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HR4ALL



HR4ALL aims to better understand the challenges and possible solutions to tackling the multifactorial dimensions of obesity and implement this in policies.



SOCIAL

An interregional cooperation project for improving **Social inclusion** policies



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Project Partners

Municipality of Haderslev (DK)
Development center Murska Sobota (SI)
Gasol Foundation (ES)
Municipality of Sant Boi de Llobregat (ES)
PON - Partnership Overweight (Netherlands (NL))
The Region of Southern Denmark (DK)
University Rehabilitation Institute, Republic of Slovenia (URI-Soča) (SI)



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SUMMARY

Obesity has become a significant health challenge in Spain, which now has one of the highest prevalence of overweight in children aged 6 to 9 years in Europe.

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POLICY BRIEF

Spain

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1. Introduction of obesity challenges in Europe

Obesity is a major health and social problem. In Europe, 59% of adults are classified as obese. This condition is understood to be multifactorial, contributing to an increased risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. Additionally, obesity can negatively affect mental health, with individuals facing a 55% higher risk of developing depression.

The proportion of obese adults in the partner countries is, according to WHO (2019):

DK	NL	EN	SLO
50%	50%	54%	58%

Obesity imposes significant costs on society, placing a strain on healthcare and social resources. In Europe, it is estimated that spending related to healthcare and productivity loss due to obesity amounts to €70 billion annually. This represents approximately 2-4% of the total health expenditure in Europe (European Commission, 2023).

Addressing obesity requires the participation of various sectors. To ensure a comprehensive approach, a diverse group of practitioners and stakeholders from the partner countries will be involved in the project.

2. The regional challenges of obesity in the municipality of Sant Boi de Llobregat

Obesity has emerged as a significant public health issue in recent years. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that in 2022, there were 2.5 billion adults who present overweight, with 890 million of them categorized as obese. Since 1975, the global prevalence of obesity has tripled, and forecasts suggest that by 2025, an additional 167 million people will present excessive weight.

In Spain, according to a study published in the *Spanish Journal of Cardiology*, the prevalence of obesity has increased significantly, rising from 7.3% in 1987 to 15.7% in 2020.

According to the Department of Health, the general obesity rate in Catalonia is 17.5% for men and 16.9% for women. Data from the 2023 Catalan Health Survey indicate that half of the

population aged 18 to 74 years old live with overweight or obesity (57.4% of men and 44.7% of women). If we take into account the data from the Barcelona Metropolitan South health region, of which Sant Boi is a part, an estimated 54.2% of the population present overweight (59% of men and 49.2% of women)

As for children aged 6 to 12, almost four out of ten boys and girls present excessive weight. Specifically, 25.2% are classified as overweight, and 13.7% as obese.

If we consider the prevalence of excess weight in the municipality of Sant Boi, the *SantBoiSà Study*, coordinated by the Gasol Foundation with the support of the Sant Boi City Council, shows that among children aged 3 to 8 years, the prevalence of excess weight is 32.7%. This includes an overweight rate of 21.2%, an obesity rate of 9%, and a severe obesity rate of 12.5%.

The WHO indicates that children with obesity have a 70% probability of remaining with obesity in adulthood, especially if the condition manifests at a very early age. It is important to note that these rates are higher among individuals living in socioeconomic vulnerability and those with lower educational levels.

To effectively address obesity, it is essential to consider its complex and multifactorial nature, recognizing that social determinants play a fundamental role in the strategies used. Therefore, a comprehensive and inclusive intervention during the early stages of life is crucial to preventing the long-term consequences of obesity.

In this context, the municipality of Sant Boi de Llobregat must focus on the main challenges by identifying multilevel and intersectoral measures and strategies that involve local political authorities and key stakeholders in the prevention and treatment of obesity. Our efforts aim to promote healthy lifestyles within families and across various environments, fostering positive change in communities from childhood to adulthood.

3. Policy instrument

The Urban Agenda 2030 of Sant Boi de Llobregat

In 2022, the Urban Agenda of Sant Boi de Llobregat 2022-2030 was approved as a city governance instrument designed to promote sustainability in urban development policies. It is a multi-level and transversal governance tool that contributes to achieving sustainable development objectives within our territorial and jurisdictional scope.

The goal of this dynamic and flexible policy instrument is to position Sant Boi de Llobregat as a model of a sustainable, healthy, and cohesive metropolitan city, creating new opportunities, especially for future generations. Additionally, it aims to enhance the city's potential and improve the health of its inhabitants.

The Local Urban Agenda is implemented through the Mandate Plan (currently 2023-2027). One of the four dimensions of the current Mandate Plan is the *Healthy, Sustainable, Resilient, and Safe City*, which includes various strategic lines and objectives focused on improving the health of Sant Boi's population through disease prevention and health promotion, with special emphasis on community health. It is in this area that the **Comprehensive Program to Address Obesity** must be incorporated, emerging as a result of this project and thanks to the collaborative work of all key stakeholders in the territory.

3.1 Status of the policies

The policy instrument does not specifically address obesity as a priority in its action proposals. Unfortunately, there is also no effective planning of obesity policies in the municipality. The Spanish partners, however, agree that achieving measurable improvements in obesity from childhood is an essential component to prevent obesity in general and to improve the population's health.

3.2. HR4ALL

As the policy instrument does not specifically address obesity in its action proposals, the Spanish partners aim to analyze multi-level and cross-cutting measures and strategies that involve local political authorities and other key actors to prevent and treat obesity in the municipality in a comprehensive way. Our efforts will focus on making Sant Boi a city that promotes healthy habits, acting both in the family sphere and in other areas. This will involve comprehensive actions that affect the educational environment, agriculture and local commerce, the social and sports ecosystem of the city, as well as the health system, among others. Additionally, collaborative work between key stakeholders in the territory will be essential to promote positive change in the community.

The Spanish partners will address the theme "We collaborate for more years of healthy life through health promotion and prevention" and the specific objective of "halting the increase in obesity." Within the framework of the HR4ALL project, we aim to address the gaps in policies in this area. We hope to achieve this goal based on the experiences shared by the different regions involved in the HR4ALL project, as well as in the project's regional activities. The knowledge of the municipality of Rotterdam and the Slovenian partners will play a key role in helping us

understand interdisciplinary rehabilitation for vulnerable groups. Moreover, the Danish partners' Health Agreement will be a source of inspiration for revising our policy instrument, as it provides a clear vision on how to tackle obesity from a cross-sectoral perspective involving various sectors.

3.3. How will we do it?

Through this project and the collaborative work between the Gasol Foundation and Sant Boi City Council, the aim is to improve local policies to reduce the prevalence of obesity and enhance the health of the population. By encouraging collaboration and the exchange of knowledge and experiences with partner regions, the goal is to create synergies and develop unified strategies to adapt the National Strategic Plan to reduce childhood obesity in the municipality of Sant Boi de Llobregat. Moreover, the premise established in the National Strategy for Health Promotion and Prevention in the National Health System will be taken into account. Its goal is to promote the health and well-being of the population by fostering healthy environments and lifestyles, considering the different age groups. Therefore, it seeks to coordinate comprehensive interventions in the healthcare, family, community, and educational spheres.

In this regard, our main objective is to develop a program that comprehensively addresses obesity, inspired by the associated regions, which promotes healthy lifestyle habits such as regular physical activity, healthy eating, adequate rest, and emotional well-being, with a special focus on vulnerable populations. The program will be a multi-level, multi-component intervention involving the collaboration of various professionals, such as those in healthcare, educational institutions, and community and sports organizations. It will include measures to combat obesity from childhood through to adulthood. Strategies will be established for the comprehensive follow-up of individuals with obesity, such as mutual support groups, and awareness campaigns will be carried out to reduce stigma.

The program will also offer education, resources, and support to families, with the goal of starting obesity prevention at an early age, thus creating a healthier environment for children to grow and develop optimally.

The project will be executed within a set timeframe, allowing for the evaluation of its impact and effectiveness. In fact, a cohort study is already underway in the city, with the primary aim of monitoring childhood obesity and lifestyles. This project will establish a framework that empowers the local government to promote sustainable and healthy interventions, based on a holistic approach to the prevention and treatment of obesity within the paradigm of the social determinants of health.

Our purpose is to encourage healthier behaviors among children and adults in local communities, with a special focus on socioeconomically vulnerable families. By using the available data on the weight status of children in Sant Boi de Llobregat, it will be possible to compare results before and after the implementation of the plan, facilitating the evaluation of its impact.

3.4 Conclusion

The main objective of the Spanish approach is to develop a comprehensive program for tackling obesity—inspired by the partner regions—that promotes healthy environments and lifestyles, including regular physical activity, healthy eating, adequate sleep duration and quality and psychological well-being, especially among vulnerable populations.

Our aim is to promote healthier behaviors among adults and their families in local communities, with a special focus on socioeconomically vulnerable families. By using the data available on the weight status of children in the territory, it will be possible to compare the results before and after the implementation of the plan, facilitating the evaluation of the impact.

To achieve this, we need to establish a framework that empowers local governments to promote sustainable and healthy interventions based on a holistic approach to the prevention and treatment of obesity, with a focus on the social determinants of health.

With these proactive approaches, we aim to improve our policy instrument, facilitating comprehensive support, promoting healthier behaviours, improving social inclusion and encouraging integration into an active life, which will lead to better overall health and productivity outcomes for the municipality's residents.

The Spanish partners will also take advantage of the experiences shared by other partners.

This policy report will be updated again at the end of Semester 6 (2027)