European and US health authorities recognize the importance of protecting children’s health and including benefits to children in the cost-benefit analysis of environmental interventions. The LIFE+ Gioconda Project involved 600 Italian pupils aged between 11 and 17 in producing recommendations on environment and health in their cities, basing on scientific data. During the participatory research action, air quality and noise were monitored inside and outside students’ classrooms, and a questionnaire measuring risk perception and willingness to pay (WTP) was filled.

The process took place in four Italian areas with different socio-economic and environmental pressures: Naples, Ravenna, Taranto and San Miniato (Pisa). In WTP questionnaire section, the pupils were asked how much they were willing to pay to reduce the risk related to air pollution. Those results were compared with the air quality measurements. Logistic regression was performed to investigate whether pupil’s characteristics influence the probability of scope sensitivity. A Tobit regression was used to analyse WTP estimates. A third model included PM10 annual means as covariates, as well as the result of the level of fear linked to the health effects of air pollution.

The higher the mean PM10 was, the lower was the probability that young individuals were willing to spend part of their budget to support environmental policies that reduce the risk of asthma due to air pollution. Children were willing to pay less for health risk reduction with increasing age. The WTP estimates resulted directly affected by the degree of trust in a causal relationship between air pollution and health. Tobit regression didn’t show differences among the areas. The mean WTP for high risk reduction was € 63, while for low risk reduction was € 52.

The results achieved strengthen the relevance of WTP for cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness assessments in children’s environmental health.