



HealthEquity-2020 conference on evidence-based integrated planning to tackle health inequalities at regional level

4 December 2015, Brussels, hosted by the Committee of the Regions

CONFERENCE BRIEFING

THE CHALLENGE

Dealing with health inequalities is not a new challenge. We have more than 30 years of history in this field. Yet, inequalities remain a constant problem despite improvements in data, knowledge, policies, and interventions. Health inequity continues to be both the catalyst and product of unequal economic, social, and environmental conditions, which are inherently unfair, unjust, and avoidable. Current thinking needs revising and the potential for integrated regional policies to help improve the population's health need to be maximised.

HEALTH EQUITY 2020 SOLUTIONS

By working with participating regions to bring available knowledge, data, and good practice into focus locally, the general objective of the HealthEquity-2020 project has been to assist EU regions to develop evidence-based action plans to tackle health inequalities. During its 3 years this project generated resources to assist this work, collected regional case studies and practical examples of how to overcome obstacles and difficulties in order to realise necessary actions. The project developed tools and a comprehensive action learning programme to assist regions to better understand and act upon: (i) where they are starting from (ii) where they want to get to in reducing health inequalities and (iii) how to get there.

All participating regions are seeking to strengthen the credibility of their action plans by (i) making them evidence-based and (ii) integrating identified priorities within established regional development plans. Some of the participating regions will also assess funding options including ESIF 2014-2020 to help address action priorities. Participating regions have validated project outputs & products that will provide them and other EU regions with ongoing support. In order to assist regions to achieve these endpoints an action learning approach was adopted. The project provided specific learning opportunities for the regions to expand their knowledge and skills in order to develop and adopt local or regional action plans that address existing needs and priorities and to build local capacities to support this.

THE AIM OF THIS CONFERENCE

The aim of the conference is to present resources, case studies, and practical examples, and to discuss with participants the key findings in the context of the emerging EU policy and planning. The conference will focus on challenges that EU regions face in seeking to tackle health inequalities through evidence-based action planning. In particular, partner regions will identify immediate benefits they have experienced from taking part in the project and that what obstacles remain in this process. Participants will discuss how to maximise the impact of action planning at regional level, how to engage decision makers in the planning process, and how to link this work to wider regional and national development activities. Financial resources to address regional priorities will also be reviewed with special regard to Structural and Investments Funds and other alternative sources.

FOUNDATIONS OF OUR WORK

In tackling health inequalities a number of key considerations deserve reflection from a regional point of view:

Evidence Adopting an evidence-based approach is a key to develop regional action plans that can deal with socioeconomic health inequalities effectively. Collecting and using evidence should be part of our working culture as it can help us reach informed decisions. The developed HE2020 Toolkit is to assist this evidence-based approach.

Intersectoral work Health inequalities is a cross-cutting issue. Tackling health inequalities requires intersectoral work. Successful collaboration between relevant organisations needs to build on the foundations of necessity and opportunity. Furthermore to be able to set and achieve goals the capacities and structures should be present together with the

established relationships. The strong emphasis on the necessity of a cross-sectoral approach in policy making is a valuable development as it makes more sense to work together to identify local needs and priorities and address these by pooling resources. Nevertheless it can overwhelm targeted communities and groups if we continue to work with multiple funding streams and initiatives, while the organisation often work with 'silo' approaches to governance by sector-specific departments and ministries at different levels. What is the solution to this obstacle?

Collaboration The key is pooling local/regional assets and resources to work together. Organisations need to understand that the collaboration can help them pursue their own core business more efficiently or effectively even if it is not directly linked to health, meanwhile tackling jointly a multifaceted problem. To be successful and overcome difficulties, the vision, commitment and networks of potential agencies, partners in the collaborative work should be understood by all parties involved to be able to address issues of common concerns.

Regional Action Groups Regional (or Local) Action Groups are good means to bring together organisations from different sectors where cooperation needs to be driven from senior level. Key stakeholders and interest groups have to be addressed to recognise the different and overlapping areas of interest and perceived needs for which an action group is an ideal form of work. Strategic planning that involves all relevant parties and creates dialogues between the actors is likely to be more successful when it needs to be adopted and financed.

Integrated planning To reduce health inequalities evidence-based action plans and enabling cross-sectoral cooperation need to be adopted. One guarantee of successful implementation of actions is taking an integrated approach by incorporating specific, health inequality focused action plans into wider regional and/or national development plans in order to promote and ensure synergies in decision making and funding. This means that higher-level decision-making processes can validate regional plans. Trying to find ways how to get those priorities integrated into a regional or even a national planning cycle is one of the biggest challenges in this work.

REGIONS IN THE FOCUS

This conference is organised to share what we have learned together with the regions, with professionals, researchers, policy-makers, and politicians working at different administrative levels. A valued first step was accepting that each participating region had its own starting point. Now, we would like to share how far they have got with this mutual work by presenting and discussing valid examples of realistic, viable, and adopted action plans to deal with health inequalities at regional and national level.

REGISTRATION IS ONLINE

<http://www.healthequity2020.eu/pages/conference/online-registration-healthequity-2020-conference/>

There is no registration fee for this conference. Registration deadline is 30 November 2015.

CONFERENCE VENUE

The event will be hosted by the Committee of the Regions

Rue Belliard 99-101 B - 1040 Brussels, Room JDE 51, and lunch will be served at 5th floor, Atrium 5.



Committee of the Regions

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

Ms Edit Sebestyén, Health ClusterNet (edit@healthclusternet.eu)

PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

Lead and associated partners: University of Maastricht, Department of International Health, The Netherlands (Action learning workshop series & Capacity building support); Health ClusterNET, UK (Project management, Dissemination & Evaluation); Erasmus MC, Department of Public Health, The Netherlands (Translational evidence & policy); Medical University of Lodz, Poland (Pilot actions); Centre for Health and Development Murska Sobota, Slovenia (Pilot actions). **Collaborating regions:** Vysočina, Czech Republic; Northern Great Plain, Hungary; Trenčín, Slovakia; Klaipėda, Lithuania; Stara Zagora, Bulgaria; Covasna, Romania; Latvia; Estonia, Tallin; Region Skåne, Sweden; Welsh Government, UK; Andalusia, Spain. The project works also with a group of organisations functioning as the [Project Advisory Board](#).

www.healthequity2020.eu

PROGRAMME

| 0900-0930 | | REGISTRATION |
|---|---|---|
| 0930-0950 | Welcome | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Witold Stępień, Marshal of Łódzkie Region and Member of the Committee of the Regions - Anthony Buchanan, Vice-Chair of Commission of Natural Resources, European Committee of the Regions; Councillor East Renfrewshire Council, UK - Dr. Jonathan Watson, HE2020 Project director, Executive director, Health ClusterNet, UK |
| 0950-1020 | KEYNOTE SPEECH Health Inequalities in focus for 35 years – Challenges today & the role of the regions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prof. dr. Johan Mackenbach, Head of Department, Public Health, Erasmus MC |
| 1020-1040 | Setting the context: The HealthEquity-2020 project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prof. dr. Helmut Brand, Project leader, Head of Department, International Health, University of Maastricht, The Netherlands, Jean Monnet Professor of European Public Health |
| I. ADOPTING EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH IN REGIONAL PLANNING TO TACKLE HEALTH INEQUALITIES | | |
| | | INTRODUCTORY NOTES |
| 1040-1100 | HE2020 Toolkit to assist regions in evidence-based action planning to tackle health inequalities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Mariëlle Beenackers, Postdoctoral researcher, Erasmus MC |
| | | PANEL DISCUSSION 1 |
| 1100-1200 | <p>Moderator:</p> <p>Dr. Caroline Costongs, Managing Director, EUROHEALTHNET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health Inequalities and regions - Importance of evidence in the planning process - Experiences with data collection at regional level - The HE2020 Toolkit – What does it offer? <p>Q & A from the audience</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prof. dr. Helmut Brand, Project leader, Head of Department, International Health, University of Maastricht; Jean Monnet Professor of European Public Health - Dr. Mariëlle Beenackers, Postdoctoral researcher, Erasmus MC - Mikołaj Gurdała, Director, Office for Research, Strategies and Development, Medical University of Lodz, HE2020 Pilot region: Lodzkie region, Poland - Kristine Karsa, Senior officer, EU Financing, Planning and Control Unit, Department of Budget and Investments, Ministry of Health, HE2020 Collaborating partner, Latvia - Peter Bez nec, Project manager, Centre for Health and Development, Murska Sobota, Slovenia, HE2020 Pilot region - Dr. Sumina Azam, Consultant in Public Health, Policy, Research and International Development Directorate, Public Health Wales, UK |

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| 1200-1250 | LUNCH | |
| II. DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSFUL ADOPTION OF REGIONAL ACTION PLANS TO TACKLE HEALTH INEQUALITIES | | |
| | INTRODUCTORY NOTES | |
| 1250-1310 | Action learning and capacity building process to develop regional action plans to tackle health inequalities | - Dr. Kai Michelsen , Assistant Professor, Department of International Health, Maastricht University |
| | CASE STUDY EXAMPLES What HE2020 achieved in the regions? Valid examples of realistic, viable, adopted action plans | |
| 1310-1330 | <i>Case study example 1</i> Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approach for Reducing Health Disparities: Klaipeda District, Lithuania case | - Neringa Tarvydienė , Head of Klaipeda District Municipality Public Health Bureau, HE2020 Collaborating region, Klaipėda district, Lithuania |
| 1330-1350 | <i>Case study example 2</i> Action plan for tackling social & health problems in Covasna County | - Kinga Hubbes , Project manager, Caritas Alba Iulia (NGO), HE2020 Collaborating region: Covasna county, Romania |
| | PANEL DISCUSSION 2 | |
| 1350-1450 | <p>Moderator:</p> <p>Tatjana Buzeti, Ministry of Health, Slovenia; WHO H2020 Consultant and leading member of the RHN, WHO Collaborating Centre for SDH Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Action learning experiences - The role of intersectoral work in action planning – The Regional Action Groups - Integrated planning - Synergies in regional decision making - Health in all policies - Social dialogue – involving NGOs, civic groups <p>Q & A from the audience</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Kai Michelsen, Assistant Professor, Department of International Health, Maastricht University - Neringa Tarvydienė, Head of Klaipeda District Municipality Public Health Bureau, HE2020 Collaborating region, Klaipėda district, Lithuania - Kinga Hubbes, Project manager, Caritas Alba Iulia (NGO), HE2020 Collaborating region: Covasna county, Romania - Przemyslaw Kardas, Head of Department, First Department of Family Medicine, Medical University of Lodz, HE2020 Pilot region: Lodzkie region, Poland - Dr. Alberto Fernández, Junta de Andalusia, Spain, Public Health Department, Regional Government; Andalusian School of Public Health, Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health |

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| 1450-1520 | COFFEE BREAK | |
| III. INTEGRATED PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT: NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES | | |
| | INTRODUCTORY NOTES | |
| 1520-1540 | The role of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in tackling health inequalities | - Dr. Andor Ürmös , Policy analyst, European Commission Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy, Competence Centre H1, Inclusive Growth, Territorial and Urban Development |
| 1540-1600 | Policy Matrix – Thinking “outside the health box” To fit health within the European Structural and Investments Funds (ESIF) 2014-2020 | - Oana Neagu , Researcher, Maastricht University |
| | PANEL DISCUSSION 3 | |
| 1600-1645 | <p>Moderator:</p> <p>Dr. Jonathan Watson, HE2020 Project director, Executive director, Health ClusterNet, UK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable development (with improved quality of life as the policy goal) - Integrated planning (strategic principles, sector and place-based projects) - Sustainable returns on investment (disinvest to reinvest, maximise and blend funding options, maximise public added value) - Future support for regions <p>Q & A from the audience</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prof. dr. Johan Mackenbach, Head of Department, Public Health, Erasmus MC - Dr. Andor Ürmös, Policy analyst, European Commission Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy, Competence Centre H1, Inclusive Growth, Territorial and Urban Development - Edmund Skorvaga, Head of Department, EU Programmes, Ministry of Health, Slovakia - Tatjana Buzeti, Ministry of Health, Slovenia |
| 1645-1700 | Critical next steps to be done at international level - Agreement between key organizations | Prof. dr. Helmut Brand , Project leader, Head of Department, International Health, University of Maastricht, The Netherlands, Jean Monnet Professor of European Public Health |
| 1700 | CLOSE OF THE EVENT | |

This event arises from the project HEALTH EQUITY 2020 which has received funding from the European Union, in the framework of the Health Programme



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