



## Beyond Health: Advocating for a Healthy Youth, Healthy Future

Every child has the right to grow up healthy. To grow up in an environment which makes the healthy choice the easiest choice. At [JOGG](#), we aim to create a healthy living environment for all children, to reduce inequality. A healthy start in life lays the groundwork for a successful future, enabling children to thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally. As we approach the European Elections from June 6th to 9th we urge your attention towards a healthy youth and healthy future. The EU has a role to play in facilitating healthy choices by shifting the focus from treatment and care to prevention, incorporating health in all policies, and promoting local and regional approaches.

JOGG encourages you to include the following points in your election program:

1. **From cure and care to prevention**

We are living increasingly unhealthy lifestyles, largely due to the obesogenic environment in Europe that encourages people to make unhealthy food choices and discourages them from being physically active. This has resulted in a rise of children and young people living with overweight and obesity, leading to escalating healthcare costs. It is time to focus on prevention policies at the European level, aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles and redesigning the environment. This will not only improve the health of children and young people but also prevent lifestyle-related diseases and ultimately reduce the continuously rising healthcare costs. We strive for a society where healthy living is easily achievable for every child and young person.

2. **Implement Health in all policies**

Domains such as education and spatial planning have a significant impact on our health. It is essential for the European Union to implement a Health in all policies strategy in the policy development process, possibly by introducing a health-in-all-policies assessment. This assessment evaluates the impact of proposed policies (such as education, housing, infrastructure and transportation, work environment). Policy should always contribute to the health of all European children and young people.

3. **Stimulate local and regional approaches**

At local and regional level, effective steps can be taken in creating a healthy environment. European action is required to enable integrated local approaches throughout the EU, with a central role for local and regional professionals acting as essential links between policy and practice. Encouraging local and regional networks by European political parties is crucial for promoting a healthier future for our youth.



The following elaboration on the aforementioned points underscores the importance of an integrated approach within the EU. This includes transitioning the focus from treatment to prevention, implementing Health in all policies, and emphasizing the crucial significance of local and regional approaches. JOGG advocates for the effective implementation of these measures to promote a healthy living environment for all children and young people in Europe.

### **From cure and care to prevention**

Our living environment has significantly evolved in recent decades. We are constantly surrounded by unhealthy food, sedentary lifestyles, high levels of stress, and inadequate sleep, exacerbated by the intensive use of smartphones and tablets. For many children, young people, and their caregivers, the environment does not foster healthy choices.

As a result, there is a rise in European children living with overweight or obesity. It is projected that by 2035, 21% of boys and 14% of girls between the ages of 5 and 19 will live with obesity<sup>1</sup>. The total costs of overweight and obesity in Europe are estimated at 800 billion euros by 2035<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, we witness an increase in related diseases such as diabetes, cancer, heart, and vascular diseases, posing a significant challenge in Europe<sup>3</sup>.

A key part of the solution lies in shifting from a curative policy to a comprehensive prevention policy at the European level. This creates a society where healthy living is accessible and attainable for every child and young person, laying the foundation for a healthy future generation.

### **Health in all policies**

JOGG believes that a healthy living environment begins with a broad integrated approach. This entails considering the potential impact of policies on the health of children and young people in the process of policy development, whether in healthcare, employment, or mobility. At JOGG, we term this approach Health in all policies. To make a real difference in the various member states, prevention must be integrated into every national and European policy. Incorporating health objectives into all policy areas fosters healthier environments and reduces health inequalities.

To achieve this, JOGG advocates for the development of a health-in-all-policies assessment. This assessment evaluates the impact of proposed policies. This allows diverse policy areas to contribute more effectively to the establishment of a healthy European living environment essential for healthy children and young people.

### **The Importance of local approaches for a healthy living environment**

Healthy upbringing begins at the local level, with neighborhoods where children can play outdoors, supermarkets offering healthier options, and schools educating children not only academically but also on healthy living. Real change is achieved by building strong networks locally and regionally, where every policy domain works towards a healthier future. Local professionals play a crucial role in bridging policy and practical implementation, providing valuable feedback to policy levels, thus ensuring policies are better aligned with practical needs and challenges.

JOGG has over 10 years of experience implementing policy and practical changes at the local and regional levels to transform the environment. Currently, JOGG assists 65% of Dutch municipalities in implementing this evidence-based prevention method, demonstrating the possibility of breaking trends<sup>4</sup>. Action and policy at the European level make it easier for municipalities to implement effective policies and respond to the needs of their local communities.

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<sup>1</sup> [World Obesity Atlas 2023](#), page 18

<sup>2</sup> [World Obesity Atlas 2023](#), page 18

<sup>3</sup> [World Obesity Atlas 2023](#), page 13

<sup>4</sup> [OECD, 2022](#)

Kobes et al, 2021: [Prevalence of overweight among Dutch primary school children living in JOGG and non-JOGG areas | Request PDF \(researchgate.net\)](#)



### **About JOGG**

For 10 years JOGG has been working on an integrated approach to ensure a healthy living environment for children and young people. Collaboration between municipalities, social organizations, businesses, and adults around a child is central to this, with municipalities playing a key role due to their local approach and responsibility for policy. Presently, 220 out of 342 municipalities in the Netherlands are JOGG municipalities.

For more information about JOGG, please visit [www.jogg.nl/about-jogg](http://www.jogg.nl/about-jogg)