

Closing the Gap

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

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Two main goals:

Information exchange



Implementation

- Transfer of knowledge across countries
- Sharing good practices
- Portal

- Policy Tool-kit
- Action Plans per country
- National seminars
- Raise awareness

Consortium: 22 Partners



Czech Republic: National Institute of Public Health

Denmark: National Institute of Public Health

England: Department of Health

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: Institute of Public Health in Ireland

Italy: Experimental Centre for Health Education

Latvia: Health Promotion State Agency

Lithuania: National Centre for HP and Education

Netherlands: NIGZ

Norway: Research Centre for Health Promotion

Poland: Polish Society of Health Education

Portugal: Ministry of Health

Scotland: NHS Health Scotland

Slovakia: Public Health Authority in Travna

Spain: Ministry of Health and Consumer Protection

Sweden: Swedish National Institute of Public Health

Wales: Wales Centre for Health

Observers: Switzerland, Austria and Belgium

Consortium activities so far:

- Position paper on tackling health inequalities
- Situation analysis in each of the 22 countries
- Database of good practices (90) across Europe
- Ongoing monitoring of EU policies that impact on the health gap (Regional policy, CAP, Social policy)
- Portal: www.health-inequalities.eu

www.health-inequalities.eu

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Closing the Gap: Home - Arcor AG & Co. KG". The address bar shows the URL: <http://www.health-inequalities.org/?uid=46131dc9cd362da7b589f7a3d7c0f7e88id=home>. The browser interface includes a menu bar (Datei, Bearbeiten, Ansicht, Favoriten, Extras, ?), a toolbar with navigation buttons (Zurück, Suchen, Favoriten), and a search bar.

The website content features a blue header with the "Closing the Gap" logo and the tagline "Strategies for Action to tackle Health Inequalities in Europe". Logos for "European Partners for EQUITY IN HEALTH", "EuroHealthNet", and "BZgA" are displayed. A search bar and a language selector (English) are present.

The main content area is titled "Welcome to the European Health Inequalities Portal!". It includes a navigation menu on the left with items like "Home", "About the Project", "European Partners", "Good-Practice Directory", "National Level Policies", "EU Policy", "Publications", "Links", "Service", and "Your Feedback".

The central text reads: "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." It lists the portal's contents: a database of good practice, country profiles, EU policy case studies, and relevant links.

A sidebar on the right contains a "Good Practice - Search Navigator" and a "Featured Project Example" section. The featured project is titled "Social and professional activation of the disabled people" (Działanie na rzecz aktywizacji zawodowej i społecznej osób niepełnosprawnych). It describes social and occupational activation of disabled people to help integrate them and fight against learned helplessness.

The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows several open applications, including "Business meeting 21-2...", "Microsoft Excel - date...", "Closing the Gap (1) at ...", and "Koordinationsaussch...". The system tray shows the date and time as 13:20.

National Level Policies

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National Level Policies: Hungary

- **Key Policy Documents**
- **Key Actors**
- **Key Policy Tools**
- **Other Publications**
- **Policy Interest for collaboration**
- **National database of good practice**
- **Barriers to making health inequalities more of an important issue**



Country Profile

Hungary is one of the eight new EU member states of Central and Eastern Europe. Since it has become a democracy in 1990, it has followed patterns typical for a transition society and economy. Income inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient is 0.269 where 0 = perfect equality and 1= perfect inequality (United Nations Development Programme, 2004).

The national public health programme (see section below) is based on the values of solidarity and the reduction of inequality. It appreciates the importance of socio-economic determinants of health and explicitly states that reduction of health inequalities within the population is the aim of country's health policy.

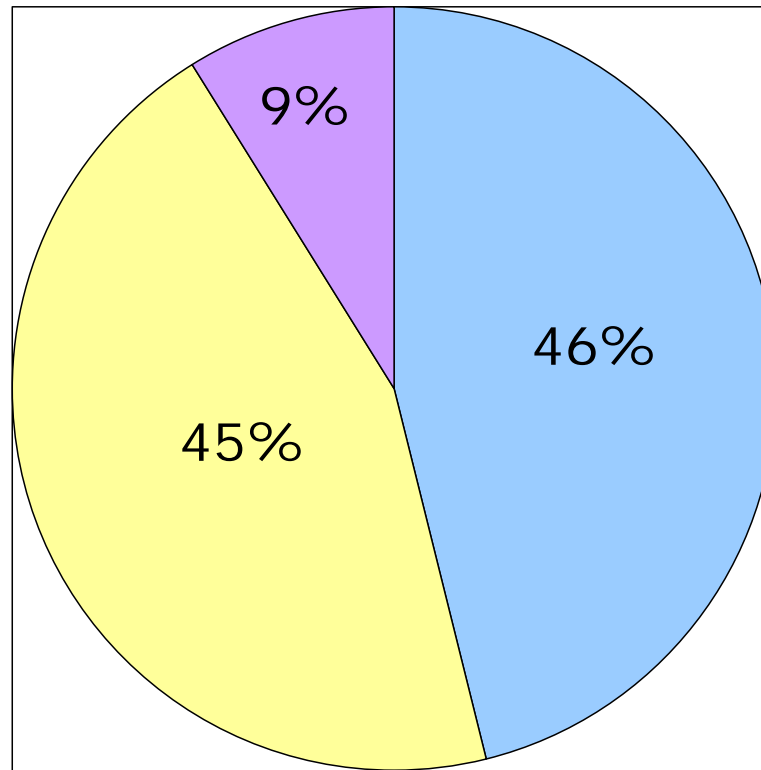
Furthermore special attention is paid to health inequalities between the native Hungarian population and the Romany minority, who experience far worse health status and health outcomes. Due to evolving Hungarian social policy and the pressure from international organisations, the Roma health and welfare has been addressed and improving.

Apart from inequalities between different socio-economic groups there are marked differences in health between the Hungarian regions.

It is interesting to note that where the public opinion is concerned the debate on health inequalities

National policies

- Most countries are committed to reduce inequality
- Specific HI policy OR part of overall PH policy



- general goals to reduce health inequalities
- specific goals with quantitative targets
- no reference to health equity, but addressing wider determinants

Policy Tool-kit to draft HI strategies

4 key areas:

1. Awareness raising
2. Working across policy sectors
3. Support for regions
4. Evidence and evaluation

Strategic plans for action
National seminars (12-15 February 2007)

Strategic plans: observations

- No 'single way' to tackle complex problem of health inequalities (HI)
- Tackling HI means addressing the 'socio-economic determinants of health'
- Both 'upstream' (addressing the causes) and 'downstream' (treating effects through social and medical care) approaches necessary
- Close cooperation with other policy areas
- Long term approach –but highlight short term gains

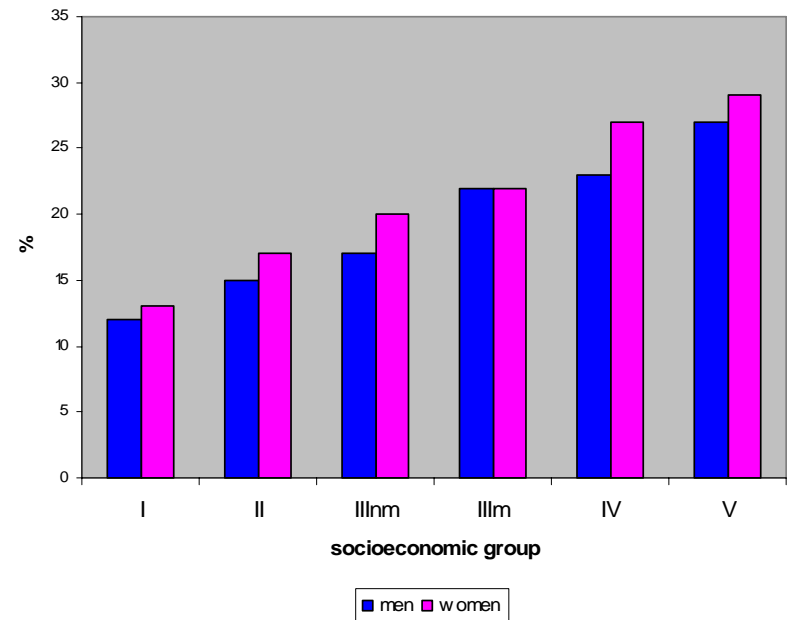
Strategic plans: Tackling the health gradient?

Tackling health gradient

=

population approach to improve health of all social sectors + stronger focus on the health of most disadvantage, to ensure their health improves at greater and faster rate

Currently: Norway, Finland



Good Practice Directory

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(Bydelsrusken)

Environment Task Force (Bydelsrusken)



Detailed View

Provider

City Part Grünerløkka, Oslo
(Bydel Grünerløkka)

Brief profile

Employment for vulnerable groups, focussing on improving the environment.

Summary of the intervention



It is a low barrier working method for people, among them young people with immigrant background, and even Norwegians with similar social problems. The participants have either been into drug abuse and/or are drop outs from school. Our task is to make participants committed to participation their daily tasks. They work 7-8 hours every day, and the tasks vary: keeping streets clean from rubbish; helping older people from Elderly Institutions; working with a skilled carpenter in preschools; working in a carpentry workshop, cleaning graffities from local Government properties, walls and streets.

All participants gather in the morning, to meet socially. This contributes to icebreaking between participants and is crucial in order to motivate the participants for their tasks.

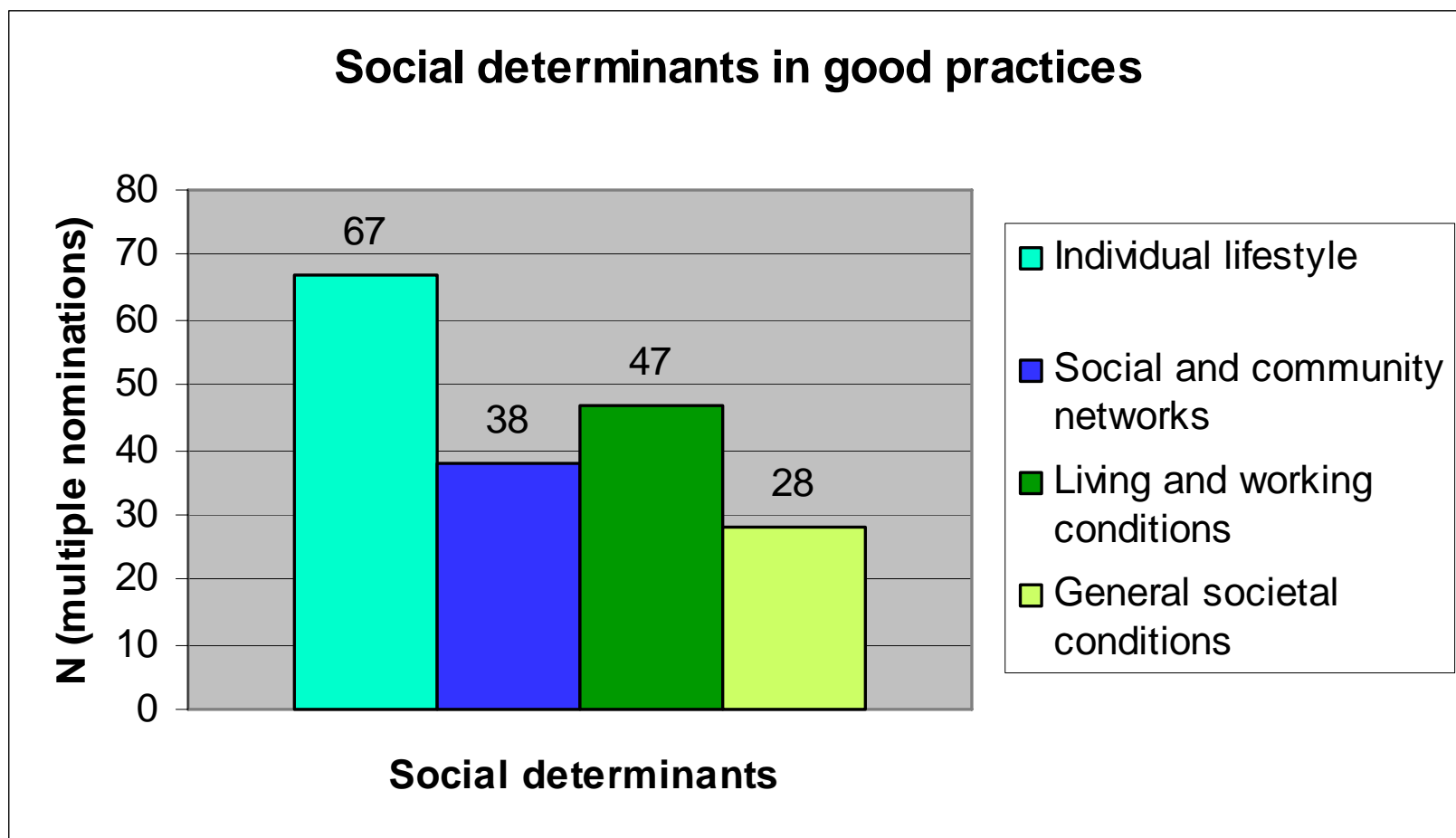


Good Practice: Methods

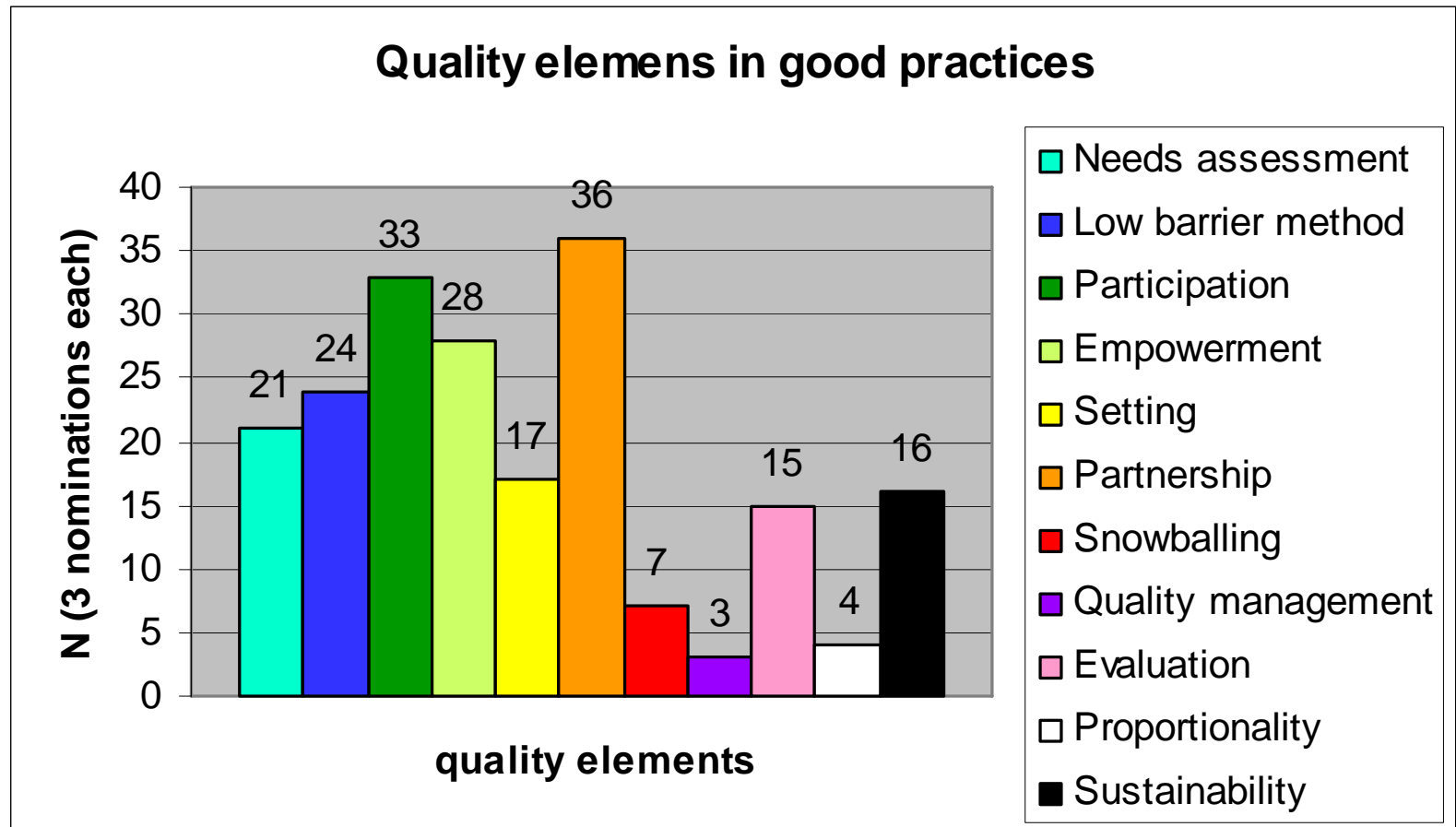
- Focus group per partner country
- Inclusion criteria
 - Tackling health inequalities; socially disadvantaged
 - Initiation/cooperation of health sector
 - Social determinants
 - Effectiveness
 - Quality
- Standardised assessment and online entry
- Quality check - N= 90
- Internet search by country, text, terms
- Detailed project information



Types of good practices I



Types of good practices II



EU policies

Closing the Gap: Introduction - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address: http://artemis.bzga.de/closingthegap/?uid=b28ca79c44fe69cb792c6ce3cc0f71e&id=Seite184

European Partners for EQUITY IN HEALTH

CLOSING THE GAP
Strategies for Action to tackle Health Inequalities

Search Go Help | Sitemap | Print

You are here: > EU Policy > Introduction

Introduction

The European Union (EU) is founded upon the idea that political and economic integration will lead to greater prosperity, generate peace and security, and strengthen social development. The existence of increasing levels of health inequalities undermines that goal. It runs counter to those core values and the objectives outlined in the Treaties of the EU.

Good health is a driver of sustainable economic development. Therefore co-operation to reduce health inequalities between and within EU Member States is of paramount importance to achieving the goal that was set by the Lisbon Council of EU government leaders in 2000: "to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion."

The role of the EU

While reducing health inequalities is in line with the values and goals of the EU, it is primarily up to EU Member States to introduce measures to achieve this, since the principle of subsidiarity persists in the areas of health and social policy. This means that the EU has shared (rather than exclusive) competence in these areas. While the EU can establish common objectives regarding health and social policy, Member States are free to achieve these objectives through a tax and social welfare policy mix of their own choice.

Health determinants

EU decisions in areas where the EU has exclusive as well as shared competence can affect economic, social and environmental conditions within its Member States. As the diagram below illustrates, health is influenced by a variety of different factors or determinants. EU level decisions in different policy areas can have a significant impact on these determinants. For example, decisions made with respect to the Internal Market can support or undermine national public health objectives, while financing available through the EU funds or programmes can be applied in a number of areas to reinforce national efforts to tackle health

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This project has received funding from the European Commission

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Internet

Email alert about "Closing the Gap" news

The "Closing the Gap" e-mail alert informs about the latest news and developments on and around the portal every four to six weeks. [Please subscribe here.](#)

Download the Newsletter: Tackling Health Inequalities in the EU.

Different networks and organisations working at the EU level in fields of e.g. poverty, environmental health, pharmaceuticals and agricultural policy discuss, in their own words, how they are contributing to a reduction of health inequalities.

Tackling Health Inequalities and Social Exclusion in Europe

How do health, poverty and social exclusion interrelate, what are the EU level and EU Member States doing to address these problems, and how can the health field contribute to solutions? These questions were at the core of a three-year project (2003-2005) that was coordinated by EuroHealthNet in collaboration with the Netherlands Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (phase 1) and NHS Health Scotland (phase 2), and co-funded by the European Commission. More information about the project and its results, including the outcomes of the final 'In Good Health' conference that took place in December 2005 is available on the EuroHealthNet website. [Click here to view the final project and conference recommendations.](#)

EU and Health Inequalities

Tackling Health Inequalities:

- In line with EU Treaty, which establishes justice, solidarity and equality as common values.
- Fits into EU's Lisbon Agenda - though important to make the case!
- Is one of the cross-cutting themes of EU Public Health Strategies and Programmes
- Should be taken into account in the work of other EC Policy Areas through Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

EU and health Inequalities

- EU can support national efforts to tackle health inequalities through:
 - Rules and legislation
 - Structural funds
 - European projects

- At the same time: it is important to ensure that rules coming from the EU do not undermine national efforts to tackle health inequalities.

National Seminars

- 12-16th February: European Health Equity Week
- National seminars taking place in 17 countries. Involving policy makers and health promotion practitioners
- Objectives:
 - Raise awareness on health inequalities
 - Discuss / seek agreement on the strategic initiatives

■ Closing Conference Brussels on 8 May 2007

- 150 senior policy makers and experts from across Europe and EU institutions
- Exchange on the outcomes of the national strategic initiatives
- Conclusions of project & **final publication**
- Declaration on how to tackle health inequalities

GOOD PRACTICE DIRECTORY
EUROPEAN UNION POLICIES
NATIONAL LEVEL POLICIES
WHAT ARE HEALTH INEQUALITIES?

www.health-inequalities.eu



CLOSING THE GAP
Strategies for Action to tackle Health Inequalities

The new European Health Inequalities Portal is a unique space that provides information on what countries throughout Europe are doing to tackle health inequalities. The Portal includes:

- Recent examples of what can and is being done at the local, national and supranational level to reduce health inequalities in the EU
- Links to important resources, policy documents and organisations in the field
- Contacts of professionals throughout Europe working on this issue

If you are involved in policy issues related to equity, a public health and health promotion professional working on health inequalities, or simply interested in learning more about this important matter, visit the Portal and discover what it has to offer you!