

# Young Health Programme in Romania

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of mortality worldwide today. Statistics show that Romania has the third highest mortality rate with two out of three Romanians (62%) dying from cardiovascular disease.

The number of cardiovascular events occurring at an early age is also on the increase. The well-known and most important cardiovascular risk factors are: age, heredity, male gender, smoking, high level of cholesterol, obesity, sedentary lifestyle, stress and associated conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes. Out of these factors, some are non-modifiable (age and heredity), but most can be influenced and controlled emphasising the importance of primary prevention. However, there is a lack of related health awareness and education in the school system.

The Young Health Programme, launched in Romania in November 2011, is focused on educating young people regarding healthy lifestyle habits, thus reducing the risks of cardiovascular events at early ages.



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Young Health Programme

A global community investment initiative

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 Junior  
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ROMANIA

 ROMANIAN  
HEART  
FOUNDATION

# Young Health Programme in Romania



## What do we want to achieve through the Programme?

The objectives of the Young Health Programme in Romania are:

- Develop a national educational programme to create healthy lifestyle behaviours among adolescents, by directly involving 50,000 high school students by 2014 in healthy lifestyle classes and non-curricular sports activities.
- Targeting adolescents aged 15 to 19, aligning the project with the broader prevention objective of Romanian cardiologists, aiming to decrease by 10% the cardiovascular mortality rate by 2015.

## What activities are taking place locally?

- The Programme was launched by Junior Achievement Romania in over 100 high schools and over 70 cities across Romania.
- Health-related workshops organised with the Romanian Heart Foundation enable students to get advice from cardiovascular specialists.
- Updated and improved health manuals for Romanian high schools and validated by the Ministry of Education aim to educate students and teachers on cardiovascular health and risk factors.
- Sports clubs (I♥sport), run in schools “by students, for students” were established to create a framework for students to do more physical activities and to promote sport events. The opportunity to open sports clubs is promoted by Junior Achievement Romania with the aim of establishing 420 clubs within five years.
- The Programme’s website [www.iheartsport.ro](http://www.iheartsport.ro) is designed to provide information to relevant stakeholders and increase awareness of the programme. It also supports and enables sports clubs to present their activities, share experiences and also compete with other clubs.
- “Step-by-Step Winners” – organised by I♥sport clubs in high schools all over the country. Teams totalling over 1,500 teenagers have been equipped with pedometers and registered in the contest to count all the steps they take. The challenge promotes physical activities as part of a healthy and active lifestyle and the winners will be awarded sports equipment and diplomas. The contest web page <http://www.iheartsport.ro/pas-cu-pas> displays in real time the total number registered by all the teams involved.

## What has been achieved so far?

- The Programme launched in high schools in November 2011, and to date more than 50,000 people, teenagers and teachers, have been directly involved. 100 high schools in 70 cities have participated, generating national media coverage across Romania.
- In a survey of students who took part in the Programme, 87% correctly identified the most frequent cardiovascular diseases. The Programme also increased the number of students who practised sport for four to eight hours a week, rising 10% since the Programme took place.

## Local partners

Our partners for this Programme are the Romanian Heart Foundation and Junior Achievement Romania.

### Junior Achievement Romania

Junior Achievement Romania, a not-for-profit organisation, was founded in 1993 and is part of Junior Achievement Worldwide®, USA, and Junior Achievement – Young Enterprise, Europe.

It is the largest and the most dynamic international organisation focused on economic and entrepreneurial education. In Romania, the “learning by doing” Junior Achievement courses are taken annually by more than 150,000 students, in more than 1,300 educational institutions, and are being implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, with the educational institutions and the business community. [www.jaromania.org](http://www.jaromania.org)

### Romanian Heart Foundation

Romanian Heart Foundation was founded by members of the Romanian Society of Cardiology for the implementation of a national strategy in cardiovascular disease prevention and to support the public campaigns initiated by the Romanian Society of Cardiology. It is a member of the European Heart Network, a Brussels based alliance of heart foundations and like-minded non-governmental organisations throughout Europe.

[www.romanianheart.ro](http://www.romanianheart.ro)