

SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

THEME 1

HEALTH



Grant agreement for: Coordination and Support Action (coordinating)

Project acronym: RICHE

Project full title: A platform and inventory for child health research in Europe

Grant agreement no.: 242181

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List of Beneficiaries

No.	Beneficiary name	Beneficiary short name	Country	Date enter	Date exit
1	Dublin City University (Coordinator)	DCU	IRL	1	36
2	Burlo Garofolo	BURLO	IT	1	36

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3	Egészség Monitor	EMon	HU	1	36
4	Erasmus Universitair Medisch Centrum Rotterdam	ERASMUS MC	NL	1	36
5	Nasjonalt Folkehelseinstitutt	FHI	NO	1	36
6	Faculdade de Motricidade Humana	FMH	PT	1	36
7	The Health Research Board	HRB	IRL	1	36
8	Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine	ICL	UK	1	36
9	Fondazione IRCCS Istituto Neurologico Carlo Besta	INNCB	IT	1	36
10	Inštitut za varovanje zdravja Republike Slovenije (Institute of Public Health of the Republic of Slovenia)	IVZ RS	SLO	1	36
11	Johannes Kepler University Linz, Institute of Health System Research	IPG	AT	1	36
13	Nordiska högskolan för folkhälso-vetenskap (Nordic School for Public Health)	NHV	SE	1	36
14	Instytut Medycyny Pracy Nofera (Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine)	NIOM	PO	1	36
15	Open Applications Consulting Limited	OpenApp	IRL	1	36
16	School of Health and Education, Reykjavik University	RU	IS	1	36
17	Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden tutkimus- ja kehittämiskeskus (National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health)	THL	FIN	1	36
18	Tervise Arengu Instituut	TAI	EE	1	36
19	Masarykova Univerzita	MU	CZ	1	36
20	The University of Edinburgh, National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence	UEdin	UK	1	36
21	Universitätsklinikum Hamburg-Eppendorf	UKE	DE	1	36
22	University of Newcastle upon Tyne	UNEW	UK	1	36
23	Universitatea Babeş Bolyai	UBB	RO	1	36
24	Universiteit Maastricht, Centre for Public Health Genomics	UM	NL	1	36

A.2 Project summary (GPF A1)

A1: Our project

Project Number ¹	242181	Project Acronym ²	RICHE
One form per project			
General information			
Project title ³	RICHE – a platform and inventory for child health research in Europe		
Starting date ⁴	Start date to be notified; must lie within 0 months of grant agreement signature		
Duration in months ⁵	36		
Call (part) identifier ⁶	FP7-HEALTH-2009-single-stage		
Activity code(s) most relevant to your topic ⁷	HEALTH-2009-3.3-5: European child health research platform		
Free keywords ⁸	Child health Inventory Taxonomy Virtual community Multilingual platform Research Roadmap Lifecourse		
Abstract ⁹ (max. 2000 char.)			
<p>The European Commission and other funding agencies make a large investment in child health research. The health of our children is satisfactory, but there are serious concerns, for example, obesity, mental health, alcohol abuse, and sexuality. We know that there are strong links between the health of young people and their social inclusion and level of education. Our objective is to establish a sustainable network for researchers, funders, policy makers, advocates and young people in Europe, to support collaboration in developing the future of child health research. We will produce an inventory of research, and reports, on gaps in research, and on roadmaps for the future of research. Our co-ordination will establish a unique, open, multi-lingual platform for child health research. This will embrace the full multi-disciplinary diversity of European research, while addressing fragmentation by making the parts visible, and supporting multi-lingual input and searching. We will develop formal processes for finding gaps in research, and for making roadmaps. We will use these to find current gaps, and make roadmaps for the future, including for the necessary research capacity. We will promote our work and our results in a series of meetings open to researchers and other stakeholders. Our consortium is a multi-disciplinary team, with great experience in doing innovative child health research in Europe, in developing, and in delivering child health strategies at national, and European level. This mixture of skills and experience gives us a unique perspective on the strategic problems at European level. We have an Expert Group, including young people, advocates, and researchers who will support us. RICHE will support the development and implementation of child health research strategies, and the use of evidence for child health action. These in turn will support innovative research, improve social policy for children, and so improve the quality of life of European children.</p>			

PART B

B.1 Scientific and/or technical quality, relevant to the topics addressed by the call

The RICHE coordination action will address the diversity and fragmentation of child health research in Europe, by establishing an innovative, iterative, and sustainable European platform for child health research across different disciplines. The platform will consist of:

- An open social network for researchers, including self-registration and reporting, and dialogue through a customised social networking tool.
- Open access for searching and hosting material for researchers, funders, advocates and policy makers.
- An inventory of research and researchers, comprising structured entries for formal commissioned research, and self-reporting of smaller innovation, each classified using

a searchable multi-lingual taxonomy.

- Reports and a series of meetings on:
 - Inventory of current research.
 - Research into child health measurement, statistics, and indicators.
 - Gaps in child health research as perceived by a range of stakeholders.
 - Roadmaps for the future of child health research in Europe.
- A website to support the network and the ongoing collation of the inventory.

This integrated virtual platform will help the different stakeholders to build the future of European child health research, and thus promote child health in Europe and beyond.

B.1.1 Concept and objectives

The EU Council (2008) resolution on the on the health and well-being of European youth, noted that, “although on the whole the health of young people in Europe is satisfactory, certain fields are of particular concern such as nutrition, physical activity, alcohol abuse, sexual and mental health; particular attention should be paid to promoting a healthy lifestyle and preventive measures, especially in the context of sexual activity, alcohol abuse and drug use, smoking, eating disorders, obesity, violence.”

To meet these needs they proposed “precise knowledge of the state of health, the needs and expectations of young women and men in terms of health, as well as existing practice, experience and lessons learned in this field, all duly assessed, is required both to contribute to ensuring the efficacy and efficiency of youth health policy and to aim to better take into account, within tailored strategies, the specific nature of this group, with particular reference to potential differences within the group due, inter alia, to age, sex, place of residence or socio-economic factors and giving priority to young people with fewer opportunities.” (EU Council 2008). Our primary goal is to support this.

European children are the subjects of a substantial amount of research activity. This is multi-disciplinary, multi-lingual, some commissioned, some investigator initiated, funded by many different agencies, including the European Commission. However, the overall effort is far from optimal, and the results are not used as they could be, because this research is fragmented. Much is commissioned by national governments or research agencies, and may remain known only in that country and language. European Commission funded research is commissioned by a specific Directorate General, of which there are several with identified responsibilities for children. Thus it is hard have an overview and thus get access to this richness of European child health research activity, as there is no coordination mechanism. Greater cohesion is needed, and the development of more effective strategies for child health research in the future.

Our goal is to create a platform through which researchers, funders, policy makers and other stakeholders can work together to improve the health of European children, and to develop new strategies for sustaining and improving the health of children.

Moreover, already we know a great deal about how to optimize the health of children, and how to support children and their families in various difficult situations, but a fundamental problem is that this knowledge is not adequately applied to policy making, or to focus further research. Researchers, practitioners and policy makers act without taking existing knowledge into account because there are only limited means of finding previous research studies.

B.1.1.1 Scientific and Technical objectives

We first outline the key objectives, and then provide a background for the 5 workpackages which will deliver these objectives.

Scientific (strategic) objectives:

We shall promote child health research across Europe by:

- Identifying, and characterising, the diversity of European child health research.
- Describing, and characterising, the fragmentation in European child health research.
- Developing an evidence-based process for identifying gaps in European child health research.
- Developing a reasoned process for determining priorities in child health research.
- Proposing key areas in which research should be undertaken.
- Providing a platform where young people, children's advocates, and other NGO's can connect with researchers to review and develop priorities in child health research.
- Assessing current child health research capacity, and proposing and facilitating ways of building it up.

Technical objectives:

The consortium will achieve this through a logical sequence of technical objectives, namely:

- Identifying and classifying recent and on-going child research activities at national and European levels (WP1: Inventory of child health research).
- Identifying previous and on-going work on measuring child health and child health indicators (WP2: Indicators).
- Developing and applying a formal evidence based process for identifying gaps in child health research (WP3: Gaps).
- Developing and applying a formal consultative and formative process for establishing roadmaps for the future of European child health research (WP4: Roadmaps).
- Designing, developing and deploying a sustainable platform to support these activities, during the project and afterwards (WP5: Platform).
- Disseminating the results to our stakeholders including young people, their advocates, researchers, research funders and policy makers (WP5: Platform).
- Providing a vehicle by which researchers can register their competencies and interests, post smaller study details, and interact within a research community and with potential commissioning bodies (WP5: Platform)

B.1.1.2 Relation of our scientific and technical objectives to the topics addressed by the call

The context specified by the call is first, to 'improve the health of European citizens' and second to boost the capacity of the European health [system]'. Our proposal will contribute to the first of these by improving the co-ordination and visibility of European child health research, and making it more accessible and comprehensible to researchers, other stakeholders, and policy-makers. This, in turn, will support the translation of research into child health policy and practice. It will contribute to the second by developing more formal, evidence-based, approaches to identifying gaps and priorities for future research in child health across Europe.

Scope of the call topic

The section under which this call falls (Section 3.3. Enhanced health promotion and disease prevention) is intended to 'provide scientific evidence for the best public health measures'. Our proposal will contribute to this objective by identifying the research, by identifying gaps (based on evidence and stakeholder requirements) in the research, and by making rational argued proposals for prioritising areas of research for further development (Roadmaps). This in turn will support policy and decision makers at European, national and local level to develop and implement effective public health interventions for children.

The call text requires us to “address the diversity and fragmentation in child health research in Europe in an inclusive multidisciplinary way, identifying existing research programmes in Member States, recent advances and identification of gaps to explore road maps for the future of child health research in Europe”. Each of these points is explicitly covered in our technical objectives, and by the structure of the consortium.

Scope of our proposal

Child health is a vast area. We could not begin to cover the whole field. Accordingly we are starting by concentrating on one specific subset – commissioned child health research. By this we mean research carried out in response to a specific call from a funding agency, and so reflecting (implicitly) the priorities of that agency. Our rationale is that this provides our project with reasonable boundaries, and such work is likely to reflect current research and policy priorities, whilst the commissioning process will provide a broad quality assurance mechanism.

However, we are also aware that some of the most innovative work will not be commissioned, but will be investigator led projects, possibly supporting only a PhD student. We will encourage such projects to engage with us directly, especially through the platform, once the core nature of the project has been established. To facilitate this our site will support multi-lingual work from the start.

A further aspect of our scope is to treat equitably research in all 27 Member States and the EEA three nations. Our structure reflects that, with a number of smaller national partners strategically aimed at gaining access to local language and grey literature, both in the new accession states, and in the less widely spoken official languages.

B.1.1.3 Scientific and technical objectives of the workpackages

WP1 Inventory

Leader Prof Michael Rigby, NHV (SE)

Deputy Leader Dr Ales Bourek, MU (CZ)

Work Package 1 will feed into all other work packages, and give them their initial material on which to build. Self-evidently, a project to identify gaps in research activity must start by identifying current activity. But this work package seeks to do more than conduct an inventory – it will set the foundations for the three-year project, and the basic frame for subsequent work within and after the project.

WP 1 will devise three separate taxonomies. One for child health research, one for research capacity and skills, and one for funding agencies. These will be developed in English, but with WP Platform the project will seek translation of the taxonomies into as many official and working languages of the EU and EEA as possible.

The first, and fundamental, taxonomy will be for child health research itself. This will be done by examining other taxonomies in the field of health, in the social sciences, and drawing from library and information science expertise on knowledge management. The taxonomy will have to be multi-axial, for instance having a dimension by age-group or life stage; by health topic or functional aspect; and by type of research.

The second taxonomy will consider research capacity and skills. This taxonomy must be compatible with the first, but will have different dimensions. Thirdly, a taxonomy to categorise funding agencies – from international organisations to philanthropic bodies – is necessary for Roadmap development, and to assist researchers.

A central part of the overall proposal, congruent with the call's objective of identifying existing research programmes in Member States, recent advances and identification of gaps, and one of the biggest overall tasks, is to build up an inventory of child health research. We propose the following scope for the collection of the child health research inventory component of this project:

- Work published from 2000 onwards
- Projects under way
- Projects actually funded

Our main priority will be commissioned research on child health, with a special focus on work commissioned by major national and international funders, such as the European Commission, major charities, and national research councils.

Several methods will be used to locate material, including bibliographic searches, contacts in our partners network, approaches to international agencies, approaches to national governments directly and through link persons such as members of the DG SANCO Network of Competent Authorities and the High Level Health Committee. National Research Councils will be approached, as will the European Science Foundation.

