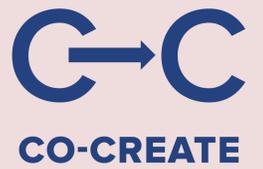


A pilot study benchmarking physical activity policy actions in Europe: lessons learned from the CO-CREATE project



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Background and aim

- The "Confronting Obesity: Co-creating policy with youth" project, known as **CO-CREATE**, brings together World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) International and 13 other research and advocacy organisations to work with young people to create, inform and disseminate evidence-based policies that help prevent obesity. The project investigates how policy changes can support healthy eating and a physically active lifestyle with the aim of halting the rise of adolescent obesity.
- Global research shows a strong link between physical activity and the risk of developing non-communicable diseases. To increase physical activity levels, governments must design and implement a comprehensive set of policy actions across a range of areas.
- It is important that countries learn from the extensive body of evidence of policy design in physical activity. Countries can do this through benchmarking, which assesses the quality of policy design or implementation by reference to evidence-based indicators. Benchmarking tools are seen as useful in comparing progress and enabling learning on policy design across countries.
- To aid governments in this process, the MOVING benchmarking tool was developed to assess the design of countries' policies in promoting physical activity, as well as gaps in policy action.

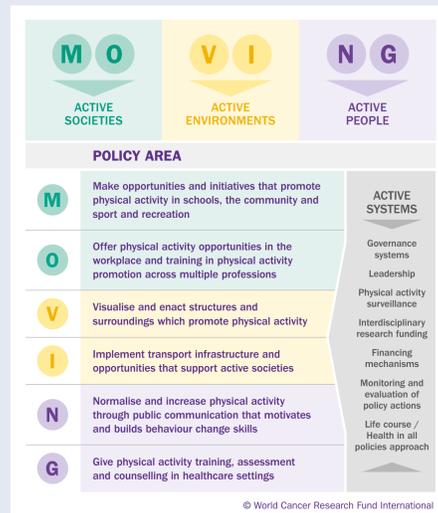


Figure 1: The MOVING framework

Methods

- The process of developing the benchmarking tools firstly included the development and testing of a benchmarking structure for physical activity policy and secondly, the development of physical activity benchmarks through five rounds of consultation.
- A number of risk factor benchmarks were reviewed, and benchmark prototypes relating to physical activity were developed, reviewed, and consulted on by experts. This resulted in benchmarking tools organised around the policy areas of the MOVING framework (Figure 1).
- The tool was applied to a set of physical activity policies from five participating countries in the CO-CREATE project: Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal and the UK. A comprehensive scan with a set methodology was used to identify physical activity policies currently implemented in these countries.

Results

- The MOVING benchmarking tool is structured around the MOVING framework on physical activity policy.
- The MOVING policy areas are associated with several benchmarks and relevant indicators in the form of statements of government support. The level of government support is given a value based on several policy attributes.
- Each benchmark contains a set of questions based on policy attributes.
- Each policy is benchmarked using a coding scheme that allocates values for each policy attribute.
- There are 74 policy attributes, 23 of which are yes/no questions which assess if a country has implemented a respective policy (Figure 2).
- Comprehensive datasets of physical activity policies are required to apply the tool which are available in the MOVING database.
- The remaining 51 policy attributes are follow-up questions on qualitative assessments of the policy design against aspirational criteria. Each of the 23 benchmarks follows a similar structure (Figure 3).



Figure 2: The structure of the MOVING benchmarking tool

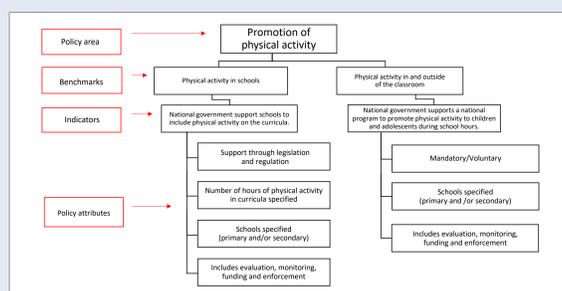


Figure 3: An example of the structure of the benchmarking tool in one policy area

- The MOVING benchmarking tool underwent extensive pilot testing to ensure coherence in use of the tool, validity and reliability of results.
- The tool is applied separately by two reviewers. Once a country dataset is benchmarked, the reviewers convene for a consensus process.
- The two reviewers discuss the results of the policies benchmarked and discrepancies in results. Discussion of results is continued until consensus is reached.
- The benchmarking tool was able to effectively and quickly identify gaps or weaknesses in policy design of single government actions.
- The piloting phase highlighted the importance that individual benchmarks be applied to multiple relevant policies at the same time. This enables benchmarking of multiple policy actions under the same benchmark and policy area.
- The pilot test showed that the tool successfully enabled comparisons between countries for specific policy areas.
- Scores produced from the benchmarking tool will be displayed in a policy index enabling cross country comparison (Figure 4).

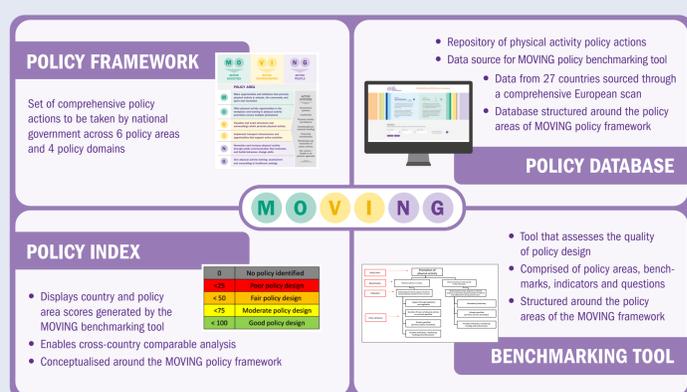


Figure 4: The 'MOVING' policy tools to support assessment, monitoring and design of physical activity policy

Conclusions

- The **MOVING benchmarking tool** is designed to monitor and assess physical activity policies. It assesses policy design through evidence-based aspirational indicators holding countries to a higher standard, providing a baseline status of a country's current policy environment, making the tool innovative.
- The benchmarking tool highlights specific weaknesses in policy-making and avenues for improving existing physical activity policies. It is an important advocacy tool, as it highlights where governments should be taking action at country level.
- The MOVING benchmarking tool can be used by government, policy-makers, civil society and researchers to identify areas of action. The tool can be used to provide greater analysis of a country's policy progress, advancing specific objectives of policymaking or as a policy advocacy tool to improve the physical activity policy environment.
- It is part of a range of policy tools and its results will support comparisons between countries by producing an overall policy index of the status of physical activity policy (Figure 4).

