

A GACD Implementation Science e-Hub Case Study

Scaling up of physical activity interventions at the national level in Brazil: An effective solution to increase physical activity at the population level

This case study was developed based on the work of

Project GUIA (Guide for Useful Interventions for Physical Activity in Brazil and Latin America)

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Case study summary

This case study assesses the nationwide expansion of the 'Academia da Cidade' program in Brazil, underlining the significance of engaging diverse sectors for effective intervention scale-up and highlighting challenges related to policy and funding changes.

Identification and characterisation of implementation issues

Brazil faces a challenge with half of its adult population not meeting recommended physical activity levels. Project GUIA, a collaboration led by Washington University, aims to address this through the 'Academia da Cidade' program, focusing on accessible community activities to encourage physical activity.

Selection, adaptation, and application of implementation strategies

Initiated in Recife, the program was designed to create or enhance public spaces for physical and cultural activities. It sought to overcome common barriers to physical activity, such as lack of time and work/family responsibilities, by providing free, instructor-led activities like dance, aerobics, and strength training.

Development and delivery of the stakeholder engagement strategy

Project GUIA's approach included comprehensive stakeholder engagement, utilizing a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods for program evaluation, including surveys, direct observations, and interviews.

Evaluating implementation

Evaluation revealed the program's success in increasing physical activity levels, with significant improvements among women, older adults, and lower-income individuals, showcasing the program's reach and impact on health disparities.

Results and key findings

The effective increase in physical activity levels across targeted demographics highlighted the program's success. However, scaling up faced challenges due to policy and funding changes, stressing the importance of stable support for sustainability.

Strengths and limitations

The program demonstrated strong potential in improving public health through physical activity. Nonetheless, scaling up initiatives like 'Academia da Cidade' to a national level encountered obstacles in adapting to new policies and securing consistent funding.

Success factors and challenges

The case underscores the critical role of cross-sector engagement and adaptive strategies in scaling up health interventions. Challenges include navigating the political and financial landscape to maintain and expand such programs.

Next steps

Recommendations for future efforts include strengthening policy support and funding mechanisms to ensure the program's sustainability and broader reach, ultimately enhancing public health outcomes through increased physical activity.

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