

Sweden on the move 2001 – a year of success!



Sweden on the move 2001

People in modern-day society have become less and less physically active, which has well-documented negative consequences for health and well-being. There is a growing awareness at all levels of society and many countries show a need for action in order to follow development. Physical inactivity has become an important public health issue that must be highlighted at the local, regional and national level.

A long-term strategy of change

Sweden on the move - 2001 have been a national programme that focuses on people's need for physical activity in order to promote health and well-being. The National Institute of Public Health where commissioned by the Government to plan for a physical activity year 2001 in collaboration with a number of government agencies and organisations. This year was the start of a long-term strategy of change with the aim of promoting health and preventing disease by increased physical activity. In 1999 a joint steering group established the objectives and organisation of the work. The aims and objectives were based on the Ottawa charter and the five strategies: Strengthen community action; develop personal skills; reorient health services, create supportive environments; and build healthy public policy, and on the National Public Health Committee's proposals for aims for physical activity.

The government commission

"The National Institute of Public Health shall, in broad consultation with the relevant authorities and organisations, turn 2001 into a year of physical activity".

Aims

- To introduce through various social and structural measures a long-term national programme of change with the purpose of increasing the level of physical activity in Sweden.
- To spread knowledge to decision-makers and professional groups of the health consequences of decisions that affect the external environment, leisure, pre-school/ school, healthcare and the workplace.
- To deepen understanding of the great importance of daily physical exercise for public health.
- To develop everyday environments so that they support safe forms of physically active behaviour.
- To make the population more physically active, with the emphasis on the most inactive groups in society.

Overall objectives

- The knowledge, interest and the prerequisites for physical activity are to be increased for everyone.
- Health is to be specially improved for the groups that are exposed to the greatest health risks.
- All people regardless of social position, gender, age, ethnicity, and disability are to be given the prerequisites for physical activity and movement.



Specific objectives

- Children of pre-school age are stimulated to daily physical activity and play indoors and outdoors.
- Children and adolescents are stimulated to a positive attitude to physical activity, and are to be given the opportunity of taking part every day in some activity that appeals to them.
- School is a supportive environment for physical activity.
- Adults are encouraged and given the opportunity to daily physical activity.
- The residential environment is a supporting environment for physical activity.
- The recreational venues for physical activity are developed from the perspective of accessibility, equality of opportunity, equity and integration.
- The work place is a supporting environment for healthy physical activity.
- Health care staffs have a broad knowledge of the preventive effects of physical activity and apply this knowledge for disease prevention.
- Guidelines for physical activity are used for different patient categories with regard to prevention and reactivation.
- Research on physical activity and its importance for public health is to be stimulated.

Setting-oriented strategic initiatives

Two parallel approaches have been developed to implement this. One involves strategic measures via four settings and the other involves the encouragement and creation of opportunities for local and regional initiatives.

The four setting-oriented groups was producing proposals during the spring of year 2000 on strategic and structural initiatives for the settings pre-school and school, work-place, health care, and leisure time on the basis of the aims and overall objectives. Efforts will concern increase of knowledge and knowledge dissemination, education, method development, research and evaluation.

As regards the work of local and regional players within the municipalities and county councils and organisations, the National Institute of Public Health's intention was that the regional and local level would be inspired and encouraged by the work of the arena groups to develop local strategies for increased physical activity in society. The National Institute of Public Health have also been collaborated with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities in the run up to 2001 to producing method guidance for local public health work relating to physical activity. Each region/county has recruited a "messenger" via the social-medicine units. The messenger has been responsible during the year for regional communication and to take on the task of creating regional networks to co-ordinate the measures.

Target group

The measures and activities have been primarily geared towards professional groups that can help to create supportive environments for health-promoting physical activity with the purpose of creating equal conditions for the population to make healthy choices.

Measures and activities directly geared towards the general public have primarily come about through players other than the National Institute of Public Health.



Message

The main emphasis of the message have been the health-promotive importance of daily exercise also including exercise, sport and recreation.

The message have been based on the principle that 30 minutes of daily physical activity can prevent a wide range of illnesses and that inactivity in Sweden is one of the of the major factors behind premature death and preventable illness.

The role and responsibility of the National Institute of Public Health

The National Institute of Public Health have been co-ordinated the planning of the year, with the responsibility for the coordination of the national measures. The Institute have been responsible for common marketing and communication and also for evaluation and follow-up. We have checked to ensure that equality aspects are being observed and part-financing the measures. The Institute have also co-ordinated the support and encouragement of local and regional initiatives primarily through the messenger system at regional level, but also through method development and network support.

The National Institute of Public Health have although been responsible for material production and for supporting certain research measures.

Evaluation

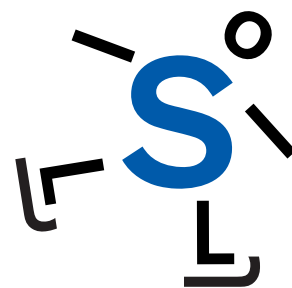
In the short term the recommended focus for the evaluation have been the implementation of "Sweden on the move 2001", based on the objectives formulated by each arena group for its activity and the activity initiated locally in the country's municipalities and regions. Primarily this involves studying whether it has been possible to implement the planned measures and, if so, what factors made that possible.

After a number of years it is also important to study the distribution effect and how measures that have been initiated are maintained and developed. In the longer term, after about five years, it is also important to study the degree to which the overall objectives and the specific objectives of the programme have been achieved. To gain an understanding of both the process and the outcome in the form of short-term, desirable and any undesired effects, various methods and strategies have been and will be used in the evaluation process with both quantitative and qualitative study methodology.

Result

Some results of the SoM-year.

- More than seventy different non governmental and governmental organisations have been collaborating during the year.
- Over 80 national conferences have been arranged, the first national conference of health enhancing physical activity had over 900 participants.
- As many as 162 municipalities (out of 289) have been participating in 15 regional conferences.
- All 21 county councils have been actively involved in the work with the SoM-year, at least one "SoM-messenger" from each county council have been selected for this mission.



- A total of 205 (out of 289) municipalities were familiar with the physical activity year and 65% had planned their own activities.
- Over 200 companies, with 50 000 employees all together, are involved in a certification process of becoming a health promotion company.
- Sweden is now in the Guinness Book of Record for having brought together a total of 64,782 people doing aerobics simultaneously.
- Nearly 3000 mass media features on the physical activity year has been spotted during the SoM-year as well as news on how to be physical.
- Over 20 official publications have been produced and distributed to different target groups.
- National recommendation for health enhancing physical activity has been set - "At least 30 minutes of physical activity per day on a moderate intensity".
- A lot of schools are involved in the process to increase the physical activity to consist of at least 30 minutes every day. A number of conferences have been held throughout the country. Pamphlets on best practice as well as several activity catalogues for children regarding activities in school have been produced.
- Physical activity on prescription is emerging and the results have been good so far. A handbook for GP on how to prescribe physical activity is about to be published. Please visit www.fyss.org for more information in Swedish.
- Health enhancing physical activity is at the top of the agenda.
- The status of physical activity has increased.
- Physical activity has become one of the most important public health issues.
- This year's good results have led to a new commission from the Government - "Keep Sweden Moving". - The commission instructs the National Institute of Public Health to continue their work with health enhancing physical activity throughout year 2003 and 2004. The commission also includes a request for a proposed national strategy for increased physical activity in society.

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