Closing the Gap
Strategies for action to tackle Health Inequalities in Europe
(2004 – 2007)

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EuroHealthNet: who are we?

- European network of national and regional agencies accountable for public health, health promotion and disease prevention

- 30 agencies in 25 European countries

- Mission: to contribute to a healthier Europe with greater equity within and between countries

- Office based in Brussels
EuroHealthNet: what do we do?

**Advocacy**
- Partnerships
- Health across policies
- Inform policy makers
- Communication

= *Raise awareness*

**Project Outcomes**
- Evidence
- Sharing good practices among Member States
- Recommendations

= *Implement*
3 European Projects on Health and Equity

1. The role of health promotion in tackling health inequalities (1999-2001) – DG Sanco


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- Aim: to identify policies and HP interventions across Europe that address health inequalities

- High Level Round Table BE Presidency Dec 2001

8 recommendations to policy makers:

- National Health Inequality Targets
- Addressing health determinants in other policy areas
- Equal access to Health Services
- Working at the local level
  - Monitoring
  - Health Impact Assessment
  - Evaluation
  - Dissemination of good practice
2. Trans-national exchange project on health and social inclusion (2003-2005)
National agencies in 13 countries collected 52 good practices in the health field that address socially excluded groups.

Methods include:
-outreach work,
-empowerment,
-intercultural mediators
-working in (self-help) groups etc

- Co-funded by DG Sanco
- Contract holder is BZgA: the Federal Centre for Health Education in Köln, Germany
- Focus on knowledge transfer, action and implementation (as far as possible)
22 European Partners

- **Czech Republic**: National Institute of Public Health
- **Denmark**: National Institute of Public Health
- **England**: NICE
- **Estonia**: National Institute for Health Development
- **Finland**: STAKES
- **France**: INPES
- **Germany**: Federal Centre for Health Education
- **Greece**: Institute of Social and Preventative Medicine
- **Hungary**: National Institute for Health Development
- **Ireland**: Department of Health and Children
- **Italy**: Experimental Centre for Health Education
- **Latvia**: Health Promotion State Agency
- **Lithuania**: National Centre for HP and Education
- **The Netherlands**: NIGZ
- **Norway**: Research Centre for Health Promotion
- **Poland**: Polish Society of Health Education
- **Scotland**: NHS Health Scotland
- **Slovakia**: Public Health Authority in Travna
- **Slovenia**: National Institute of Public Health
- **Spain**: Ministry of Health and Consumer Protection
- **Sweden**: Swedish National Institute of Public Health
- **Wales**: Wales Centre for Health
- **Observers**: Switzerland, Austria and Belgium
Aims and outcomes:

- consensus on a definition of tackling health inequalities
  - declaration

- analysis of EU policies that impact on the health gap
  - strategies for action at EU level (Report)

- a situation analysis of tackling health inequalities in each of the 22 countries
  - key strategies for action at national level (National Reports)

- online Directory of good practices which is part of the Health Inequalities Portal
National level

- National Situation Analysis
  - completed by national focus groups
  - a review of national level policies, structures, monitoring and key actors

- 3 types of HI strategies
  - Specific policies on reducing health inequalities
  - Equity is prominent within general public health policy
  - Wider social justice policies that might impact on HI (NAPs/incl)
Approaches to HI Policy Frameworks

- Legislative commitments
  (e.g. Greece, Germany)
- Explicit goals in national policy documents
  (e.g. Denmark, Italy, Sweden, Poland)
- Quantitative targets
  - WHO (e.g. Czech Republic, Latvia)
  - Fairly general (e.g. Finland, Netherlands)
  - Fairly sophisticated, with established frameworks for monitoring (Ireland, UK)
Types of national action

- Actions that address social determinants, but with no distinctive focus on HI (e.g. Cyprus, Greece)
- Some actions are in place, but relatively modest (e.g. Belgium, France)
- Equity features in general public health action plans (e.g. Hungary, Sweden, Finland)
- Well integrated and coordinated action plans to tackle HI (e.g. Ireland, UK)
Issues for consideration

- Encouraging signs; much wider awareness now than few years ago
- Documentation versus implementation
- There is no single right way to reduce HI
- Think more about the gradient
- There is limited available evidence on effectiveness – are current policy responses appropriate?
- Better monitoring and evaluation is essential
National Situation Analysis (Report & Portal)

1. Evidence and Evaluation
2. Awareness raising (policy, public, media)
3. Working across policy sectors & HIA
4. Support for Regions

National Strategies for Action
European Level

- Aim: to identify and analyse EU policies that impact on health inequalities
  - *Regional policy - Structural Funds*
  - *CAP*
  - *Social & Economic Policy*
- Examples – difficult to assess causality
- Impact on HI: from a European or national perspective?
- Report / final event in Brussels / Portal
Local level: Good Practices Database

- Currently 19 good practices submitted (Czech R, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Poland, Sweden)
- Online submission & Quality Check
- Summer 2006

Selection Criteria:
- Clear aim is to reduce HI
- Effective
- Ongoing
- Fulfill 3/11 quality elements
Next Steps: International exchanges

- 3rd Business Meeting in Brussels (29-30 March 2006) with the 4 workshops to discuss in-depth key themes

- 4th Business Meeting in Berlin (end of 2006) to finalise the national and European Strategies for Action reports

- 3rd Advisory Committee Meeting (Autumn 2006) Prof H. Graham, E. Ziglio, Dr. A. Mielck, Prof. M. Whitehead, Dr J. Benach

- Concluding event during German Presidency, Brussels 7-8 May 2007
23 National Seminars on HI

- To clarify EU policies
- To demonstrate the country’s position in the European context re: HI
- To present the targeted *Strategies for Action*
- To demonstrate the use of the Portal and Good practices database
- Exchange of speakers
- Invite EuroThine researchers
Lastly…

- We welcome the Expert Group and we look forward to working together

- More info, reports and contact details are available on:
  - www.health-inequalities.org
  - www.eurohealthnet.org
Welcome to the European Health Inequalities Portal!

This portal is a unique space in which you can find recent examples of interventions and policies designed to reduce health inequalities in the countries of the European Union.

The portal is a host to:
- Database of Good Practice to Reduce Health Inequalities,
- Country Profiles listing the main policies, actors and tools developed to deal with health inequalities on a national level,
- EU Policy Section containing Case Studies that show how EU Policies and Programmes can affect health inequalities at the national level, and
- Relevant links related to the issue of health inequalities.

The Health Inequalities Portal is the tool to use when planning local projects, understanding the policy context of these interventions and/or conducting exploratory research in the field of health inequalities.

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