



# Chapter 10

## SETS, Romania



**Silvia Bucur, Ionela Badescu**

SETS website: [sets.ro](http://sets.ro)

### 1. SETS programme overview

PRAIS Foundation initiated, in March 2011, for a period of 5 years, “I’m living healthy, too!” – SETS, the first national movement aiming at preventing childhood obesity and promoting a healthy lifestyle among Romanian families, in a holistic approach: mind, body and spirit. The movement advocates for the development of healthy behavioural and lifestyle patterns for children and families.

The specific objectives of the SETS movement are:

- to inform families and the general public about the benefits of a daily balanced diet;
- to encourage daily physical activity;
- to create a Romanian alliance of values: important stakeholders, such as scientifics, doctors, universities, institutional partners, key opinion leaders (KOLs), companies and associations.

Ever since the launching of this childhood obesity prevention project in Romania, the SETS movement applied the EU acknowledged methodology developed by the Epode International Network (EIN) and which is based on 4 pillars: political involvement at local and national level; a social marketing approach; resource gathering through public/private partnership; assessment and dissemination of results.

## 1.1. Methodology

For 5 years, SETS sought to prevent childhood obesity using a holistic approach, via direct interventions in schools, towards families and within the selected communities through:

- **common work of the SETS Scientific Council:** doctors, psychologists, academics, food safety specialists contribute to studies, public debates, and publish opinions to support the cause in the media;
- **dissemination of free educational books:** in all the primary schools involved in the SETS movement, PRAIS Foundation provides the pupils with extracurricular educational books free of charge, to promote daily physical exercises, a balanced diet, and Olympic sports –as values and role-models– in addition to informative materials, based on which the educators deliver lessons within extracurricular classes, throughout the school year;
- **educational kits and trainings for teachers:** delivered at the beginning of each school year to all teachers and school principals involved in the project;
- **all schools covered by educational SETS posters:** increase in number each year;
- **the creation of SETS Clubs “Sports and Entertainment!”:** a new activation concept addressing all pupils for after-school physical activities and contests. SETS Clubs are voluntarily organised by the pupils, but remain under the coordination of the educators. All physical and sports activities done during their free time are registered in the annual competition of the most active clubs on [www.sets.ro](http://www.sets.ro), the movement’s communication platform, where children, as well as parents and the public at large, can easily find information;
- **open lessons in schools:** each year, volunteer students from sports universities present to children the sports they can practice, and then exercise together;
- **the direct dissemination of the SETS information kit to all parents;**
- **strong media and online communication campaigns, including [www.sets.ro](http://www.sets.ro),** with 2 sections, for parents and for children, videos and written interviews with KOLs, articles about nutrition, sports, and a balanced lifestyle.



## 1.2. Organisation

**The central coordination team** manages all relations with the partners, private and public. Through regular meetings with their representatives to inform them on the agenda of activities for the SETS movement and on the steps to follow, the team can specifically indicate how partners can get involved. The central coordination team also edits regular evaluation reports on the status of implementation and results.

All programme interventions are coordinated at central level by the PRAIS Foundation team, which consists of:

- SETS' Strategic Developer;
- SETS' Programme Director;
- SETS' Communities Coordinators;
- SETS' Scientific Council.

**The local coordination** consists of all school coordinators and teachers that implement the movement through extracurricular methodologies and activating pupils and their families in the SETS clubs.

All activities and interventions designed at central level are implemented in the field with the support of the local coordination teams, based on a detailed programme schedule communicated to them at the beginning of the school year.

For the first time, the issue of childhood obesity is holistically approached, with the support of the Scientific Council of the SETS movement, which gathers renowned medical doctors, educators, psychologists and Olympic athletes.

SETS' Romanian movement created an alliance of 22 public and private partners, including:

### Scientific partners:

- the Bucharest National University of Physical Education and Sports (UNEFS);
- the Cluj Faculty of Physical Education and Sports (FEFS);
- the Timisoara Faculty of Physical Education and Sports;
- the Romanian Federation for Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolic Diseases;
- the Romanian Nutrition Society.

### Private partners:

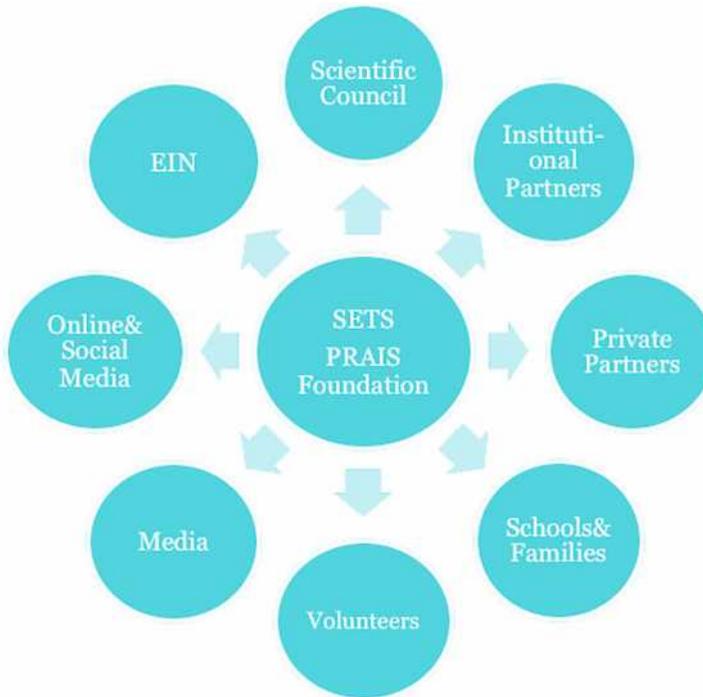
- Romalimenta (Romanian Food Federation) through 5 member companies: Nestlé Romania, Mondelez Romania, Coca-Cola Hellenic, Unilever, PepsiCo;
- Carrefour Romania.

### Institutional partners:

- the Ministry of Health;
- the Ministry of National Education;
- the Ministry of Youth and Sports;
- the School Directorates in Bucharest, Cluj, Neamt and Timisoara;
- the "Ioan Petrus" high school in Otopeni;

- the Cluj-Napoca, Otopeni and Roman City Councils;
- the Romanian Olympic and Sports Committee (COSR);
- the Romanian Athletics Federation;
- the Romanian Fencing Federation.

### A 360° communication plan targeting all audiences



### 1.3. Results

Since its launching, SETS has reached 116,340 pupils in the primary education cycle in 252 schools in Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Roman, Otopeni and Timisoara, over 3,000 members of the teaching staff, and over 240,000 parents – 2 million in audience. 376 UNEFS and FEFS students have voluntarily delivered 330 open lessons, sports demonstrations, thus becoming true role-models for the pupils.

Throughout the 4 years of this programme's existence, over 13,810 students signed up to the 344 SETS Clubs, partaking in 6,237 physical activities in association with a balanced diet, for the healthy development of children.

In addition to the first-hand interventions implemented in schools, the SETS national movement built the public information portal dedicated to both parents and their children – [www.sets.ro](http://www.sets.ro), registering over 425,494 visitors, as well as a social media platform (consisting in SETS' Facebook pages, with over 33,000 friends, and Twitter, Youtube, and Instagram accounts).

In the autumn of 2011, PRAIS Foundation was invited to ensure the presidency of SETS Romania at the meeting of Health Ministries' representatives, DG Sanco - High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activities. The participants applauded the SETS methodology, which is compliant with the EPODE approach, as well as the sustainable 5-year intervention and the use of a public/private partnership.

A 2014 study evaluated the impact and effectiveness of SETS methodologies and information tools used to implement the third annual edition of the SETS movement during the 2013-2014 school year.

### **Main conclusions of the study:**

- It remains essential that children have access to information on healthy lifestyle;
- All respondents have agreed that the implementation of SETS movement over a period of 5 years can influence pupils and their families' lifestyle habits;
- [www.sets.ro](http://www.sets.ro) is a major information source for the teachers involved in the movement, as they are often accessing the website, creating and uploading activities for SETS Clubs "Sports and Entertainment!"; SETS' Facebook page is an important information source for teachers, students and parents;
- During the 2013-2014 school year, the participating teachers devoted an average of 80 extracurricular hours to organise SETS activities with the children;
- 86% of the teachers declared that thanks to the SETS methodologies and interventions, the students' interest in physical activities has increased;
- 93% of the teachers have noticed a change in their students' eating habits after they were presented with the information contained in the SETS educational materials;
- The students retained most of the SETS educational materials;
- Teachers declared that a majority of parents (92%) consider the SETS movement and its educational materials as having a positive impact on their children;
- 99% of the teachers consider that SETS activities have a positive impact on the pupils' health and lifestyle;
- Pupils' involvement in SETS Clubs "Sports and Entertainment!" is considered beneficial to changing their lifestyle habits by a majority of teachers;
- The children involvement in SETS Clubs was perceived as a positive action by 94% of the parents.

PRAIS Foundation participated in studies, and presented the results and SETS' accomplishments at 4 national congresses on diabetes and nutrition.

As recognition of the importance of the movement at national level, "I am living healthy, too! – SETS", implemented by PRAIS Foundation, was rewarded with 2 important prizes, at Romanian PR Awards (2013) and the Romanian Society Gala Award (2014).

### **SETS promotion, up-to-date results:**

- 42 media campaigns;
- 875 press materials "no cash for editorial";
- 425,494 unique visits on [www.sets.ro](http://www.sets.ro);
- 33,000 Likes on Facebook; 49 videos posted on Youtube that were viewed 9,420 times.

## SETS briefing



## 2. Social Marketing Activities

SETS movement approaches the obesity issue from a social marketing perspective, which enables the PRAIS Foundation to strongly support the social cause. The movement uses marketing and brand promotion mechanisms: inspiring logo and positive slogan, role-model-focused illustration and contents of the books for the students, the portal with 2 universes for children and parents, playful activation in SETS clubs of a large number of children, together with the alliance of local and international values created by the movement, adding to the TV and radio spot, wide-scope public events and intense media campaigns.

“I’m living healthy, too!” - SETS movement is using all social marketing tools in order to promote a healthy lifestyle amongst the targeted audiences, with a holistic approach using all available channels.

The campaign is designed to take into consideration the national context and the results of each year’s implementation period to measure the impact and gather feedback from the targeted audiences.

The SETS Scientific Council gathers renowned doctors, psychologists, academics, food safety specialists, and holds periodic meetings to discuss the new studies on obesity prevention, and make recommendations for the implementation team.

On each implementation period, the team chooses a main theme to be addressed at school through specific interventions and communication campaigns.

After the dissemination of free educational books in all the primary schools involved in the SETS movement, the educators deliver lessons within extracurricular classes throughout the school year. They also use the educational kits and are involved in trainings to help them implement the SETS activities and obtain visible results.

**“SETS Clubs – Sports and Entertainment!”** is a new activation concept designed by PRAIS Foundation that addresses all students, which on a voluntary basis are involved in after-school physical activities organised by the coordinating teachers. All physical and sports activities are registered on [www.sets.ro](http://www.sets.ro). The annual competition of the most active clubs in SETS cities are awarded with special prizes during the annual awards ceremonies.

Every school year, over 100 students from the sports universities partners of the movement become volunteers within SETS and go to the schools to hold open lessons, do sports demonstrations for the children and exercise with them.

All interventions in the field are documented and promoted on the movement portal, [www.sets.ro](http://www.sets.ro), and via strong media and online communication campaigns.

**SETS activities are promoted to the general public via:**

- launching events with the participation of the mass media and partners;
- the SETS Clubs awards ceremonies roadshow;
- media campaigns on nutrition and topics related to the yearly theme;
- the promotion of SETS interventions as part of the EIN.

### 3. EPHE Community

In Romania, the chosen city for the implementation of the EPHE project was Otopeni, a community in Ilfov County, situated 15 km north from Bucharest.

The town's total population is approximately 12,671 inhabitants and the average income in 2013 was of RON 1,892.

Following the scientific criteria, the city of Otopeni was chosen for the implementation of the EPHE project for the following reasons:

- only one school in the city gathers children from all socio-economical categories, which allowed reaching all targeted beneficiaries;
- the city had not participated in other projects dedicated to the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

Another added value to this city was the political involvement, the endorsement of the programme, and good knowledge of local stakeholders:

- good relations with local authorities (the school, the City Council, the School Inspectorate);
- prior successful collaborations on other projects.

The main school in town, “Ioan Petrus” High School - which includes primary classes and 4 kindergartens - developed wide extracurricular activities involving the

1,725 students registered in the school year 2012-2013. “Ioan Petrus” High School accepted PRAIS Foundation proposal to be part of EPHE as soon as the project was presented to the board.

The EPHE project in Otopeni targeted all 1st grade students during 2012-2013, which ensured their continuous involvement during the 3-year intervention. Thus, starting 2012, 185 children and their families actively took part in the project interventions and the evaluation process.

The main local partners of the project, which supported the development and implementation of all EPHE actions, were the Otopeni City Council and “Ioan Petrus” High School.

## 4. Interventions Undertaken

### 4.1. The preparation step

The first year of the project focused on selecting the community and gaining the support of the local potential partners in Otopeni in order to ensure a successful implementation of the project. After securing all partnerships, the PRAIS Foundation organised a motivational campaign addressed to the families of the selected children to gain their involvement in the project and ensure high participation in the main action developed during the baseline evaluation period.



Questionnaires and open letters distribution in classes

### 4.2. The Intervention step

During the 2013-2014 school year, the PRAIS Foundation implemented the SETS methodologies in the EPHE school, and applied all actions and interventions designed

in the framework of the national movement: delivering educational materials to children and their families (books, posters, open letters to the parents), organizing SETS “Sports and Entertainment!” Clubs competitions, and holding open lessons on the importance of daily physical activities by volunteer students from sports universities.

Also, interventions based on the project’s 4 themes were organised with a main focus on the behaviours to be addressed resulting from the baseline evaluation in Otopeni:

- fruit & vegetables consumption;
- Fruit juices & soft drinks consumption;
- total screen time (TV, computer) in relation with sleep.

At the end of the school year, the second evaluation phase was implemented, with an over 95% response rate.



### 4.3. The observation step

The last implementation year of the EPHE project was mainly dedicated to the activities organised as part of the SETS national movement, which involved all local partners of the project:

- delivering educational materials to children and their families: booklets for every child on the importance of a balanced lifestyle, posters, information kits for teachers, open letters to parents;
- organising SETS “Sports and Entertainment!” Clubs at class level;
- organising open lessons held by volunteer students of the sports universities on the importance of daily physical activities.

## 5. Remarkable activities

### “Discover the 5 senses!” Open lessons on fruit and vegetables -

Following the baseline evaluation, the results indicated a need to increase fruit and vegetables consumption in the EPHE project families.

In order to educate children and parents about the benefits of daily consumption of fruit and vegetables, a special activity was implemented in Otopeni’s EPHE school: the “Discover the 5 senses” open lessons.

All 180 children participated in the intervention with great enthusiasm.

For this activity, PRAIS Foundation prepared for every child and teacher the “Fruit and vegetables hour” booklet. The material contained information on the most consumed fruits and vegetables in Romania (their nutritional values, why it is important to include them in our daily diet, etc.), as well as games and quizzes.

2 actors dressed in fruit costumes explained to the children the importance and benefits of fruit and vegetable consumption, based on the information provided by the project nutritionist.

The animators involved the children in an active dialog about fruit and vegetables. They asked the students to name some of their favourite fruits and vegetables, to talk about the difference between fruits and vegetables, and to name some delicious recipes with fruits and vegetables.

After the discussion, the animators asked for volunteers amongst the children. The selected students came in front of the class, were blindfolded and invited to use their other senses to discover a fruit or a vegetable (through smell, touch, taste) and name it. After what the animators would speak about the benefits of the named fruit or vegetable on one’s health.

At the end of the lesson, children would be asked questions about the fruits and vegetables that the animators talked about to verify if they remembered what they had just learned.

Also, as a reward for their participation in the activity, and to encourage consumption, all the children received fruit salads with oranges, mango, grapefruit, and kiwi.

Children were encouraged to take home the booklet on fruit and vegetables for their parents to see and further discuss with them what they had learned.

The activity on fruit and vegetables consumption was greatly appreciated by the children, parents and teachers, and the implementation team received positive feedback.

In order to obtain positive results from the interventions, it was essential to deliver informational materials, have special animators communicate the messages, and target the parents. This intervention serves as a best practice, since its implemen-

tation methodology combines different tools to deliver key messages and ensure a positive impact on the target group.

