

Health in All Policies

Seizing opportunities, implementing policies

Edited by
Kimmo Leppo
Eeva Ollila
Sebastián Peña
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Sarah Cook



MINISTRY OF
SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND HEALTH
Finland



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Contents

Foreword by the Prime Minister of Finland	vii
Foreword by the Director-General of WHO	ix
Acknowledgements	xi
List of tables, boxes and figures	xiii
List of case studies	xv
List of abbreviations	xvii

Part I **1**

Chapter 1: Introduction to Health in All Policies and the analytical framework of the book	3
<i>Eeva Ollila, Fran Baum, Sebastián Peña</i>	
Chapter 2: History of HiAP	25
<i>Fran Baum, Eeva Ollila, Sebastián Peña</i>	
Chapter 3: Health and development: challenges and pathways to HiAP in low-income countries	43
<i>Sarah Cook, Shufang Zhang, Ilcheong Yi</i>	
Chapter 4: Prioritizing health equity	63
<i>Michael Marmot, Jessica Allen</i>	
Chapter 5: Globalization and national policy space for health and a HiAP approach	81
<i>Meri Koivusalo, Ronald Labonte, Suwit Wibulpolprasert, Churnrurtai Kanchanachitra</i>	

Part II **103**

Chapter 6: Promoting equity from the start through early child development and Health in All Policies (ECD-HiAP)	105
<i>Raúl Mercer, Clyde Hertzman, Helia Molina, Ziba Vaghri</i>	
Chapter 7: Work, health and employment	125
<i>Jorma Rantanen, Joan Benach, Carles Muntaner, Tsuyoshi Kawakami, Rokho Kim</i>	
Chapter 8: Promoting mental health: a crucial component of all public policy	163
<i>Rachel Jenkins, Alberto Minoletti</i>	

Chapter 9: Agriculture, food and nutrition <i>Stuart Gillespie, Florence Egal, Martina Park</i>	183
Chapter 10: Tobacco or health <i>Douglas Bettcher, Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva</i>	203
Chapter 11: Alcohol <i>Peter Anderson, Sally Casswell, Charles Parry, Jürgen Rehm</i>	225
Chapter 12: Lessons from environment and health for HiAP <i>Carlos Dora, Michaela Pfeiffer, Francesca Racioppi</i>	255
Chapter 13: Making development assistance for health more effective through HiAP <i>Ravi Ram</i>	287
Part III	307
Chapter 14: The health sector's role in HiAP <i>Kimmo Leppo, Viroj Tangcharoensathien</i>	309
Chapter 15: Lessons for policy-makers <i>Kimmo Leppo, Eeva Ollila, Sebastián Peña, Matthias Wismar, Sarah Cook</i>	325
Glossary	339
List of contributors	343

Foreword by the Prime Minister of Finland

The aim of my government is to create a caring and successful Finland. The government is committed to act with determination in order to develop and reinforce the basic structures of the welfare society.

The government has three main priorities: a reduction of poverty, inequality and social exclusion; the consolidation of public finances; and enhancement of sustainable economic growth, employment and competitiveness. At a time of austerity, and with an ageing population structure, achievement of these goals is challenging and requires an input from all of us.

Health is a human right and a central element of well-being. Health is also an essential prerequisite for the achievement of our governmental goals.

One of our major concerns is to prolong the working life: to ensure that our youth enters work as soon as possible; that we have a healthy, motivated and capable workforce; and that even those close to retirement age maintain their ability to work. We have made major efforts across sectors to prevent social exclusion of young adults, to maintain the work capacity of those outside the workforce and to facilitate the attainment of employment. Health has an intrinsic link to the ability to work: it plays a core role in addressing poverty and social exclusion, and enhances our potential for economic growth and competitiveness. The other side of the coin must not be ignored: we need to ensure that there are employment opportunities for all and that employment conditions and workplaces promote health and prevent ill-health.

Most public policies have the potential to influence health and health equity, either positively or negatively, and many of our societal goals cannot be achieved without a healthy and well-educated population. Finland has a long tradition of working across administrative sectors, and structures and processes have been developed to accomplish this. Open and transparent policy-making is a foundation for good public policies and adequate resources for implementation and monitoring are essential. An educated and well-informed population forms a basis for functional democracy.

We need a good knowledge base to have evidence-informed policy-making. As regards the Health in All Policies, we need assistance from our Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, as well as the institutes subordinate to it, on how best to incorporate health considerations into policy-making in order to reach our goals as a whole, to enhance well-being, and to improve health and reduce inequity.

My government has made an explicit commitment to promote well-being and health as well as to reduce inequality in all its decision-making. In times of austerity we may select slightly different tools than in good economic times to improve health and health equity. The current government has moved towards health- and environment-based taxation.

We are living in a globalized world which makes us all very dependent on one another. Policy-making takes place at all levels, from global to regional, national to local. Opportunities and challenges, as well as proposed solutions, transcend boundaries. We must aim at anticipating opportunities and threats, so that our efforts – including norms, standards and regulations – are always up to date. We need to share our knowledge and experiences on how best to make good policies that enhance our goals and objectives, and make our societies more just and our populations happier and healthier. This book serves the purpose of sharing experiences around the world. I hope that politicians and policy-makers across sectors in all continents will find it useful and inspirational for their own work.

Jyrki Katainen
Prime Minister of Finland

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