

Case studies on the development and implementation of national policies for the promotion of physical activity

Case study summary

SWITZERLAND

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(covering situation until May 2011)

Completed by

Brian Martin, MD MPH, Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine, University of Zurich

Eva Martin, MPH, Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine, University of Zurich

Sonja Kahlmeier, PhD, Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine, University of Zurich



Background

Switzerland has a federalist structure where most political responsibilities, including for health and education, lie with the communities and with the cantons. The federal administration has a mainly subsidiary role, except for some specifically defined topics such as defence or external policy. For historic reasons that also is the case for sports promotion.

Policy development and documents

There are relevant documents in different sectors as well as historic documents and current developments (which cannot yet be judged regarding their impact).

- Environment: The **Freedom to roam (1907)** is a very important historic key element both for the environment and for transport. The impact of the **Federal CO₂ Law (1999)** still remains to be seen.
- Sport: The **Federal Law on the Promotion of Gymnastics and Sport (1972)** is the most important basis. The **Concept of the Federal Council for a Sports Policy in Switzerland (2000)** followed.
- Transport: The **Freedom to roam (1907)** and the **Federal Law on Walking and Hiking Paths (1985)** are very important historic key elements. Even though the **Mission statement on human powered mobility (2002)** has not been finalized officially, it has guided strongly further developments in this area. The impact of the most recent laws (**Federal CO₂, law 1999, Federal law on the Infrastructure Fund 2006**) is to be seen.
- Health: The **Federal Health Insurance Law (1996)** was an important step, defining among other things the role of the foundation "Health Promotion Switzerland". The **National environment and health action plan (2001-2007)** had a key role in bringing together the different sectors but has had limited concrete impact and has been discontinued. The **Health objectives for Switzerland (2002)** were probably less important in terms of direct impact, but they are one of the pillars of the upcoming prevention law. The **National Programme on Diet and Physical Activity (2008-2012)** is the latest development in this sector.

National recommendations

National recommendations for health-enhancing physical activity have been issued for adults in 1999 and for children in 2006. They are based on the international recommendations (at least half an hour of moderate intensity activities a day for adults, at least an hour a day for adolescents, children at the beginning of school age considerably more).

National goals and performance indicators

- The "Sustainable Development Strategy" states as one of its goals the increase of the proportion of physically active transport stages within the modal split of overall mobility. No specific targets are defined.
- The "Concept of the Federal Council for a Sports Policy in Switzerland" has defined the increase of physically active people in Switzerland as the first goal of the Swiss Sports Policy. For the years 2003 to 2006 the target was stated of first stabilizing and then increasing by one percent per year the proportion of physically active people in Switzerland. No more specific targets were stated for 2007 to 2010.
- The "Mission statement on human powered mobility" which exists only as a draft so far has one target on increasing physically active transport by 15% within 10 years.
- The "National Programme on Diet and Physical Activity" states as its third goal "the promotion of physical activity in daily life". No specific targets are defined.

National action plans outlining a clear implementation strategy

- The Federal Administration is called upon to develop an action plan for the Sustainable Development Strategy until 2011.
- The "Concept of the Federal Council for a Sports Policy in Switzerland" has had two "packages of measures", one from 2003 to 2006 and one from 2007 to 2010.
- The National Programme on Diet and Physical Activity 2008-2012 has no action plan.
- The federal laws mentioned above do not have action plans, but ordinances defining the ways in which the corresponding financial means are being used.

Communication and branding

Switzerland has had different communication campaigns addressing physical activity. Some brands used such as the “Youth+Sport” are known by the vast majority of the Swiss population and have an excellent reputation; others have been used by different actors more recently and have not been evaluated yet for brand recognition.

Evidence of political commitment

- The national programme Youth and Sport has had very strong political support on different political levels since the 1970s.
- The “Concept of the Federal Council for a Sports Policy in Switzerland” has had strong political support during its development in the late 1990s, but only limited additional resources have materialised for the concrete measures.
- The political support for the “National Programme on Diet and Physical Activity” and the (first ever) national prevention law will become clear in the upcoming discussions of the law in the federal parliament.
- At the same time, there is growing interest and support for all aspects of physical activity promotion at the level of cities and cantons.
- After a decline in the late 1990s, there is again growing interest and political support for the promotion of walking and cycling also under the aspects of transport and spatial planning as well as environmental protection (CO₂ reduction).

Coordination and stewardship for HEPA promotion

There is not one single institution providing overall stewardship,, different bodies are responsible for partial aspects. Some activities have been delegated outside of government, e.g. to the Foundation Health Promotion Switzerland.

Surveillance or health monitoring system

There is no standardized surveillance system for physical activity but three monitoring systems contain information on physical activity: the “observatory sport and physical activity Switzerland”, the indicator system on sustainable development (MONET), and the Monitoring System on Nutrition and Physical Activity (MOSEB).

Evaluation of policy implementation

- The “Concept of the Federal Council for a Sports Policy in Switzerland” had some evaluation of its first package of measures. There are no specific plans for the current second package of measures. The “observatory sport and physical activity Switzerland” (www.sportobs.ch) contains a whole series of sport policy indicators.
- An evaluation of the “National Programme on Diet and Physical Activity” is planned for 2011.
- The strategy of Health Promotion Switzerland for a healthy body weight is being evaluated by different monitoring and evaluation projects.

Main successes and challenges

Examples of an area or issue of greatest progress in recent years include the extension of the Youth and Sport programme to 5 to 10 year olds in 2008; the consensus on recommendations and principles of physical activity and health, and a growing interest in the topic in the media and in the public as well as growing involvement and number of actions by other sectors. Issues that remain more difficult to address include the clarification of roles and joint actions by national institutions, a better mechanism (funding, structures) for supporting action and change, and a monitoring system on physical activity for all age groups.

Overview of development of HEPA policy and implementation in Switzerland



Overview of documents and developments

