



*“Health is not only the responsibility of the citizen,
but of society as a whole”*

*“Health is everywhere; it can be influenced by all policies
and can be used for all policies”*

*“A radical reorientation in approaches to ensuring good
and equitable population health and well-being is required,
which engages a wide range of sectors and actors”*

Health for All Policies

*“Improving overall population health and wellbeing is a clear
‘win-win’ for all. Healthier populations possess more potential
to foster greater long term workforce productivity,
contribute to safer environments, ward off the threat of poverty,
and lead to more inclusive, equitable societies”*

*“The current economic crisis is an opportunity to strengthen
collaborative work for health and well-being, since it provides an
impetus to change our way of working, think creatively,
and restructure the use of resources for more strategic action”*



Health *for All* Policies

Health is everybody's business. It improves workforce productivity, increases capacity to learn, strengthens families and communities, supports sustainable habitats and environments, and contributes to safety, poverty reduction and social security. Reducing the incidence of people suffering from illness and disease is key to improving the overall quality of life in Europe and to contributing to economic growth and prosperity.

Clever health campaigns and initiatives developed and implemented by the health sector are however not enough to encourage people to adopt healthier lifestyles and behaviours. For example, it is difficult for a person to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables and to exercise more, when processed foods are less expensive and easier to obtain or when urban environments are crowded, unsafe and polluted.

All sectors have a role to play in ensuring that governments provide their citizens with the best possible quality of life. Causes of ill-health that lay outside the scope of the health sector need to be tackled, and it is crucial to develop, maintain and strengthen cross-sectoral collaborations. Health is everywhere; it can be influenced by all policies and can be used for all policies.

Working Together *for Health and Well-being*

All policy sectors are to a certain extent confronted with the necessity to change their way of thinking to more efficient approaches and "joined-up" working. This offers significant opportunity and potential to improve health and well-being, as new approaches, creative thinking and innovation can be important imperatives for working together to achieve common goals.

There are several key elements that must be in place to facilitate successful cross-sectoral collaborations. Strong leadership at government and organizational level in terms of relevant mandates and regulations will help to engage others for health and well-being. Well informed, committed people that champion the approach are required to steer cross-sectoral processes. Professionals need to adopt strong communications, relationship building and negotiation skills, and solid management skills to build competencies and trust amongst the different actors involved.

Action Points

In order to generate more systematic efforts of collaborative working, several action points need to be considered:

- Policy makers, civil servants and professionals from a wide range of sectors must be encouraged to **identify those opportunities to engage** that best suit their specific needs, priorities and competences, and to exploit these by developing cross-sectoral approaches.
- Sectors should develop and plan comprehensive strategies, which are feasible and supported by pooled and sustained resources, have **common, clear and realistic objectives**, and are underpinned by evaluation processes to measure outcomes.
- **Understanding the language, culture and priorities of other sectors** and being able to identify what is in it for them (the win-wins), is crucial for a successful cross-sectoral collaboration.
- Actors involved in cross-sectoral initiatives must clearly **identify what success looks like**, and acknowledge that they may perhaps have to give headline credit to another sector or need to make compromises.
- **Collaborative approaches to data collection and analysis** are required to try and evaluate health outcomes from actions taken within other policy domains, and to identify the added value that 'health' brings to other sectors.
- **Long term approaches** are crucial for building up and maintaining strong relationships and establishing structures that facilitate cross-sectoral approaches.
- At the same time, maintaining a momentum in efforts to expand approaches and to convince politicians, policy makers and organizational leads of the need for action, also requires **short term evidence of success**.
- Change is not easy as actors often have vested interests in existing approaches and structures. Strong, convincing, and strategic messages and approaches need to be developed to **overcome this resistance to change**.





This leaflet was produced as part of the Crossing Bridges project (Jan 2011 – June 2012), which is an EU co-funded initiative that aims to address the question of how the health sector could work more closely with other sectors to ensure that their policies and actions contribute to improved health and well-being.

The following documents and resources were produced as part of the Crossing Bridges project:

- 3 Case Study reports on cross-sectoral collaborations in the areas of: Transport/Planning and Health, Education and Health and the EU School Fruit Scheme Programme.
- A Capacity Building Training module for public health professionals to further improve or initiate cross-sectoral collaborations.
- An overview report setting out different strategies, approaches and entry points for cross-sectoral work, useful tools and mechanisms and practical examples of initiatives.

Coordinator

EuroHealthNet

Project Partners

- Gesundheit Österreich GmbH, Austria
- Flemish Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Belgium
- National Institute of Public Health, Czech Republic
- NHS Sefton, England
- Federal Centre for Health Education, Germany
- Institute of Preventive Medicine, Environmental & Occupational Health, Greece
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- Public Health Wales, Wales

For further information or to download the publications, please visit:

www.health-inequalities.eu



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