

Chapter 5

EPODE Flandre Lys, France



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Flanders Lys website: cc-flandrelys.fr

1. EPODE Flandre Lys programme overview

1.1. Community of Towns Flanders Lys (CTFL)

The Community of Towns Flanders Lys is located in the North of France, about 30 kms from Lille and across the river from the Lys.

CTFL, uniqueness relies primarily on the EPODE Flanders Lys programme implementation in its 2 departments, the North and the Pas-de-Calais. Established in 1992, the EPODE Flanders Lys programme includes 8 municipalities, 4 in the North (Merville, Estaires, Haverskerque and La Gorgue) and 4 in the Pas-de-Calais (Fleurbaix, Laventie, Lestrem and Sailly-sur-la-Lys).

The Community of Towns Flanders Lys includes 38,932 inhabitants over a territory of 32.124 acres.



The Community of Towns Flanders Lys is a public entity of inter-municipal cooperation. Its community council is comprised of 41 advisors elected by a municipal council of 8 common members working for the emergence of projects pertaining to community interest.

Delegates, under the authority of the President, vote and deliberate on draft projects prepared in committees and proposed by the community bureau.

An administrative team of 30 people implements actions related to the decisions of the Community Council.

These projects are in different fields of action within the CCFL, which are:

- Economic Development;
- Urban Planning;
- Tourism, Sports and Recreation;
- Sustainable Development and the Environment;
- Habitat and Social Affairs;
- Youth and Culture;
- Health and Early Childhood.

The EPODE Flanders Lys programme coordinates different actions concerning the final field of action, Health and Early Childhood.

However, given the transversal nature of this programme, elected officials strive to be active in CCFL's other fields of action as well.

1.2. Programme: EPODE Flandre Lys

Based on a proposal by 2 French doctors, Professor Pierre Fossati, President of the French Nutrition Society and Chief of Diabetes and Nutrition at Lille Regional Centre Hospital and, Dr Jean-Michel Borys, Nutritionist and Endocrinologist, the towns of Fleurbaix and Laventie agreed to put in place the "Fleurbaix-Laventie Ville Santé" (FLVS) study. Its objective was to verify if the nutrition information given to children by teachers in the schools of those towns had a positive impact on their knowledge, behaviour and eating habits and on those of their whole families.

Conducted from 1992 to 2004, the study presented results that have been the subject of numerous publications and that are still referred to today by the leading global experts in the field of nutrition.

The nutrition information provided in schools to children on various themes including balanced diet helped indirectly educate families. Within 5 years, the behaviour and habits of the population had significantly improved. The health impacts were as follows: in Fleurbaix and Laventie, the prevalence of childhood obesity did not increase in 10 years while it doubled during the same period in the region of Nord-Pas-de-Calais.

Building on the FLVS study results, the Food Habits and Weight Observatory launched the EPODE programme (created to prevent childhood obesity) in January 2004 and included 10 pilot cities across France.

In 2006, the EPODE programme extended to a network of EPODE towns, thus integrating the municipalities and communities willing to commit to this public health programme.

It is for this reason that, in 2006, the Community Council of Flanders Lys, relying on the success of “Fleurbaix-Laventie Ville-Santé”, gave its approval for the adoption of the EPODE programme across its entire territory.

Building on the achievement of the “Fleurbaix-Laventie Ville Santé” model, the EPODE programme is designed to help families change their behaviour and sustainable lifestyle for a balanced diet and regular physical activity, with the aim to maintain good health.

1.3. Organisation

1.3.1. *At central and local level*

To promote the project and the implementation of actions by elected community representatives, a technical team has been formed and is composed of the following:

- Project coordinator:
Commissioned to make the link between elected representatives and field actions. The coordinator brings together all the local actors, communicates and informs, initiates actions in the field and seeks partners.
- Dietician:
Commissioned to secure the lifestyle and diet guidelines for health messages. The dietician organises the implementation of the programme’s actions in cities and participates in school menu creation.

1.3.2. *Partners*

Collaborate to motivate the parents:

- the EPHE coordination team;
- the Inspection Académique;
- the teaching staff of educational establishments;
- the Health commission of Flandre Lys.

1.4. Activities

According to the projects and actions in progress, the team works in close collaboration with all of the CTFL services and, more specifically, the sports, youth, childhood and communications services.

A medical expert has been appointed to ensure that doctors in the territory have joined the programme. He is responsible for informing and mobilising health professionals on the different actions of the programme.

2. Social Marketing Activities

EPODE Flandre Lys is **an action based programme organised around different themes** to bring all of the programme's actors together around the same health message. A theme is chosen on an annual basis. Prevention messages revolve around various topics in connection with a balanced diet or regular physical activity.

Since 2007, 8 themes have been treated under the EPODE Flandre Lys programme.

Year	Theme	Message
2007	H2O, soif de savoir !	The importance of hydration
2008	La santé, ça commence à table !	The benefits of a balanced diet
2009	Jouer, c'est déjà bouger !	Play to practice regular physical activity
2010	Prenons rendez-vous avec les fruits !	The importance of eating fruits and vegetables
2011	À table, c'est chacun sa portion !	Intake is different at different ages
2012	Manger ensemble, c'est tellement meilleur !	Enjoying eating well together
2013	Dormir, c'est vital !	The needs and benefits of sleep
2014	Bouger, se dépenser, c'est bon pour la santé !	The importance of performing physical activity regularly

Various communication tools have been developed to convey health messages:

[Informative posters](#)

They convey the main messages of prevention.

[Flyers](#)

They present the prevention messages and user tips for facilitating implementation of the recommendations.



The CCFL strategically disseminates the posters and flyers to the public via:

- Schools
- Nursery schools
- Childcare centres
- Recreation facilities
- Sports facilities
- Libraries
- Media libraries
- Halls
- Medical and paramedical structures
- Shops

Methodology guides

Targeted at stakeholders working with children, the guides contain different activities.

Letter to doctors

The letter informs physicians about the current theme and the various related recommendations.



Diagram about how themes are disseminated



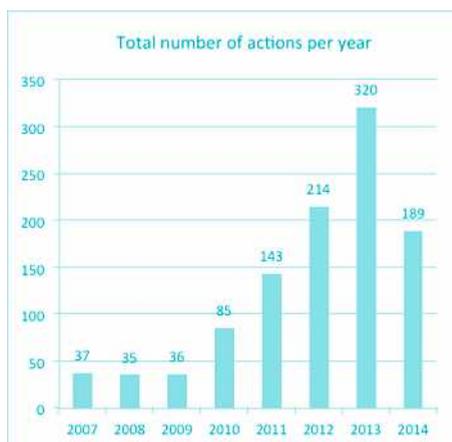
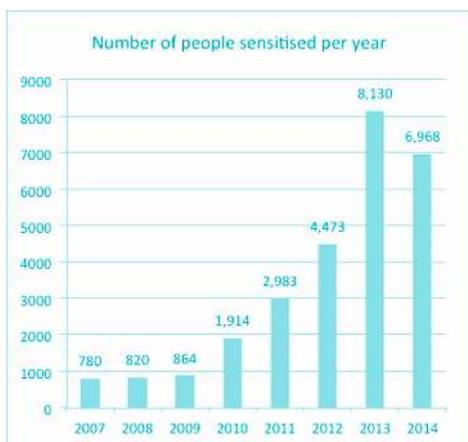
Activities and achievements of the EPODE Flandre Lys programme

Prevention tools

Several pedagogical tools have been developed so that all stakeholders (teachers, facilitators, sports educators, child educators...) can communicate prevention messages associated with various themes and work with the public.

Each tool has been edited with an action plan that helps identify the objectives of the activity, its roll-out and the requisite materials.

These kits have resulted in a large number of actions being implemented by health services and local actors.



The programme actions for obesity prevention

In addition to the many actions carried out with children throughout the year, 2 devices were put in place to promote the programme to the general public.

Vitality Day (La Journée Vitalité)

This event is organised on-site by EOLYS (child and adult play park) and takes place on a Sunday, in June or September, accommodating approximately 4,000 people. This day represents an opportunity to present the child actions to parents through fun workshops, as well as engage them in physical activity as a family with their children: challenges on inflatable structures, workshops about sport initiatives, etc...



[Le Pass' Vitalité](#)

To promote the EPODE Flandre Lys programme amongst the population, the team is present during major events on the CTFL territory. These events are in close connection with the philosophy of the programme.

- The EPODE Flandre Lys-EOLYS Vitality Day
- The Tomato and Traditional Vegetable Feast, Haverskerque
- The better living market, Lestrem
- Cyclocross Championship, EOLYS
- The Nautical Base Flandre Lys
- Market for flowers and vegetables, Fleurbaix

A “Vitality Pass” was implemented in 2013 to encourage families to participate in these events in conjunction with the promotion of a balanced diet and/or regular physical activity.

Families validate their attendance with the EPODE team when they come to the events. To reward participants for their loyalty, a lottery is held with great prizes for 3 lucky winners.

[Action on fruits](#)

Since 2008 and in partnership with the Northern Primary Disease Insurance Fund (CPAM), the fruit action is carried out in all kindergartens across the territory.

Each year, 1,700 children discover or rediscover 22 seasonal fruits.

These discoveries are carried out by school teams through animated tastings.

Various support tools have been developed by EPODE and given to professionals: notebooks for the young food tasters, sheets explaining taste, and a brochure for tasting different fruits.

Each class enjoys a session of nutritional education provided by a nutritionist from Flanders Lys or a moderator from the CPAM health prevention.

Due to its success, the action has been extended to all structures concerning childhood care with the tasting of 6 different seasonal fruits. The first edition of this action is called “Little Bear Is Looking for the Shape”.

This serves as an effective model of an EPODE action, since its success requires the mobilisation of actors from each sector:

- the CTFL, which finances the purchase of fruits and develops educational tools;
- the municipalities, who purchase and deliver the fruits to schools;
- the teachers, who conduct various discovery sessions with the children.

[Multisport platforms and childhood games](#)

Various sport and recreational facilities have been installed in each of the Flanders Lys towns to promote and assist the populations to practise regular physical activity.

These achievements are the perfect illustration of the programme coordination with other CCFL fields of action: “Youth” and “Sports and Leisure”.

[Recreation courses](#)

Still within the physical activity context, is the action to encourage children to spontaneously perform physical activities during recess. This has been achieved by remodelling 27 schoolyards with traced/painted games on the ground.

Several months of study were required to propose an individualised project, compatible with the characteristics of each location.
Each school received a sports kit to optimise the use of these schoolyard games.



Assistance in the project implementation: “Call for Projects”

To promote project implementation dedicated to balanced diet and/or regular physical activity in the territory, the Community of Towns Flanders Lys implemented calls for EPODE projects.

The call for projects can financially support schools, associations or communities who are willing to put in place a project in relation to the philosophy of the EPODE programme. The maximum amount of support is set at €500.

Evaluation

To assess the impact of the programme on the height and weight of the children in each territory, the CCFL Health Service conducts a collection of these measurements on 4,500 children aged 5 to 11 years every 5 years.

The first evaluation was directed in 2008 to help draw up an initial diagnosis and the second in 2013 to understand the evolution over 5 years.

3. EPHE community

3.1. City selection

The first phase of implementation: CCFL Health Commission selected the 2 cities Estaires and Merville according to the criteria recommended by the Scientific Committee.

3.2. School selection

In order to propose the study to the 2 schools targeted by the CTFL Health Commission, it was necessary to obtain validation from the Academic Inspectorate (AI) regarding the implementation of this study at school.

Accordingly, a meeting presenting the programme convened:

- the EPHE Coordinator;
- the EPHE Scientific Director;
- the CTFL President;
- the EPODE Flandre Lys Coordinator;
- the Academic Inspectorate (AI);
- the technical adviser and doctor of the AI.

After examining the project objectives and models, the Academic Inspectorate agreed to implement the study in both schools: Louis-Pergaud in Estaires and Victor-Hugo in Merville.

As for the academic inspection, the CTFL Health Service together with the elected official in charge of educational affairs for the communes met the directors and teachers from the schools to obtain their consent to carry out the study.

They agreed without any hesitation to participate in this plan. Indeed, health prevention issues are at the heart of the educational project of their establishments.

Prevention actions were in line with the field of expertise “Discoveries of the world” included in the grade 1 curriculum.

3.3. Family selection

A key element for the implementation of the study was to define the recruitment of families. The pedagogical teams seemed more reserved about this task.

To qualify a sufficient study cohort, a strategic work was conducted with directors and teachers from each of the schools in order to identify the insights that would assist in the recruitment of the families.

It appeared that an official letter would not achieve the objective.

[Louis-Pergaud School in Estaires](#)

It was decided with the pedagogical team that the CTFL Health Service would hold a meeting for grades 1 and 2 at school. In fact almost 90% of the parents were present at this meeting.

59 families out of the 65 present committed

[Victor-Hugo School in Merville](#)

“A time to taste different foods” event was organized in grade 1 and 2 classes, during which the CCFL Health Service raised awareness and proceeded with the recruitment of families.

87 families out of the 114 participating families committed

The families from both schools were presented the study objectives, and proposed roll-out timeline. They also received a document outlining all of the steps and terms of their commitment.

3.4. Motivational tools: Identification of a strategy to promote the active participation of families

The concern shared by the families with respect to participation in the study was mainly based on the required number of questionnaires to be completed and returned at the end of each phase of the study.

In order to motivate the parents, it was agreed between all the partners listed below:

- the EPHE coordination team;
- the Academic Inspectorate;
- the teaching staff;
- the Flandre Lys Health Commission, that a motivational gift would be offered to each family upon the return of a completed questionnaire to thank them for their involvement.

The gifts were one of the following items:

- €15 for the purchase of fruits and vegetables (Questionnaire 1 and 3)
- a €10 one-hour nautical activity for 2 at the Nautical Base of Flanders Lys (Questionnaire 2)

Questionnaire 1	Questionnaire 2	Questionnaire 3
Participation 82%	Participation 79%	Participation 77.6%

School principals were very satisfied with the return rate of completed questionnaires as compared to their experiences on similar actions.

4. Interventions undertaken

Actions to raise awareness

The second phase of the study was dedicated to raising awareness amongst children around the four themes identified by the EPHE Scientific Community:

- Fruit and Vegetables;
- Water;
- Physical Activity;
- Sleep.

Actions were conceptualized and they inspired 65 “animated” sessions conducted with the 179 children involved in the study.

After each session, the parents received written information describing the action that involved their children.

Actions in response to the first results

The initial results of the study revealed that the major problem for parents was learning how to say “no”.

It was therefore imperative to direct future EPHE actions to raise awareness amongst parents about the importance of their role as educators to guide their children’s health. Accordingly, the parents received a flyer with information based on scientific recommendations per theme and parenting tips in order to promote compliance.

Then families were invited to 2 sessions for a total of one half-day on parenting skills.

Session 1 - parents participated in an exchange with a psychologist on the importance of saying “no”;

Session 2 - brought parents and children together so parents could learn how to create a positive change in behaviour and in the habits of their children.

The action of the second phase was built around water and physical activity themes.

In the first workshop entitled “Pour l’eau, créons des slogans rigolos !” parents and children worked together to find different slogans promoting water consumption.

Assisted by the dietician, parents were able to reaffirm to their children the importance of drinking water.

Fun slogans made water the superhero of this action.

During the second workshop, entitled “À quoi tu jouais, si tu n’avais pas de jeu vidéo ?”, parents were asked to present to their children games that they had played as youngsters.

Mothers taught their daughters the rules of hopscotch and songs that accompanied jump rope.

Other games took place during the workshop like board games, etc...

Using their own childhood experiences, parents became actors in the promotion of physical activity with their own children.

Closing exhibition

To enable parents to explore all of the activities their children had carried out during the EPHE action, the CCFL Health Service helped the children create a closing exhibition about everything that had been worked on.

This event allowed the children to present to their parents the full spectrum of work that they had accomplished, and also to reaffirm to them of the important lesson of health promotion.



5. Remarkable activities

EPHE challenges

Challenges were implemented to unite the children around health promotion messages and to enable educational teams to build on the advocacy work conducted by the EPODE team's actions.

During the 15 days in between the different actions with the children, the teachers created several challenges that were in line with the themes on raising awareness.

Fruits and vegetables

- Health objective: Create curiosity amongst the children about the discovery of new fruits.
- Challenge objective: Create the largest fruit basket!

Fruit Basket Poster Challenge – Everyday, children would choose a letter from the alphabet and the next day, they would bring an image of a fruit beginning with that letter to be glued onto the basket poster.

Water

- Health objective: Teach children to drink water throughout the day.
- Challenge objective: Collect the maximum number of lids from water bottles!

Water Bottle Lid Poster Challenge – Every day, each child received a bottle of water (50 cl). At the end of the day, if the child had drank the entire bottle, he/she could glue the lid onto the the water bottle poster.

Physical Activity

- Health objective: Be aware of the amount of time devoted to physical activity.
- Challenge objective: Collect the greatest number of stickers on the physical activity stopwatch!

Physical Activity Poster Challenge –Every evening, the children reported on their agendas the physical activities in which they participated outside of school. The following day, they would glue thumbnails, corresponding to the number of physical activities they did, onto the poster.

Sleep

- Health objective: Improve conditions to sleep well.
- Challenge objective: Collect the maximum number of smileys “I slept well!”.

Every day, children glued the smiley “I slept well!” or “I slept badly!” to the Sleep Well Poster Challenge. When a child indicated that he or she had slept badly, the teacher asked the child to explain why, and reminded him/her of the optimal conditions to promote a good night's sleep.

The implementation of these challenges over 15 days between actions helped unite all stakeholders in the field involved in the EPHE project in France. The CTFL Health Service, the teaching staff, the parents and the children all contributed to the success of these actions.

The challenges helped enable teachers to relay the message of health promotion consistently and on a regular basis. Thanks to this EPHE project, the children have benefited from more time learning about health promotion than they would have from simply the Health Service actions alone.

The enthusiasm with which both the professionals and families participated in these challenges reflects the impact with respect to the dissemination of the health promotion message.

