

## **1. TITLE of the practice (in original language and English translation, if the original language is not English)**

SAFE Sugar Project

## **2. Please provide your details.**

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## **3. Please provide a short summary description of your practice that will be used for the publication in case your practice is selected as best.**

### Background, context:

In 2015, the World Health Organisation (WHO) published new guidelines regarding sugar intake for adults and children. The WHO recommends reducing the intake of free sugars to less than 10% of total energy intake, while a reduction to below 5% would provide additional benefits. Free sugars are all monosaccharides and disaccharides added to foods by the manufacturer, cooks or consumers, as well as sugars that are naturally present in honey, syrups and fruit juices. To reach the threshold of 10% of total energy intake, children aged 7 to 10 should not eat more than 6 teaspoons of sugar per day, and adults no more than 12 teaspoons of sugar per day. Currently, in Belgium, the average daily sugar intake reaches 20 teaspoons of sugar per day for children and 25 teaspoons of sugar per day for adults. With the support of the Ministry of Education of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels, and under the campaign "Désucrez-vous! Du sucre oui, mais pas trop", SAFE has launched training courses aimed at children and teenagers to inform and raise awareness on the health risks of excessive sugar intake. The courses are first implemented in Belgian schools before being spread out across EU Member States.

### Overall goal and specific objectives:

The Sugar Project campaign educates the general public about the excessive quantity of sugar consumed daily and about its consequences on Public Health. SAFE encourages consumers to reduce their sugar intake, hence improving their health. Education and Communication objectives: - Educating the general public about sugar consumption; - Raising awareness about sugar quantities in food; - Raising awareness about the numerous sugar-related health issues; - Identifying a resource site offering useful knowledge to reduce sugar consumption. - Raising awareness among the general public about sugar-related issues and providing a resource website where solutions to reduce sugar consumption can be found

### Indicators:

Specific satisfaction questionnaires were sent to 46 teachers and staff members (one for each class) after the 20 training courses. Each teacher was asked about the level of relevance of the workshops, the quality of the information they were provided with and of the teaching materials used to engage with children. Indicator markers ranging from 0 to 5 were used to assess the level of relevance of educational materials and of the information provided. Additional questions included whether the teachers would organise such trainings again in their schools and whether they would recommend them to other teachers.

### Target population:

The target population is very broad, as excessive sugar consumption and its consequences affect the general population. However, the primary targets are children between 8 and 14 years old. Like every food habit, sugar consumption is more easily tackled if addressed at a young age. - Population helping with the transmission of the initiative: children, teachers, public authorities.

### Methodology:

The first selected region to start the Sugar Project action was the City of Brussels. Every school in Brussels was therefore indexed and several schools from a broad spectrum of social and economic backgrounds were chosen to host training sessions on sugar. The social and economic background of each school was identified in accordance with the official list published by the Ministry of Education of the Federation of Wallonia-Brussels. In total, 20 workshops were organized, gathering 46 classrooms in 11 different schools. Each workshop consisted of a 2-hour class where 20 to 40 children from the age of 8 to 14 years old were taught about sugar. The classes consisted of presentations, the screening of recreational learning materials (containing audiovisual material and games), discussions, and information sharing. Students and teachers were invited to give feedback on their experience and to share the knowledge obtained during the workshop with their families and colleagues. Evaluation forms were gathered from the teachers. At the end of the first year of training sessions, the collected data were used to adapt the courses to the educational needs of the children and the teachers.

### Main outcomes:

20 workshops were organized with a total of 46 classes from February 2017 to September 2017 in 11 different schools, located in 8 municipalities in Brussels. The workshops reached a total of 1014 children aged 8 to 14 years old and more than 30 staff members within the schools (teachers, management staff). From a general perspective, the workshops were appreciated by the teachers because they met their expectations and were well-aligned with their educational projects about nutrition and a healthy diet. SAFE obtained positive feedback regarding 3 main aspects of the workshops: - Teachers felt their pupils knew more about the health risks of excessive sugar intake after the workshops; - Teachers felt their pupils were more aware of the actual amount of sugar contained in food; - Teachers felt their pupils knew more about food packaging and could better read nutrition labels about sugar and food colorants. SAFE's workshops got an average of 8 out of 10 in the satisfaction reports filled in by the teachers at the end of the classes. A large majority of the teachers and school staff members want to organize new workshops in their institutions in the coming years.