



Funded by
the European Union

INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER 8



(CC BY-SA) : You are free to Share- copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format and Adapt – remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms under the following terms:

Attribution – you must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use

ShareAlike- If you remix, transform or build upon the material, you must distribute your contribution under the same license as the original

No additional restrictions – you may not apply legal terms.



DECLARATION:

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or Dům zahraniční spolupráce. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER

Healthy lifestyle among young people in our country

In an era marked by rapid technological advancements and increasingly sedentary lifestyles, promoting healthy habits among young people has become paramount. This is especially true in countries like Austria, Czech Republic, Italy, Turkey, Greece, and Latvia, where societal trends and cultural nuances influence how youth approach their well-being. This document aims to explore the current landscape of healthy lifestyles among young people in these nations, highlighting key factors that contribute to their choices and identifying opportunities for positive change. It's a comprehensive exploration of the challenges and successes in cultivating a culture of wellness amongst the younger generation.



**Funded by
the European Union**

DECLARATION:

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or Dům zahraniční spolupráce. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

8



ERASMUS+

#OPEN@



Importance of Healthy Lifestyles

Adopting a healthy lifestyle is crucial for young people, laying the foundation for a fulfilling and vibrant life. It encompasses various aspects that work synergistically to promote overall well-being and reduce the risk of chronic diseases in later years.

A healthy lifestyle empowers individuals to live longer, healthier lives. It is not about perfection, but rather a commitment to making positive choices that benefit both physical and mental health. **Regular physical activity** is vital for maintaining a healthy weight, strengthening bones and muscles, and reducing the risk of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes. **A balanced diet**, rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein, provides essential nutrients to support optimal growth and development.

Furthermore, a healthy lifestyle promotes **mental well-being**. Stress management techniques, adequate sleep, and engaging in activities that bring joy contribute to a positive outlook and enhance resilience. By fostering healthy habits, young people can build a strong foundation for a fulfilling and vibrant life.

Current Trends in Austria



Austria, known for its picturesque landscapes and rich cultural heritage, has been witnessing a growing focus on healthy lifestyles among its young population. The Austrian government has implemented various initiatives to promote healthy eating habits, physical activity, and mental well-being, particularly targeting youth. These efforts are driven by a growing awareness of the importance of preventative healthcare and a desire to foster a more active and healthy society.

Recent studies indicate that Austrian young people are increasingly conscious of the benefits of a balanced diet, with a shift towards consuming more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. The country has seen a surge in popularity of organic and locally sourced food, reflecting a growing awareness of sustainable practices and the importance of fresh, high-quality ingredients. This trend is also evident in the increasing number of farmers' markets and initiatives promoting healthy eating in schools and communities.

Physical activity is another key aspect of healthy living that is gaining traction in Austria. The country's stunning natural beauty offers numerous opportunities for outdoor recreation, with hiking, cycling, and skiing being popular activities among young people. The government is investing in sports infrastructure and promoting physical activity programs in schools and communities. This focus on movement is helping to combat sedentary lifestyles and encourage a more active approach to life.



Current Trends in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic, like many other European countries, is witnessing a growing awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles among young people. However, certain trends and challenges persist. One notable trend is the increasing prevalence of sedentary behavior, particularly among youth. This is partly attributed to the rise of screen time and digital entertainment. While the Czech Republic has a strong tradition of outdoor recreation, the appeal of indoor activities and electronic devices has somewhat overshadowed traditional physical activity.

Another trend is the evolving dietary habits of young Czechs. Fast food consumption has become more widespread, leading to concerns about the nutritional quality of meals. However, there is also a growing interest in healthy eating, with a focus on fresh produce, whole grains, and lean protein. This trend is reflected in the increasing popularity of organic foods and farmers' markets.

Despite these trends, the Czech Republic has implemented various initiatives to promote healthy lifestyles among young people. These initiatives include school-based programs that teach nutrition, physical activity, and mental health. Public health campaigns are also underway to raise awareness about the benefits of healthy choices. These initiatives aim to address the challenges and create a culture of wellness within the Czech youth population.

Current Trends in Italy



Italy, a country known for its rich culture, cuisine, and breathtaking landscapes, is also grappling with the complexities of promoting healthy lifestyles among its young population. While Italy has a long tradition of healthy eating, with a Mediterranean diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, modern challenges like processed foods, fast food, and sedentary lifestyles have emerged, impacting the health of younger generations.

Recent studies indicate that Italian youth are facing rising rates of obesity, cardiovascular disease, and type 2 diabetes, prompting concerns about the long-term health implications. These trends are partly attributed to changes in dietary habits, with a shift away from traditional Mediterranean staples and towards processed foods and sugary drinks. Moreover, increased screen time, reduced physical activity, and a lack of access to safe and affordable outdoor spaces contribute to a growing inactivity problem among young Italians.

However, positive trends are also emerging. There's a growing awareness among Italian youth about the importance of health and wellness. This is fueled by initiatives promoting healthy eating, regular exercise, and mental well-being in schools and communities. Furthermore, the popularity of outdoor activities like hiking, cycling, and team sports is on the rise, offering opportunities for physical activity and social interaction.



Current Trends in Turkey



Turkey faces unique challenges in promoting healthy lifestyles among its young population. The country is experiencing rapid urbanization and modernization, leading to changes in dietary habits and physical activity patterns. While Turkey has a strong tradition of fresh produce and home-cooked meals, processed foods and fast food consumption are on the rise, particularly in urban areas. This shift has contributed to an increase in obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease among young people.

Furthermore, the increasing use of technology and sedentary lifestyles are contributing to decreased physical activity levels. Screen time and video game usage have replaced traditional forms of outdoor play and recreation, impacting young people's physical health and mental well-being. Despite these challenges, Turkey is making strides in promoting healthy lifestyles. There is a growing awareness of the importance of nutrition, exercise, and mental health.

The government has implemented various initiatives to encourage healthier choices, including promoting school-based physical activity programs and providing subsidies for healthy food options. Non-governmental organizations are also actively engaged in promoting health education and awareness campaigns. These efforts are critical to combat the rising rates of non-communicable diseases and ensure the future health and well-being of Turkey's young generation.



Current Trends in Greece

Greece, with its vibrant culture and Mediterranean lifestyle, is facing both challenges and opportunities in promoting healthy lifestyles among young people. The country has made strides in addressing issues such as nutrition, physical activity, and mental health, but ongoing efforts are necessary to further improve the well-being of this demographic.

Greek youth are increasingly aware of the importance of healthy eating, driven by the growing emphasis on Mediterranean cuisine. There is a rise in interest in locally sourced, fresh produce and traditional dishes, which are rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. However, challenges remain in combating the influence of fast food and processed foods, especially in urban areas.

Physical activity levels in Greece are improving, with participation in sports and recreational activities increasing among young people. This is encouraged by government initiatives promoting outdoor activities, sports programs in schools, and access to public parks. However, screen time remains a significant concern, with young people spending a considerable amount of time indoors engaging in sedentary activities.

Mental health and well-being are receiving increased attention in Greece. Mental health services are expanding, and awareness campaigns are promoting open conversations about mental health issues. However, stigma and limited access to resources remain challenges in accessing mental health support.

Overall, Greece is taking steps to foster healthy lifestyles among its youth. However, ongoing efforts are needed to address persisting challenges and create a supportive environment that empowers young people to make healthy choices.

Current Trends in Latvia



Latvia, like many other European countries, is witnessing a growing awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles among young people. This awareness is driven by various factors, including increased access to information, growing concerns about chronic diseases, and a shift towards a more active and mindful approach to life.

One notable trend is the increasing popularity of fitness activities, particularly among young adults. Gyms, yoga studios, and outdoor fitness parks are becoming increasingly common, offering a wide range of options for staying active. Additionally, there's a growing interest in sports such as basketball, soccer, and running, fostering a sense of community and healthy competition.

Another significant trend is the focus on healthy eating habits. Young Latvians are becoming more conscious of the nutritional value of their food, with an emphasis on fresh produce, whole grains, and lean protein sources. This shift is evident in the increasing availability of organic and locally sourced food products, as well as the growing popularity of vegetarian and vegan diets.

Nutrition and Dietary Habits

A balanced diet is essential for a healthy lifestyle. Young people require a varied and nutritious intake to support their growth, development, and overall well-being. It's crucial to ensure they're getting the right amount of essential nutrients, including vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Unfortunately, modern-day diets often fall short of ideal nutritional requirements, leading to deficiencies and health problems.

- **Fruits and Vegetables:** Fruits and vegetables are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, which are vital for protecting against chronic diseases.
- **Whole Grains:** Whole grains provide complex carbohydrates, fiber, and essential nutrients, promoting digestive health and satiety.
- **Lean Proteins:** Protein is essential for muscle growth, repair, and hormone production. Lean protein sources, such as poultry, fish, beans, and lentils, are preferred over processed meats.
- **Dairy Products:** Dairy products are excellent sources of calcium, which is crucial for bone health.
- **Healthy Fats:** While fat is often demonized, healthy fats from sources like avocados, nuts, and olive oil are essential for brain function and hormone production.

It's essential to emphasize the importance of limiting processed foods, sugary drinks, and excessive intake of saturated and trans fats. These dietary choices can contribute to weight gain, heart disease, and other health issues.

Educating young people about nutrition and dietary habits is crucial for their future health. Encouraging them to cook healthy meals, make informed choices at restaurants, and read food labels can help them develop sustainable healthy eating patterns.

Physical Activity and Exercise

Engaging in regular physical activity is paramount for maintaining a healthy lifestyle, particularly among young people. It plays a vital role in fostering both physical and mental well-being. In the context of this magazine, we explore the importance of physical activity and exercise among young people in Austria, Czech Republic, Italy, Turkey, Greece, and Latvia.

- Regular exercise helps to strengthen bones, muscles, and cardiovascular systems, reducing the risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes.
- Physical activity also promotes healthy weight management, improves sleep quality, and boosts mood and self-esteem. Engaging in enjoyable forms of exercise can enhance overall quality of life.
- Furthermore, physical activity can foster social connections and promote teamwork, particularly in team sports or group fitness classes.
- In each of the countries we are focusing on, initiatives are underway to encourage young people to adopt active lifestyles. These include promoting accessible sports facilities, offering subsidized fitness programs, and integrating physical activity into school curricula.



Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health and wellbeing are crucial components of a healthy lifestyle, especially for young people. This age group faces unique challenges, including academic pressure, social expectations, and identity formation, which can impact their mental health. It is important to promote a culture of mental health awareness and support among young people, providing them with the resources and skills they need to manage stress, cope with adversity, and maintain positive mental wellbeing.

Promoting mental health among young people requires a multifaceted approach that addresses both individual and societal factors. This includes fostering open communication about mental health, reducing stigma surrounding mental illness, and providing access to mental health services. Educational programs can equip young people with knowledge about mental health conditions, coping mechanisms, and seeking help. Additionally, creating supportive environments within schools, families, and communities can help young people feel safe, connected, and empowered to prioritize their mental wellbeing.

Encouraging healthy lifestyle habits, such as regular exercise, adequate sleep, and a balanced diet, can also contribute to positive mental health. Engaging in activities that promote relaxation, mindfulness, and social connection, such as yoga, meditation, or spending time with friends and family, can provide valuable outlets for stress management and emotional regulation.

Substance Abuse Prevention

Substance abuse prevention is a crucial component of promoting healthy lifestyles among young people. It aims to reduce the risk of individuals developing substance use disorders, which can have devastating consequences for their physical, mental, and social well-being. Effective prevention strategies encompass a multi-faceted approach, addressing various factors that contribute to substance use.

- **Education and Awareness:** Providing comprehensive and age-appropriate education about the risks associated with substance use, including alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs, is essential. This education should cover the physiological, psychological, and social consequences of substance abuse, as well as the legal implications.
- **Skill-Building:** Equipping young people with the necessary skills to resist peer pressure, manage stress, and make healthy choices is vital. This can involve teaching coping mechanisms, communication skills, decision-making strategies, and refusal skills.
- **Family Involvement:** Strong family bonds and supportive parenting practices are crucial in substance abuse prevention. Open communication, clear expectations, and consistent monitoring can help create a protective environment that reduces the risk of substance use.
- **Community Support:** Building a supportive and healthy community environment can play a significant role in preventing substance abuse. This includes promoting positive activities, reducing access to substances, and fostering a culture of well-being.
- **Early Intervention:** Identifying and addressing early warning signs of substance use is essential for preventing escalation. Early intervention programs provide support and guidance to individuals who are at risk of developing substance use disorders.

Sleep and Recovery

Adequate sleep is a fundamental pillar of a healthy lifestyle, especially for young people navigating the demands of education, social life, and personal growth. Sleep allows the body and mind to recharge, repair, and consolidate memories. Sleep deprivation can have significant negative consequences on physical and mental health, including impaired cognitive function, weakened immune system, increased risk of chronic diseases, mood swings, and even accidents.

Young people often face challenges in prioritizing sleep, such as academic pressure, extracurricular activities, social media usage, and irregular sleep schedules. It is crucial to establish a regular sleep-wake cycle, create a conducive sleep environment, and prioritize sleep hygiene practices. This includes maintaining a consistent bedtime and wake-up time, even on weekends, creating a relaxing bedtime routine, avoiding caffeine and alcohol before bed, and ensuring a dark, quiet, and cool bedroom.

Recovery is an essential aspect of a healthy lifestyle that complements sleep. It involves engaging in activities that promote physical and mental well-being, such as relaxation techniques, mindfulness practices, spending time in nature, and pursuing hobbies. Recovery allows the body and mind to de-stress, reduce anxiety, and enhance overall health and resilience.

Stress Management

Stress is a common issue for young people, especially in today's fast-paced world. It can stem from academic pressures, social expectations, family dynamics, financial worries, and even global events. Effective stress management is crucial for overall well-being. Young people need to develop healthy coping mechanisms to manage stress effectively and prevent it from negatively impacting their mental and physical health.

- **Mindfulness and Meditation:** These practices can help young people become more aware of their thoughts and feelings, allowing them to respond to stress in a more balanced way.
- **Physical Activity:** Regular exercise is a powerful stress reliever. Engaging in activities they enjoy, like sports, dancing, or yoga, can release endorphins and improve mood.
- **Time Management:** Developing effective time management skills can help young people reduce feelings of overwhelm and stress. Prioritizing tasks, setting realistic goals, and taking breaks can significantly contribute to stress reduction.
- **Social Support:** Connecting with friends, family, or support groups can provide a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation. Sharing their concerns with trusted individuals can alleviate stress and offer valuable perspectives.
- **Healthy Lifestyle Choices:** Getting enough sleep, eating a balanced diet, and limiting caffeine and alcohol intake can have a positive impact on stress levels. Taking breaks from screens and spending time in nature can also contribute to stress management.

Peer Influence and Social Factors



The Power of Friends

Peer groups play a significant role in shaping young people's attitudes and behaviors, including those related to health. Friends can influence everything from food choices and physical activity levels to substance use and mental well-being. The influence of peers can be both positive and negative, depending on the values and behaviors of the group. Positive peer influence can encourage healthy habits, while negative influence can lead to risky behaviors.



Social Media's Impact

Social media platforms can also exert a powerful influence on young people's perceptions of health and fitness. Images and messages on social media can often create unrealistic expectations and body image pressures, leading to unhealthy eating habits, excessive exercise, or even disordered eating. It is crucial to promote critical thinking skills among young people to help them navigate the often-filtered and idealized world presented on social media.



Building Supportive Communities

Creating supportive and inclusive social environments that promote healthy behaviors is crucial. This can involve encouraging schools, community centers, and youth organizations to foster positive peer relationships, promote healthy activities, and provide opportunities for young people to develop leadership skills and contribute to their communities. By building a strong sense of belonging and fostering positive social connections, we can empower young people to make healthier choices and support each other on their journey towards well-being.

Role of Education and Awareness

Education plays a pivotal role in promoting healthy lifestyles among young people. It equips them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to make informed choices about their health and well-being.

Comprehensive health education programs should be integrated into school curricula, covering topics such as nutrition, physical activity, mental health, substance abuse prevention, and sexual health.

Raising awareness about the benefits of healthy lifestyles is crucial. Public health campaigns, social media initiatives, and community outreach programs can effectively disseminate information and inspire positive behavior change. Engaging role models, such as athletes, influencers, and health professionals, can enhance the impact of these campaigns and make them more relatable to young audiences.

Educational institutions should collaborate with local communities, healthcare providers, and youth organizations to create a supportive environment for healthy living. This can involve providing access to healthy food options, promoting physical activity opportunities, and offering mental health support services.

By prioritizing education and awareness, we can empower young people to make informed choices, adopt healthy habits, and thrive in a dynamic and challenging world.

Recommendations for Policymakers

Invest in Comprehensive Health Education

Policymakers should prioritize funding for comprehensive health education programs in schools and communities. These programs should address nutrition, physical activity, mental health, substance abuse, and other crucial aspects of a healthy lifestyle. They should be tailored to the specific needs and cultural contexts of different communities.

Promote Accessible and Affordable Healthy Options

Policymakers should work towards making healthy food options more accessible and affordable for young people. This could involve implementing policies such as subsidies for fruits and vegetables, reducing taxes on healthy foods, and supporting community gardens and farmers' markets.

Create Safe and Supportive Environments

Policymakers should create safe and supportive environments for young people to engage in healthy activities. This could involve investing in parks, recreation centers, and other public spaces. It also includes promoting policies that discourage unhealthy behaviors, such as smoking and excessive alcohol consumption.

Support Mental Health Services

Policymakers should prioritize mental health services for young people. This includes providing access to affordable counseling, therapy, and other mental health resources. It also involves promoting mental health awareness and reducing the stigma associated with seeking help.