

Intersectoral working in schools between education staff and primary healthcare professionals



Case study description

Title of the initiative / case study	School Menu Review Programme (PReME)
Country / Territory	Catalonia (Spain)
Summary of the intersectoral initiative	The School Menu Review Program (PReME) is part of the PAAS strategy (Integral Plan of Health Promotion through Physical Activity and Healthy Eating) of the Public Health Agency of Catalonia. It began in 2006 in collaboration with the Department of Education offering a free review of menu planning in all schools in Catalonia.
Focus of the initiative	Physical health
Goal and objectives Overall goals and specific objectives.	The aim of PReME is improving the quality of the meals offered in school cafeteria. The aim of the study was to assess the evolution of compliance with PReME's recommendations for meals provided by school cafeteria in Catalonia covering the program's implementation in 2006 until 2020. Possible differences in compliance to recommendations were analysed, based on who provided the service and the type of school category, as well as the availability of special menus, based on the type of school category.
School setting	3-18
- Age group of students covered (0-18)	
- Number of students in the school	788.971 pupils using school cafeterias
- Public (<i>no fees</i>) or Private (<i>pay fees</i>)?	All types
- Location	Catalonia
- Socioeconomic environment	All types
Description of the initiative	In Catalonia, in response to the increase observed in the prevalence of obesity, and in
- What was the driver to start the	

<p>initiative? <i>Was it the pandemic, or something else?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From when to when did the initiative take place? <i>Does it continue now?</i> - Did it get funding? How was it funded? - What type of activities took place <i>e.g. health professionals seeing students or staff for consultations, health professionals training education staff, teachers training health professionals?</i> 	<p>accordance with WHO's global strategy, the Comprehensive Plan for the promotion of health through physical activity and healthy eating (PAAS) was developed in 2006, led by the Ministry of Health's Public Health Agency of Catalonia (ASPCAT) with the aim, among others, of raising public awareness of the problem of obesity and promoting initiatives that contribute to the adoption of healthy lifestyles, especially among children and young people.</p> <p>Thus, an agreement was signed between the Ministries of Health and Education in 2006 to offer complimentary revisions of school meal plans, with the aim of improving the quality of the meals offered in school cafeteria.</p> <p>PReME is funded by the Ministry of Health's with the approximate amount of 20.000 € per year.</p> <p>PReME is structured in 3 phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Phase 1. Initial evaluation by dietitian-nutritionists of a monthly meal plan and preparation of the report with suggestions for improvement. – Phase 2. Follow-up of the actions taken by schools after receipt of the initial report. This phase began in 2012, and is offered to all schools that have completed phase 1. – Phase 3. Sensory assessment by PReME staff of school meals and the cafeteria. This was launched on a pilot basis in 2015, and is carried out in schools that have completed Phases 1 and 2.
<p>Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who are the partners involved? - Who are the education professionals involved in the initiative? - Who are the health professionals involved in the initiative? - Where are the health professionals located? (<i>e.g. In the school, in the community?</i>) - At what stage/s did intersectoral work happen (<i>eg conceptualization, co-design, implementation or evaluation</i>)? 	<p>PReME: Dietitian-Nutritionists team (DNs) at ASPCAT's central services; the public health specialists (PHSs) working in the regional teams that carry out the annual technical and sanitary inspection of school kitchens and cafeterias; center's management team, associations of student families, school lunch monitors, teachers, catering companies or local authorities reporting the programme; and professionals of the Ministries of Health and Education by information and coordination meetings, publication of reports and PReME tools on their website.</p> <p>PReME study: Maria Blanquer-Genovart: Study design, fieldwork, data analysis and manuscript writing. Maria Manera-Bassols: Study design, data</p>

	<p>analysis and manuscript review. Oriol Cunillera-Puertolas: Data analysis. Gemma Salvador-Castell, Conxa Castell-Abat, Carmen Cabezas-Pena: Study design and manuscript supervision.</p> <p>Conceptualization, MB, MM, GS, CC, CC; Formal analysis, OC, MB, MM; Investigation, MB, MM; Methodology, MB, MM, GS; Project administration, CC, CC; Resources, GS, CC, CC; Software, OC; Supervision, CC; Validation, OC; Visualization, MB; Writing—original draft, MB; Writing—review & editing, MM, GS, CC, CC.</p>
<p>Results of the initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What were the deliverables? - Can you give some examples of actions resulting from the initiative? - What do you think was the impact of the initiative, if any? 	<p>Of the 6,387 meal plans received (from 2221 schools) and assessed during the period 2006–2020, 4,742 initial reports were generated for phase 1 of the programme and 1,645 follow-up reports for phase 2 (phase 2 started in 2012). Compliance improved during the study period. The percentage of schools that complied with dietary recommendations in relation to the five PReME indicators (fresh fruit, pulses, daily vegetables, fresh food and olive oil for dressing) has steadily increased since PReME began, with variations depending on school category and cafeteria management. Furthermore, an improvement in the levels of compliance with de recommended food frequencies was observed.</p> <p>With the goal of improving the quality of the meals served in school cafeterias, PReME not only offers to review meal plans but also publishes and disseminates recommendations to facilitate the uptake of healthy eating habits.</p>
<p>Evaluation of the initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Was the initiative evaluated? If Yes - <i>How, and by whom?</i> - Name two things that went well. - Name two things that could be improved. - What were the main <u>barriers</u> to intersectoral working? - What were the main <u>facilitators</u> for intersectoral working? - What advice would you give to others who would like to do a similar initiative? 	<p>Our study shows an improvement in the nutritional content of school meals in the schools included in the PReME programme for the period 2006–2020. Compliance with PReME indicators is elevated and increasing, although variations can be observed depending on school category and cafeteria management. An improvement was also observed in the compliance with recommendations evidenced by follow-up reports, which would indicate that the recommendations and suggestions for improvement are being implemented successfully. Furthermore, an increase was observed in the percentage of</p>

	<p>schools offering special menus in response to health conditions or requests related to ethical or religious aspects, as well as the progressive removal of food and beverage vending machines. The upward trend in compliance with PReME’s recommendations is evidence of the program’s effectiveness. Our study highlights the success of strategies for implementing and disseminating recommendations to improve the nutritional quality of school meals and to promote healthy eating.</p> <p>The main barriers are the lack on legislation on this subject and the complete support and awareness of all families and agents who manage the school menu.</p> <p>The main facilitators are the professional teams of Ministry of Health’s and Education.</p> <p>It is extremely important to plan and assess the quality of school meals and further research along these lines is needed to continue improving school meals, as well as incorporating legislative changes and making operational policy decisions.</p>
<p>Additional information if available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Links to relevant websites - Link to / title of relevant articles - Other relevant resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School Menu Review Program (PReME) - Article School Menu Review Programme (PReME): evaluation of compliance with dietary recommendations during the period 2006–2020 in Catalonia - Guide “Healthy eating at school” - Guide “Small changes to eat better”