, the less nutritious it is. Cooking for ourselves is also a good idea because we have better control of the ingredients' quality, freshness and portion size. Besides, it's a great way to teach and learn about the taste, texture, and pleasure of food.

Think of ways to bring seniors and children together to cook or exchange recipes and cooking stories. Consider also possibilities for cooking classes especially designed for pregnant women or mothers.

Enjoy eating together

Families only have limited time to spend together, and meals may be the only time of the day when they can reconnect, leaving behind individual pursuits such as watching TV, playing video games, emailing and doing homework. A meal is an opportunity to relax, recharge, laugh, tell stories and catch up on the week's ups and downs, while developing a sense of identity as a family.

Where possible and appropriate, encourage families to eat together and to take the opportunity to share about their day. You can also organise healthy meals to be attended by your target groups, and even combine these meals with other activities like cooking classes or shopping trips.

Finding ways to encourage people of all ages to enjoy eating healthy foods together can be another great way to promote healthy habits.





Enjoy drinking water

Water makes up more than half of our body weight. Every cell in our body needs water to function correctly. That's why it is important to stay hydrated. Although all beverages help with hydration by providing some water, certain beverages are better choices than others.

Water is the optimal choice to meet our body's fluid needs. Find activities and messages that make water more enjoyable to everyone, especially children, pregnant women and seniors.

Let's make drinking water a fun routine for our target groups – we recommended ordering water at a restaurant before any other drink, drinking it in nice cups and special glasses, or infusing it with exotic fruit.



Enjoy colourful fruit and vegetables



Fruit and vegetables contain many of the vitamins and antioxidants we need – and few calories. Along with helping us to maintain good health, the nutrients in fruit and vegetables have been shown to work together to protect against cancer, heart disease, loss of vision, hypertension and other illnesses.

Increasing fruit and vegetables in our diet is a great step towards improving our health. As a general rule, eating fruit and vegetables of a wide variety of colours helps to ensure that we are getting all of the many different benefits.

Try to find ways to share the benefits of the different fruit and vegetables with your local community and provide access to a wide variety in different colours. Be sure to avoid [health claims](#) as food information shall not attribute to any food the property of preventing, treating or curing a human disease. Any conclusions as to their effects, if any have to be directly linked to the mineral or vitamin, not the actual food.

Enjoy physical exercise

Physical exercise is an excellent way to help achieve or maintain healthy weight. The more intense the physical activity, the more calories we burn, and the benefits of physical exercise extend far beyond weight control. Regular exercise contributes to lowering the risk of disease, such as stroke, metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes, depression, certain types of cancer and arthritis.



Doing some exercise can be a fun way to spend our free time, giving us a chance to unwind and engage in activities that make us happy. Physical activity can also help us connect with family or friends.

Try to ensure that both indoor and outdoor sport activities – depending on your local climate – are accessible in your community. Get local school gyms, youth organisations or similar facilities to participate by sponsoring or hosting activities. In addition, there are many outdoor possibilities such as group walking and “family fun” workouts.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

Now that you read about the strategic approach and communication methods behind “We Love Eating”, you may wish to consider some or all of the advice as you develop your own healthy lifestyle project.

The steps below are an outline of how to create a Local Action Plan for your project in your city. Be sure to collaborate with all of your partners, and also involve local stakeholders, your chosen target group(s), and representatives of disadvantaged groups at every step of the way.

4.1. Create a plan of action

Developing a concrete action plan for your city may seem like a challenging task, but by following the steps outlined below you will see that it is easily managed – and tremendously satisfying.

1	Understand your city
2	Set your objectives
3	Design a Local Action Plan
4	Implement the project
5	Evaluate and disseminate the results

Understand your city

Identify different settings where you can reach the target groups, such as schools, health clinics, community centres, libraries, sports clubs, assisted living facilities, and homes for senior citizens, as well as through social media and local media. Map existing local initiatives, projects and networks related to promoting healthy diets and regular physical activity in your city to take advantage of the possible synergies and to ensure that there is no overlap – the aim is collaboration, not competition!

It is important to identify local actors that have access to the target groups and can help to multiply the effects of the project. These include teachers, community workers, nurses, local volunteers, bloggers, etc.

You can use tools such as mapping workshops, interviewing local health experts, workshops with representatives of the target groups, obtaining information from existing surveys, health reports etc.

You will also need to choose clearly your intended target group(s) and identify their specific needs.

Set your objectives

Define specific objectives for your city based on your analysis. What are your target groups missing? For example, it may be access to fresh fruit and vegetables, or adequate physical activity. Look for factors that are common to your community, such as high obesity rates, as additional starting points when designing your action plan.

Keep in mind the six "We Love Eating" key recommendations when considering the different target groups: Are older people drinking enough water? Do pregnant women have access to information about healthy diets? Are children able to enjoy regular physical activity? Do older people have opportunities to cook and enjoy home cooked meals? Are there opportunities for intergenerational exchange about healthy diets?

Based on this, choose the message(s) that you would like to focus on. Best not to focus on all six messages, as this requires a great deal of human and financial resources. Rather, choose just one or two.

Design an Action Plan

This is where your project comes to life!

Design new activities together with your partners and representatives of the target groups based on the identified needs and objectives of your community. Local stakeholders tend to be very keen on getting involved in developing these activities. Ideas are provided in section 5.2.

You should also consider how existing initiatives, projects and networks can come together and incorporate your chosen messages and tools.

Once you have defined your activities and discussed them with the relevant community actors (local gymnasiums, healthcare providers, supermarkets, etc), develop a calendar of activities. As part of your action plan, create a communication strategy, which will be very important for giving visibility to the key messages and actions. The best action is no good if nobody knows about it.

Here are some additional tips for developing your local Action Plan:

- Involve diverse community actors from all levels and sectors of society;
- Segment your target audiences according to factors (such as age, gender, cultural background, economic level, etc.) to best identify specific needs;
- Provide basic, accurate information through clear, unambiguous messages;
- Build upon existing health services, NGOs and networks and ongoing initiatives, working in collaboration rather than competition;
- Bring together partnerships of public, voluntary and private organisations, and businesses;
- Recruit members of the target groups to act as advocates/ambassadors for the project;
- Provide easily accessible opportunities to make healthy choices;
- Don't underestimate cultural norms and social pressures, which may come from religious, ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds.

Implement the project

To implement the project you will need to develop a calendar of activities, with a clear description of where the activities will take place, who will participate and who is responsible for organising them. The chart below can be used to structure your planning:

ACTIVITY	TARGET	LOCATION	OBJECTIVES	WE LOVE EATING RECOMMENDATION	ORGANISERS / CONTACT PERSON	RESOURCES REQUIRED	PROPOSED DATE(S)

Using an activity chart will be very useful in coordinating the activities over the course of the project especially as your partners might vary for each activity. For example, if you are organising a healthy cooking class for older people, you may need to contact a civic centre or school canteen for use of their kitchen.

Apart from the individual or regular activities consider also:

- Organising a local launch event to give visibility to the project;
- Developing a project website and social media to share your activities, information, experiences and lessons learnt;
- Working with local media to give visibility to the actions carried out by the project.

ORGANISING A LAUNCH EVENT

Launch events are important to get your project off the ground successfully and raise awareness among target group members, local/regional policymakers, media and other stakeholders.

Begin by brainstorming the kinds of activities and attractions that would be most appealing to your target groups, especially those from disadvantaged communities. Some ideas could include an event with healthy foods to sample, information and recipes; exercise activities like yoga classes or tai chi in a local park, and workshops on healthy shopping, cooking and eating.

Past launch events have also focused on intergenerational activities, storytelling related to food, neighbourhood picnics, cooking demonstrations, bicycle riding, physical activities for older people, multicultural events, and film projections. Feel free to use your imagination and all local resources – get creative!

However, don't forget the promotional aspects of the event. Take an inventory of your local press; this should include traditional media like television stations, radio stations and newspapers as well as "new" media such as online newspapers and relevant social media pages. Contact all of them beforehand with a save-the-date invitation, giving an overall scope of your project and an appealing preview of what's to come at the launch event. Highlight the local element, and mention well-known stakeholders' participation.

You should also think about where your target group members are and how you will reach them. Where is the best place to put posters and other promotional materials about the event? Are there any high-profile



community members who could help spread the news? Can you collaborate with health providers, social workers, municipal gyms, supermarkets...? Putting in some time and effort to your launch event will pay off in the long term through the success of your project!

Note that the involvement of local companies should be avoided (e.g. funding, logos in communication activities, free products in hand-out bags, etc) to guarantee full independence.

In Banská Bystrica



In Bradford





In Deventer



INDEPENDENCE FROM THIRD PARTIES

Note that the involvement of private companies in your project should be very carefully evaluated. To safeguard independence and trustworthiness of your initiative vis-à-vis all stakeholders and participants, no marketing or association with industry should be considered.

Evaluate and disseminate the results

Remember to build evaluation and dissemination components into all your efforts.

EVALUATION

Evaluation is essential to allow you to draw conclusions from your intervention, to assess the use of resources and to fine tune future projects. It does not need to be burdensome, but it must be designed at the onset of the project to be effective.

Define key objectives and variables, establish a statistically significant base line or control group, gather contact information for follow up contacts and engage with participants. To assess behavioural change and judge the impact of your project it is imperative that the same participants answer your questions at the beginning and at the end of your project. This is the only way to see if what you did changed the way they shop, cook, eat and exercise. Remember, it is important that your project lasts a sufficient length of time to allow for change to take place. How much time you need will depend upon the objectives of your project. Read more in Chapter 6.

DISSEMINATION

Conclusions, recommendations and lessons learnt not only showcase the results of your hard work but might encourage others to set up even more projects. It can also have an influence on local health policy. Dissemination furthermore promotes the sustainability of your project. Early thoughts on the sustainability and transferability of the project and its results are important. Look out for opportunities how your project activities could continue after the project ends.

Start discussions with neighbouring or sister cities how the project ideas and results can be shared and used there. Some of the cities that participated in “We Love Eating” also wrote letters to their high level national representatives for nutrition and physical exercise requesting meetings with representatives of the Health Ministry to present the project outcomes to have their recommendations considered in national health programmes. Find out more about who to contact here:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/high_level_group/index_en.htm.

To compile your results, get together with all your partners, stakeholders and target group members to draw conclusions from the project actions, discuss how the project was implemented and how it could be improved, and identify possible collaborations for the future.

Consider the following questions:

- What is the purpose of your dissemination? Would you like to see your project replicated? Influence political policy? Earn recognition for those who took part in the project?
- What will you disseminate? Results? Recommendations?
- Who will your audience be? Health stakeholders? Politicians? The general public?
- How will the dissemination take place? Through social media or a website? An event? Local press?
- When will the dissemination take place? Have you allowed sufficient time to see the true results of your actions?

The answers to these questions should give you a clearer picture of your dissemination plan.



5. TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES

5.1. The tools

The "We Love Eating" tools were created especially for the objectives and methodology of the project. All of the tools and proposed activities included in this guide have been scientifically grounded and validated by a scientific board of experts who came together for the purpose of this project.

"WE LOVE EATING" SCIENTIFIC BOARD

To augment our expertise and give further validation, a panel of scientific experts from a variety of disciplines was composed with a common interest – health. They provided guidelines for project intervention, and helped to assess materials and validate the findings.

- Prof. Bjarne Bruun Jensen ([Steno Diabetes Centre – Health Promotion Research / Aalborg University](#)).
- Goof Buijs ([CBO BV / Schools for Health in Europe network](#)).
- Prof. Tina Lavender ([University of Manchester](#))
- Prof. Margaret Lumbers ([University of Surrey](#))
- Dr. Esteve Llargués ([General Hospital in Granollers](#)).
- Prof. Monique Romon ([University of Lille 2 / Lille Hospital](#))
- Prof. W Bruce Traill ([University of Reading](#))

We hope you find the "We Love Eating" tools to be helpful and inspiring to your own local project. They are described in detail on the next pages and available for downloading from http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/projects/ep_funded_projects_en.htm#fragment0



WEBSITE

This online tool was core to the project, as it featured all the other educational tools available for the LPGs and all agents involved in health promotion at local level. The website was highly interactive and of great practical use to visitors who could find all information relevant to the project.



HANDBOOK

The handbook available in 7 languages served as a roadmap for creating local action plans. It included the philosophy behind "We Love Eating", tips for reaching different target groups, proposed activities, and much more.



FACEBOOK

One of the most important tools for engaging your target groups – especially pregnant women. Suitable to form online groups and keep people engaged and up to date on project activities. You are also encouraged to start your own Facebook groups.



CARD GAME

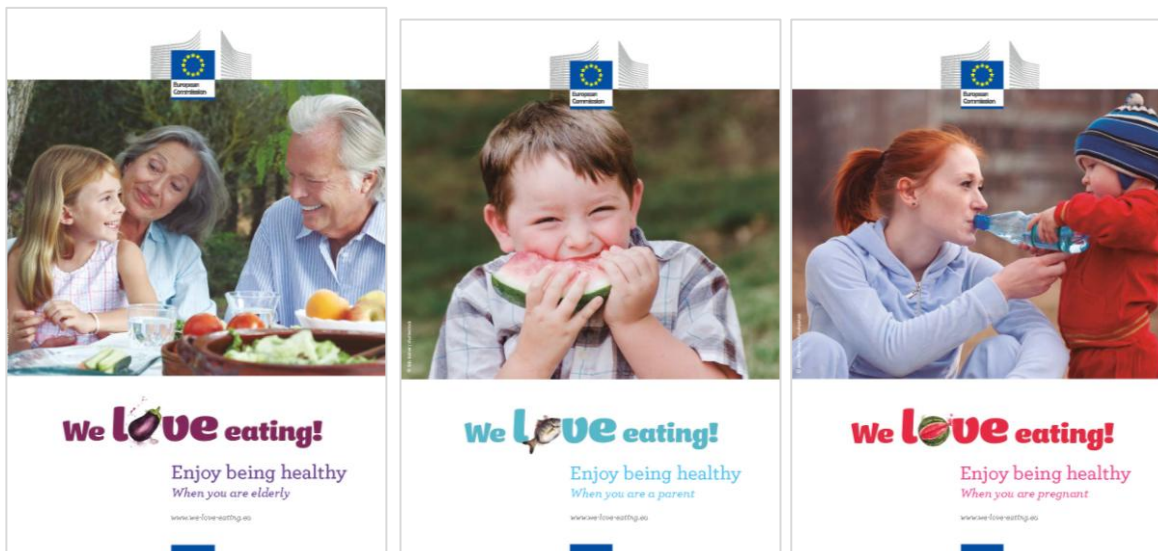
A fun activity suitable for all ages – especially recommended as an intergenerational activity. You may wish to use the card game as a tool to spur intergenerational exchange at schools, maternity classes, homes for seniors etc. It was surprisingly successful with seniors who played more often than the children it was designed for.





LEAFLETS

Leaflets are available for each target group (older people, parents and kids, and pregnant women) and turned out to be a successful way to attract their interest. A great way to share the project messages directly with individual community members, full of easy to access information in a fun and colourful look.



POSTERS

Like leaflets, posters make an eye-catching way to raise awareness of the project at the onset and promote local healthy lifestyle events. Partners and stakeholders can easily display them to show their support and/or collaboration.



BADGES AND MAGNETS



These little promotional gifts are very helpful reminders about your project and its key messages – especially when placed on the refrigerator!

We encourage you to use the tools, adapting them to your specific needs or using them as inspiration to create others. See also Chapter 8.

Based on the “We Love Eating” experiences, we can offer you a few key tips:

- The card game was popular among all three of the target groups, especially with older people. It was a real winner! The magnets were also well received. However, the app (game where players chose from the different food groups to create healthy diets progressing through increasingly difficult levels with the clock ticking as they made their choices) and the online survey (to self assess our lifestyles) were far less popular. Consider carefully if you wish to invest in these tools, making sure they meet the needs and wants of your target group(s).
- If you are targeting youngsters, you will not be surprised to learn that they love gadgets! It will be helpful to incorporate them into your activities, perhaps as rewards for healthy lifestyles or at the end of participatory discussions. Just be sure that gadgets are accompanied by meaningful messaging!
- The leaflets were popular among the target groups and stakeholders, but they often mentioned that they contained too much text. When designing your own leaflets, you may wish to keep the information simple and less wordy.
- The tools have been designed to address different target groups and reach both the tech-savvy population and those that are digitally excluded. Choose the right mix to best reach your target group.

5.2. The activities

Activities are the heart of participatory initiatives. They directly involve your target groups, showing them what is healthy rather than telling them. Activities also create a true sense of ownership among the participants, increasing the impact of your project and its messages exponentially.

Since “We Love Eating” placed a great deal of importance on enjoying good company as a part of good health, they were even more important than usual. They were an excellent opportunity to improve or learn more about their health, while getting to know other community members.

This guide provides a selection of proposed activities that can be adapted to the specific needs of your target group(s), but you are also encouraged to come up with new ideas depending on the resources and existing initiatives in your community. Your project can gain a great deal of strength and impact by collaborating with the initiative that already exist in your city!

Organisers should always go the extra mile to reach members of disadvantaged groups, whether the activities are brand-new or developed in collaboration with existing initiatives. They should always have a clear objective, e.g.:

- Increasing the availability of healthier food and beverage choices in public service venues;
- Providing incentives to food retailers to offer healthier food and beverage choices in underserved areas;
- Improving mechanisms for purchasing foods from farms;
- Creating or promoting programmes that highlight the importance of drinking water and staying hydrated;



- Providing opportunities for indoor and outdoor physical activities;
- Improving access to outdoor recreational facilities;
- Enhancing opportunities to cycle and walk to school or work, and enjoy public spaces;
- Promoting healthy shopping and cooking;
- Underline the importance of the 5 portions a day principle and explain how people can manage to eat 5 portions of fresh fruit and vegetables every day;
- Organising events in supermarkets, such as classes on how to read labels;
- Promoting cooking and tasting classes in schools;
- Organise group meals, inviting members of different target groups.

"We Love Eating" activities have included intergenerational meals and cooking classes, group discussions on healthy eating, excursions on foot and bicycle, and even city-wide collaborative events to share "We Love Eating" messages, e.g.

- In Bradford, young and old came together for an intergenerational breakfast. First they cooked together, and then they shared the meal – as well as stories and experiences. The event helped people to learn from each other and help one another, strengthening bonds between generations.
- In Deventer, a workshop was organised to inform mothers and mothers-to-be about healthy and unhealthy snacks and drinks. It also shared information about the amount of sugar in 'drinks for kids' and encouraged mothers to offer water to their children. The women also enjoyed getting to know one another at this social event.
- In Granollers, community members came together to take part in a walking excursion to a local farm where they learnt about pesticide-free farming and other healthy practices. They were invited to purchase the farm-fresh produce.
- For two whole weeks in Granollers, local stores distributed "We Love Eating" posters, leaflets and postcards with healthy messages and tips. They also decorated their shops with healthy themes and gave free gift vouchers to customers.

Read stories about what other cities have done at:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/projects/ep_funded_projects_en.htm#fragment0. There is also a wide variety of proposed activities for all target groups in the "We Love Eating" handbook.

Just like the "We Love Eating" organisers, you should carefully evaluate the involvement of local companies (e.g. funding, logos in communication activities, free products in hand-out bags, etc.) to guarantee full independence.



See some images of the activities held in Granollers and Cluj Napoca:

"WE LOVE EATING" WEEKS IN GRANOLLERS IN COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL MERCHANTS



COOKING CONTEST – A SCHOOL PROJECT ORGANISED IN SCHOOLS IN CLUJ NAPOCA





6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Part of the "We Love Eating" aim was to provide evidence-based information that can be used to possibly support future health policies at local, regional and European level. For this reason, it was essential to monitor and evaluate the project development and target groups' attitudes and behaviour in regards to the "We Love Eating" key recommendations.

You may wish to use similar methods for monitoring and evaluation of your project.

6.1. Pre-evaluation

Before designing an action plan, it is helpful to survey the chosen target groups to measure awareness, behaviour, opinions and attitudes with respect to healthy eating and lifestyles. The measurement should take the form of a questionnaire to be completed individually either on paper or online. You can start with a baseline measurement and from there narrow it down and choose one message, one target and one goal for your initiative.

This measurement is also essential for evaluating the effectiveness of your project activities. You must maintain contact with as many participants as possible, from the beginning to the final evaluation to be able to compare initial and final attitudes and behaviours.

Maintaining contact with your monitoring sample can be challenging. With children and seniors it is actually quite simple. Collaborate with schools and elderly care centres to ensure access to your groups through the months and even years.

Maintaining contact with pregnant women can prove more difficult – especially once they've had their babies. One way to keep in touch with this target group is by starting a Facebook group. This is ideal especially for new mothers who are craving contact with other mums but struggle to find the time to go to social events.

You can also try to offer an incentive to this target group for maintaining contact and completing the required evaluations, e.g. by raffling off some blenders. Think also about local stakeholders e.g. a supermarket which might offer vouchers.

6.2. Post-evaluation

Post-evaluation takes place once the entire project has finished. It should cover:

- Recollection of the project;
- Appreciation of the overall project and of individual tools and materials;
- Impact of the project in terms of awareness of
 - intended messages,
 - changes in attitude towards healthy diets,
 - changes in eating behaviour.

Like the pre-evaluation, the post-evaluation should use much of the same questionnaire for the results to be comparable (see an example of the questionnaire on the next page).



Share the results at a dissemination workshop – this will be an attractive event for local stakeholders and the press. Try also to interest your local government in your results to potentially support the development of future policy.

See an example of one of the questionnaires created for the evaluation:

Eating, Drinking and Exercise Survey

General

Unique ID number:

Date:

Dear participant,

This questionnaire is part of a pilot project in your city to promote healthy diets. The questionnaire will only take **10 minutes** to fill in. Your responses will be 100% anonymous.

We thank you very much for your participation!

1 Tell us about yourself:

1. **How old are you?**
__ years old

2. **Are you a boy or a girl?** (tick a box)


Boy
 Girl

2 Questionnaire

Please tick **one single answer** for all the questions, unless it is mentioned that more than one answer can be given.

3. **On a general day, how often do you drink a glass of water?**

5 or more times a day
 3 – 4 times a day
 2 - 3 times a day
 0-1 times a day
 less than once a day
 never




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Enjoy being healthy

Eating, Drinking and Exercise Survey


4. **I eat fruit:** (1 portion = one piece of fruit, such as one apple, banana, pear, orange or nectarine; tick a box).

every day: at least 2 portions a day
 every day
 5-6 times a week
 3-4 times a week
 1-2 times a week
 less than once a week
 never




5. **I eat vegetables:** (1 portion = 80gr.; tick a box)

every day: at least 2 portions a day
 every day
 5-6 times a week
 3-4 times a week
 1-2 times a week
 less than once a week
 never




6. **In my daily life I am:** (tick a box)

very active (playing sports like football, gym, running ...)
 moderately active (riding your bike, walking to school ...)
 somewhat active (playing in the playground at school ...)
 not active (sitting most of the day)



7. **How many days a week do you eat together as a family?** (tick a box)

6-7 days a week
 4-5 days a week
 2-3 days a week
 1 day a week
 less than once a week
 never




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8. **How many days a week do you eat a fresh cooked meal?** (not ready-made food from a shop or takeaway; tick a box)

6-7 days per week
 4-5 days per week
 2-3 days per week
 1 day per week
 less than once a week
 never



Answering the following questions, please tell us what you think about the following behaviours.

9. **How much do you agree with the following statements about drinking water?** (tick a box next to each statement)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1 I like the taste of water.							
2 Water is cheap.							
3 Drinking water makes me feel healthier.							
4 Water stops me feeling thirsty.							

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10. **How much do you agree with the following statements about eating fruits and vegetables?** (tick a box next to each statement)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1 I like the taste of fruit and vegetables.							
2 Fruit and vegetables contain a lot of vitamins and minerals.							
3 Fruit is an easy and quick snack.							
4 Eating lots of fruit and vegetables can stop me getting ill.							
5 Fruit and vegetables give me energy.							
6 Eating fruit and vegetables makes me feel healthier.							

11. **How much do you agree with the following statements about regular exercise?** (tick a box next to each statement)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1 Exercising makes me feel better.							
2 Exercising is fun to do.							
3 Exercising regularly can stop me getting ill.							
4 Exercising gives me a boost of energy.							
5 I can sleep better after exercising.							
6 Exercise is a good way to meet new people.							

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12. How much do you agree with the following statements about cooking meals at home? (tick a box next to each statement)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1 Home cooked meals taste better than ready-made food from a shop or a takeaway.							
2 Home cooked meals are healthier than ready-made food from a shop or a takeaway.							

13. How much do you agree with the following statements about sharing a meal with friends or family? (tick a box next to each statement)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1 Shared meals are an opportunity to talk to each other.							
2 Sharing a meal is enjoyable.							

14. Please select all that apply: A healthy diet is most important for:

- Children
- Adults
- Pregnant women
- Breastfeeding women
- Elderly

15. Select a food group on the left and give it a place in the list on the right. Order the food groups by how often you eat/drink them in your daily life. (1 should be the food group you eat/drink most often).



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16. Now order the food groups by how often you think you should eat/drink them in your daily life to be as healthy as possible. (1 should be the food group you think you should eat/drink most often).

A. Fats and oils	1	_____
B. Vegetables	2	_____
C. Bread, cereals, rice, pasta	3	_____
D. Milk, yoghurt, cheese	4	_____
E. Fruit	5	_____
F. Water	6	_____
G. Meat, poultry, fish	7	_____
H. Sweets and other sugary foods	8	_____
I. Fizzy and sugary drinks	9	_____

17. How much you agree with the following statement? (tick a box)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1 I know which foods are healthy.							

18. How much do you agree with the following statements? (tick a box next to each statement)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1 I enjoy eating healthily.							
2 Eating healthily is important to me.							
3 I enjoy eating fruit.							
4 I enjoy eating vegetables.							
5 Eating healthily is pointless.							



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16. Now order the food groups by how often you think you should eat/drink them in your daily life to be as healthy as possible. (1 should be the food group you think you should eat/drink most often).

A. Fats and oils	1	_____
B. Vegetables	2	_____
C. Bread, cereals, rice, pasta	3	_____
D. Milk, yoghurt, cheese	4	_____
E. Fruit	5	_____
F. Water	6	_____
G. Meat, poultry, fish	7	_____
H. Sweets and other sugary foods	8	_____
I. Fizzy and sugary drinks	9	_____

17. How much you agree with the following statement? (tick a box)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1 I know which foods are healthy.							

18. How much do you agree with the following statements? (tick a box next to each statement)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1 I enjoy eating healthily.							
2 Eating healthily is important to me.							
3 I enjoy eating fruit.							
4 I enjoy eating vegetables.							
5 Eating healthily is pointless.							

19. How much do you agree with the following statements? (tick a box next to each statement)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1 Eating is a good way to socialise with people.							
2 I enjoy sitting down with friends or family to share a meal.							
3 I enjoy exercising in my free time.							

20. How much do you agree with the following statements? (tick a box next to each statement)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1 I drink enough water.							
2 I eat enough fruit.							
3 I eat enough vegetables.							
4 I exercise enough.							
5 I take care of my body with the right foods and I exercise regularly.							
6 I try to live healthily, but every time I fall back into unhealthy habits.							

21. How much you agree with the following statements? (tick a box next to each statement)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1 I intend to try and live more healthily than I am right now.							



22. In the future, I would like to:



	Less often	A little bit less often	Same amount	A little bit more often	More often
1 exercise ...					
2 drink water ...					
3 eat vegetables ...					
4 eat fruits ...					
5 share meals with family or friends					

3 Please tell us a little more information about you:

23. Do you have any kind of food allergy or other health problem that affects your diet?

- Yes
- No

24. If you would like to tell us anything else, please write it in the box below:



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Thank you for your time!

As a thank you for completing our survey you will automatically be entered into our prize draw for the chance to win **£100!** We will announce the lucky winner in August.

As an added thank you we would also like to offer you a **free swim**. To claim your swimming voucher please provide your postal address below (we will not contact you by post for any other reason).

Alternatively you can pick up your free voucher from the same place you picked up the questionnaire.

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

We would like to contact you again for our follow-up survey next year. If you agree to take this survey, please enter your e-mail address or telephone number below. We will keep your information confidential and use it only to contact you for the survey next year. Your personal information will never be linked in any way to your answers to either survey, and will always remain confidential.

Do you want to participate again?

- Yes, I want to participate again
- No, I prefer not to participate again

If you want to participate again, please enter your email address or telephone number:

Email: _____ Tel. No: _____

Thank you for your cooperation!



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7. LESSONS LEARNT

To allow others to learn from the “We Love Eating” pilot project's experiences, project evaluations were carried out in several stages, from a pre-project mapping of current situations to the post-evaluation of target groups and stakeholders.

This evaluation has provided insights on project implementation and development, and project strengths and challenges.

The tips below are intended to help you avoid some of the difficulties encountered by those involved in “We Love Eating”.

- Activities are key. The project is not one of didactical education but is based on dialogue-promoting initiatives that put the target groups in the centre. Activities were the ideal way to connect to the target groups and convey the messages of “We Love Eating”. Take care to develop activities that your target groups truly want and need.
- Clearly identify the different ethnic and socio-economic groups you will target, and accurately represent them. This applies to any promotional materials you may need to produce for your local events, and to the events and activities themselves. Are you planning a group meal? Be sure to serve foods that are familiar to your target groups. An exercise activity? Some groups may not be comfortable exercising in public. Taking these factors into account will greatly increase the success of the project.
- Create and adapt online materials to your specific needs. Social media like Facebook can be highly useful in engaging certain target groups (such as young people and pregnant women; it may not be the best way to reach and involve others, such as the older people). Just be sure to keep the page regularly updated with relevant information and activities.
- To be able to evaluate your work and the results, take monitoring into account from the beginning to reduce work in this area later on and to ensure the most accurate findings. It is especially important to gather statistically representative groups that agree to take part in the monitoring and evaluation for an adequate duration of time. For children and seniors, this can be achieved through schools and elderly care centres. Pregnant and breastfeeding women are more challenging – one of the best methods for maintaining regular engagement with this target group is social media (see next point).
- Create a Facebook page especially for pregnant and breastfeeding women. Pregnant and breastfeeding women can be challenging to engage with on a regular basis. This target group is busy – especially new mothers – but they also crave interaction with other mums. Create a Facebook page especially for them and make a special effort to keep it updated and to engage women in online dialogue as well as in real activities.
- Regarding the monitoring sample size, it always needs to be realistic and above all proportionate to the cities’ population size.
- Plan for your project to last long enough to allow for behavioural changes to take place and be observed. Some “We Love Eating” stakeholders felt that one year was not long enough.

- Focus on just one or two target groups and messages – focusing on more may prove to be overly ambitious and demand too many resources! “We Love Eating” stakeholders and partners felt that three target groups and six messages was too ambitious for the year-long pilot project. Another option is to plan for a longer project duration, which could allow you to address additional target groups and/or messages.
- Keep key messages simple. The project may have lots of key messages – all important – but they should not be communicated all at once. Instead, focus activities and communication on one or two key messages at a time. Plan diverse activities to communicate all of the key messages.
- Develop synergies with and build upon existing initiatives: events, groups, other communication project materials, etc. Strive to engage with existing services and projects, first mapping “existing local initiatives”. Working with existing initiatives, projects and networks is also a way of ensuring the sustainability of the project.
- The success of “We Love Eating” depended largely on getting stakeholders to take ownership of the project and get fully involved in implementing activities. Dedicate time and effort to the motivation and training of stakeholders and partners.
- During the implementation of the activities in any city, language and cultural barriers can arise. This is especially true for certain disadvantaged groups like ethnic minorities and migrants, which must be taken into account from the beginning.
- Reach target groups by going to where they are rather than expecting them to come to the project. Map community entry points and leaders who can help you to reach them.
- Current financial pressure in Europe makes it difficult to hope that organisations will provide resources and staff on a good will basis alone. You may need to offer financial compensation or think of other creative ways to make participation worthwhile.

8. FIND OUT MORE

Find the project's tools and results:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/projects/ep_funded_projects_en.htm#fragment0

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