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## Capacity building workshop (CBW): Joint part of RG meeting and Assembly with a theme of Physical activity (PA) in the schools

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### Minutes 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Keeper of minutes: Julie Dalgaard Guldager and Ulla Pedersen

Participants: 53 logged on in the first part of the meeting.

Päivi Nykyri from Finland presented the program of today's meeting, which is the capacity building workshop – a joint part of the research group meeting and the assembly. The theme was physical activity at school and consisted of three presentations around the Finnish “Schools on the Move” program (<https://schoolsonthemove.fi/>) - a national action program aiming to establish a physically active culture in Finnish comprehensive schools. The program is sponsored by the Finnish National Agency of Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Three interactive presentations were presented:

1. Schools on the Move program / Program coordinator, Finnish Schools on the Move Joonas Niemi
2. Components to increase PA in school / Pedagogical expert and Head Teacher of PE in the City of Jyväskylä Samuli Penttiniemi
3. Program research and results / Researcher, LIKES Research Center for Physical Activity and Health Jouni Kallio

Ad. 1)

Joonas Niemi, the program coordinator of Finland, presented the “Schools on the Move program” ([www.schoolsonthemove.fi](http://www.schoolsonthemove.fi)). He showed a small video of how the program works within schools. The program aims to have more movement, student participation and learning and less sitting activities, in physical education programs, but also during recess and other classes. The program has been part of the wider Finnish education program three times. 91% of the schools are involved in the program, which started in 2010 and is still ongoing. There is a high interest in exporting the concept abroad, through activities such as pedagogical training for teachers and staff, webinars and on-site training in other countries. The program consists of not only physical activity lessons but also an inspiration to movement in after-school clubs, the journey to school, active breaks during sitting lessons. During the presentation, participants could ask questions in the chatroom and were very engaged with many additional questions.

Ad. 2)

Samuli Penttiniemi, Pedagogical expert and Head Teacher of physical education (PE) in the City of Jyväskylä presented “Active school days – ways to increase physical activity in schools”. In the presentation, he explained how his organization offers teacher training for PE. For example, an online course, presenting how sedentary time can be decreased by small changes (students standing up when

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raising the hand, picking up notes, standing workplaces with existing furniture). Sedentary time can also be reduced when teachers to use active breaks (brain gym, motor skill development, stretching), active learning and improvement of classrooms (sitting more actively on physiotherapy balls, jumping mathematics by tape on the floor). In the presentation, an example was used on how to incorporate physical activity in distance learning (e.g. sports bingo, active breaks illustrated by a video). After the presentation, questions were asked by the participants.

Ad. 3)

Jouni Kallio, Researcher at LIKES Research Center for Physical Activity and Health in Finland, presented the program's research and results. Research has been a significant part of the "Schools on the Move program", and a research group has followed the program. The study aims to increase knowledge, get experiences and views, and to evaluate progress and effects. The results are given back to the funders and participating teachers. On the national level, there are national surveys. Further, municipality surveys and interviews are conducted, and school surveys among the staff and students, as well as accelerometer data from students to evaluate the process, are included in the research project. The research reported that the program had had a positive effect on aspects such as the levels of physical activity among the students and improved students' involvement in the planning of activities.

Päivi Nykyri closed the meeting by thanking the presenters and audience.

This first part of the meeting closed at 10:45 and the SHE coordinators and guests from the WHO discussed the following questions in five online 'breakout rooms' until noon:

1) Is daily physical activity (PA) an organic part of the school day and in leisure time on a system level?

If YES:

2a) How is it organized (daily physical education class / Dynamic physical education (DPE)/other way?)

2b) How likely is it that all children will participate?

2c) How is improvement of the quality of daily PA facilitated? And how is it affected by COVID-19?

If NO:

3a) What are the causes?

3b) What are the plans for possibilities to improve the situation?

All five groups used an interactive tool (a padlet) for noting the insights of their discussions. The notes are published on SHE's website:

<https://www.schoolsforhealth.org/sites/default/files/editor/assembly/workshop-on-physical-activity-29-10-20-padlet.pdf>

In a final plenary session, some of the insights were discussed. For example:

How do we promote physical activity in older children (13 years and above)?

The most common experience is that younger children are more physically active during the day, and teachers don't meet resistance to increasing the amount of movement. However, for many older children, increased activity is not a natural part of the day.

Ideas for meeting this challenge were discussed including: More student involvement, using Roger Hart's didactic model for participation in decision making, choosing less competitive activities (to attract children who do not have adequate physical skills), using mandatory physical activities when children



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are at home during lock-down, educate teachers in the choice of activities, integrating physical activities in all subjects at school.

A broader discussion centred around the question of who, in the school, is responsible for Physical Education and Physical Activity. Some countries have guidelines on this; some do not. "The best way to do physical activity is not noticing that you do it".

During breaks, Physical Activity can be promoted in schools.

It could be an idea to contact the organizations of Physical Education teachers in our countries and involve them in solving the challenges on how to get better physical education and more physical activity in schools.

### The challenge of being physically active when the schools are locked down due to COVID-19

Many schools have used videos to stimulate physical activity during the lock-down with good results. This method has also been used with children with disabilities. Also, life skills education has been used during lock-down to increase physical activity in the home. Many cities and regions have made online platforms where teachers can share ideas and practices. SHE has published many case stories on our website describing these initiatives.

Examples of protocols/guidelines for PE/PA from countries that have developed a response to COVID-19: Wales gives the following example. <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/educational-and-childcare-settings/gui-003-guidance-on-covid-19-and-physical-activity-in-schools-final-version-2-0/>

### **For inspiration, the Finnish Schools on the Move programme sent these videos:**

Schools on the Move overview video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lLmhUIAApY>

Schools on the Move teacher comments: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNnlh62MWMA&t>

Active Classroom in Jyväskylä: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rpUTnRF-R8&t>

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