

PROMOTING ACTIVE TRAVEL AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

This project encourages children to become ambassadors for promoting walking and cycling as forms of active travel to school.

Keywords:
Walking, Cycling, Physical Activity, Road Safety, Pollution

Project Partner: Evangelical Social Action Forum (ESAF)

Location: Bangalore in Karnataka, Nagpur in Maharashtra and Malappuram and Thrissur in Kerala.

Duration: 9/2015 - ongoing

Target Issue and Target Group

In India, more and more children are becoming over-weight and obese. One of the main risk factors contributing to overweight and obesity is physical inactivity. Our Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) program focuses on creating safe routes for children to walk and cycle to school. This addresses the issue of physical inactivity, but also reduces risk of injury and vehicle emissions that contribute to poor air quality and climate change.

The project was limited to students from grade 5 through the 12th standard residing within a one to two kilometre radius from the participating school.



During the campaign a total of 3500 children, 150 parents and 120 teachers were walking or cycling to school on Saturdays.

Strategies Employed within Project

Evangelical Social Action Forum (ESAF) engaged in a comprehensive program to encourage children to walk or cycle to school as a way of improving health, and environmental quality. The program involved stakeholder engagement, awareness programs, safe routes development, and campaigns.

Main Activities

Stakeholder engagement: A likeminded local organization was identified to mobilise the community and garner support. Initially ten schools were contacted and given an overview about the project and 6 schools in the area decided to join the program. In addition, two government bodies that are crucial in regulating traffic became involved. Parents were informed and their support was requested. The



HealthBridge Partner Case Studies | Implementing Urban Health in Livable Cities
PROMOTING ACTIVE TRAVEL AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

HealthBridge.ca

 @HealthBridgeCan

 /HealthBridgeFoundation

media helped to publicise the event so that more people would drive more mindfully on that day.

Awareness programs: All schools were made aware of the importance of the ASRTS program for health, safety, and the environment. Baseline data was collected to understand the existing mode of transport adopted by the children.

Safe routes developed: Students were asked to map their routes to and from school to identify major road segments as potential routes. Assessments of the routes were made and volunteers as well as traffic wardens were strategically placed to support the safety of the children.

Walk/ Cycle to School on Saturday Campaign: In order to ensure maximum participation every Saturday, for 13 weeks, was designated as a walk or cycle to school day.

Project Reach

In total six schools participated with a total of 3500 children, 150 parents and 120 teachers walking or cycling to school on Saturdays. An additional 12,000 children and their parents were made aware of the importance of walking to school for health and the environment.

Preliminary Results

- Overall the project proved very successful. Parents and children reported great enthusiasm for the program and children indicated they were happier when their parents walked them to school.
- One school ensured that school buses stopped 100-150 m away on all days (not just walking Saturdays) so that children walking and cycling could move around safely.
- There was a much greater understanding among children and parents about their neighbourhoods and the reasons for walking and cycling to school.
- Two government departments dedicated support for ASRTS activities. The Department of Traffic appointed the Assistant Commissioner of Police as a senior official to coordinate these efforts.
- Schools took ownership of the program and have now integrated ASRTS activities into their school curriculum

Impact

More children are able to walk to more school safely. As direct result of our program, infrastructure projects in vicinity of the schools are receiving more community involvement and are being implemented on an expedited timeline.

Take-away Messages from the Project:

- Community engagement is key in program implementation.
- Children are interested in adopting an active lifestyle.
- Parents play a major role in the success of such a program. Extensive interaction and awareness programs help to address their concerns.
- The involvement of government departments is crucial for scaling up and the sustainability of the initiative.
- Community demand for policy enforcement is a powerful strategy for creating change.

Contact Person:

Manju George, Evangelical Social Action Forum (ESAF)
manju@esaf.in
www.esaf.in



HealthBridge Partner Case Studies | Implementing Urban Health in Livable Cities
PROMOTING ACTIVE TRAVEL AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

HealthBridge.ca



@HealthBridgeCan



/HealthBridgeFoundation