



Baltic Sea Region policy recommendations on cross sectoral urban policies

The starting point of Healthy Boost:

The Healthy Boost project gathers together fourteen partners from diverse levels of local governance and from different sectors, representing seven countries in the Baltic Sea Region, with the aim of strengthening local authorities' capacities to improve the health and well-being of residents with the help of cross-sectoral cooperation – a collaborative effort in which partners from different sectors (public, private and non-profit sectors) pool their resources to provide joint solutions for common benefit, and address problems and complex challenges.

Cross-sectoral cooperation – a collaborative effort in which partners from different sectors (public, private and non-profit sectors) pool their resources to provide joint solutions for common benefit, and address problems and complex challenges.

The project aims to solve the transnational challenge of the health burden due to the unhealthy lifestyles of the city residents, which is difficult to solve by the fragmented, incoherent urban policies in place. The interlinkages of different aspects of city life – social, environmental, commercial and physical aspects – are often not taken into account, and current policies only provide a partial solution to a complex problem. The lack of capacities of municipal employees combined with limited resources and insufficient development of innovations (methods of work, ideas, tools and processes) in the public sector constitutes the base of the problem.

The objective of the project is to promote the health-in-all-policies principle and to contribute to both the sustainable development of the Baltic Sea Region cities and the social well-being of city residents through improved, more innovative, inclusive, effective and integrated cross-sectoral urban policies and practices. This can be achieved by enhancing co-creation and engaging citizens in planning and implementation of the policies for health and well-being, improving cross-sectoral cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region cities in order to enable city administration to provide integrated policies for better citizens' health and well-being, and improving the innovativeness of city administration in order to respond better to the current and future complex challenges of health and well-being.

The policy recommendations in this document are primarily targeted at the local authorities: the managers,

administrators and practitioners of the health and social service departments in the city administration; the leaders, planners, coordinators etc. of the other departments relevant to health (urban planning, transport, education, social care, sport, culture departments etc.); and local decision makers. Representatives of the ministries and regional authorities and international organisations are targeted, and they are involved in the national and regional health and well-being strategies and urban policies on the national and EU Baltic Sea Region levels.

The participating cities have piloted the model for cross-sectoral cooperation for health and well-being (hereinafter model) and tools (a tool based on a matrix for self-assessment and a simulation tool based on a training for the municipalities on cross-sectoral cooperation) and recorded their experiences for enhanced replicability in the Baltic Sea Region in order to promote the cross-sectoral approach to urban challenges. Within the evaluation phase of the Healthy Boost project, it was found that the model was useful in different stages of the projects and related to important domains of cross-sectoral collaboration, such as improved communication, motivation, leadership, risk identification and assessment. The following recommendations have been formulated through collaboration within the consortium of the Healthy Boost project.



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Photo by Heidi Pelander.

Estonia •
(Tartu and Tehnopol)

• **Finland**
(Metropolia AMK &
Turku & Helsinki)



Photo by City of Tartu.

Latvia •
(Jelgava Local
Municipality & RSU)

• **Lithuania**
(Klaipeda & LSMU)



Photo by Laura Kubiliūtė, Klaipeda City



Photo by Archive of JLM.

Poland •
(NOFER & Poznan
& Suwalki)

• **Russia**
(Healthy cities,
districts, and villages
association)



Photo by Katerina Kochkina.



Photo by The City Hall of Suwałki.

• **Sweden**
(Västerbotten County
Council)



Photo by Livsmedicin.

Find out more about our pilots: www.healthyboost.eu/pilots

Some of the stories of our pilots:



Photo by JLM archive.

Jelgava Local Municipality (Latvia)

Jelgava Local Municipality (JLM) is a home for 33 855 inhabitants and it is located in the very heart of Latvia, in the Zemgale region. It borders the Republic of Lithuania in the south. It has a favourable geographical location as it is 42 km from capital city, Riga, and it surrounds the fourth-largest city in Latvia – Jelgava, which has national importance.

The challenge for the pilot

The health of children is vital for ensuring the health of society in general. Food is one of the cornerstones of the well-being of humans. Therefore, it is essential to offer healthy, local and sustainable food from the early childhood and school years onwards. Social awareness of the impact of a healthy diet on human health is gradually increasing. The challenge is to introduce healthier, local and seasonal catering at education establishments.

How has the model for cross-sectoral cooperation benefitted the pilot?

The model for cross-sectoral cooperation enabled different stakeholders from various sectors to work together on the complex challenge of ensuring that school children have a healthy diet.

How did the pilot benefit the life of the residents?

Around 200 children were involved in the pilot project activities. According to the final evaluation, there has been shift in the children's mindset – a significant number of the children have reported that their consumption of fruit and vegetables has increased. It can also be assumed that their families are consuming healthier products.

More about the JLM pilot: www.healthyboost.eu/pilots/jelgava-local-municipality



Photo by JLM archive.

Turku (Finland)

Turku is the oldest and one of the biggest cities in Finland. The former capital of the country was founded in 1229. It is located in southwestern Finland, by the river Aura, on the shores of the Baltic Sea. There are around 194 000 residents in Turku. The versatile life, top-class selection of education and culture, and the beautiful archipelago form a magnetic combination in Turku.

The challenge for the pilot

Turku offers great services to support well-being. Still, the residents do not always find them or know how to take part in decision-making. The focus of the Turku pilot was communication. The aim was to find ways to communicate better about health and well-being services, and in that way, promote healthy choices that



Photo by Simo Ahtee.

benefit the residents' well-being and participation in decision-making. To reach a sustainable result, Turku has approached these challenges from different angles. Turku targeted residents directly and worked with the city employees and NGOs providing services for them.

How has the model for cross-sectoral cooperation benefitted the pilot?

The Turku pilot has applied the model in many different situations. For example, it has been utilised in co-creation workshops and when creating a digital experience application for city employees. The model has benefitted the pilot by providing new sorts of structures and ideas for cross-sectoral cooperation. It has acted particularly well as an initiator of discussions as the questions asked by the model highlight issues that are often overlooked or assumed.

How did the pilot benefit the life of the residents?

When people have a better understanding of the services and participation opportunities, they can nourish their well-being better and find opportunities to participate in decision-making.



Photo by Heidi Pelander.

In the Turku pilot, the actions have been taken on three different levels:

- Making decision-making more achievable and visible by boosting the communication skills and cross-sectoral cooperation of the employees working with health and well-being and/or people from marginalised districts
- The communication and marketing of the well-being services and encouraging residents to participate
- Teaming up with other organisations and projects in order to beat loneliness and exclusion by activating communication and by social marketing experiments aiming to reach both people from marginalised districts and a wider audience

More about the Turku pilot:
www.healthyboost.eu/pilots/turku



Photo by specialists of the Committee of Cross-border Cooperation and Tourism of Pskov City Administration.

Pskov (Russia)

Pskov is one of the most ancient cities in Russia, located in the north-west of the country. The region is unique in its location since it borders on three states: Latvia, Estonia and the Republic of Belarus. The access to Baltic Sea ports and foreign markets makes the economic and geographical location of the region favourable and allows it to participate in the integration processes of interregional and international cooperation.

The challenge for the pilot

In the city there is a lack of places where people can do physical exercise. The idea was to prepare special places for all groups of citizens in order to increase their phys-



Photo by Katerina Kochkina.

ical activity. Therefore, the aim of the pilot intervention was to create a centre for physical activity for citizens, based in a school stadium.

How has the model for cross-sectoral cooperation benefitted the pilot?

The model helped by showing how to arrange work in the proper way, how to distribute the roles of all participants, how to establish communication and how to determine the stages of project implementation. The model allowed evaluating the whole process of cooperation.

How did the pilot benefit the life of the residents?

Four School Stadiums (centres for physical activity for citizens) were built with the help of the cooperation established.

More about the Pskov pilot:
www.healthyboost.eu/pilots/pskov



Photo by Neringa Petreikytė.

Klaipėda (Lithuania)

Klaipėda is the third largest city in Lithuania with approximately 149 000 inhabitants. It is located on the coast of the Baltic Sea, 311 km northwest of the capital, Vilnius, and it is the only seaport in the country. Klaipėda is one of the main Lithuanian economic centres and a very important transit hub. In 2011, Klaipėda became a member of the WHO European Healthy Cities network.



Photo by Alina Bocman.

The challenge for the pilot

The lifestyle surveys carried out from 2016 to 2020 revealed that Klaipėda is facing a physical inactivity problem.

How has the model for cross-sectoral cooperation benefitted the pilot?

The model was used as a checklist and some points were used as topics for the meetings with stakeholders. The motivation domain was particularly useful when setting common goals in order to motivate partners to get involved in cross-sectoral cooperation in the pilot.

How did the pilot benefit the life of the residents?

After the end of quarantine, the city residents were invited to come to Klaipėda City Public Health Bureau to try the VR tool (a simulator of the bicycle ride on the streets of Klaipėda). Moreover, various activities and events were provided during the European Mobility Week, and different stakeholders were involved in the preparation of the activity plan and its implementation.

More about the Klaipėda pilot:
www.healthyboost.eu/pilots/klaipeda

Key policy recommendations



1. Cross-sectoral cooperation should be incorporated as a key feature in health promotion by including it in strategies and policy making, as well as in implementation

The burden of unhealthy lifestyles is a well-recognised challenge in the cities of the Baltic Sea Region; for example, the lack of exercise, unhealthy diets, the lack of sleep, smoking, alcohol and substances consumption, and experiencing exclusion and the lack of opportunities to participate in social life all challenge the health and well-being of the citizens.

To thrive sustainably, the Baltic Sea Region needs to improve the health and well-being of its citizens. Health is wealth – and the avoidance of lifestyle-related health risks will improve the wealth of the residents in many ways.

The urban life of the residents often takes place in more than one sector, and the same issue can be

looked at from different perspectives. Hence, there is a need for coordinated cross-sectoral cooperation in relation to both the practical and strategic level. The common tasks and goals are often overlooked in a municipality, where departments do not know that they have similar goals and that they are trying to solve quite similar, interconnected issues from their own perspective. The multiple and different needs of residents are very challenging to recognise within one department in the municipality. While one aspect of a resident's life is discussed and thought about within one department, the related or same aspects might have already been worked upon by other departments, small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). There is persistent lack of communication about these actions between the stakeholders that diminishes both the effectiveness of each of the stakeholders and of the solution to the issue. Incorporating cross-sectoral cooperation into strategies and policymaking is a key feature in health promotion.

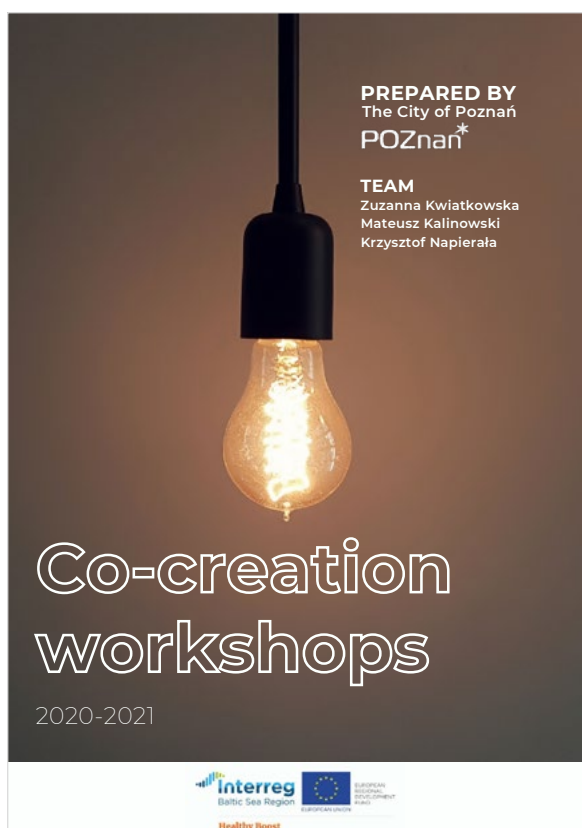
It is important to plan cross-sectoral cooperation as a long-term process. The establishment of



How to promote health and boost cross-sectoral cooperation using the example of nine cities.

Ideas for local government.

Successes and failures – summary of pilot activities



Collection of experiences from co-creation workshops

cross-sectoral cooperation can be started by utilising the tool for self-assessment developed within the scope of the Healthy Boost project. A matrix for self-assessment is an interactive tool enabling the versatile identification of the needs, values, participatory capabilities, motivation and the willingness of the municipal staff to engage in cross-sectoral co-operation for sustainable urban development. This tool includes the matrix of prerequisites for successful collaboration between the partners. Based on the respondents' assessment, the tool provides practical suggestions with the aim to boost the cross-sectoral work in the city in order to promote citizens' health and well-being.

2. Resources for cross-sectoral cooperation should be allocated, defining the common goal and co-creating

The most critical resources for cross-sectoral cooperation are time, competence, human resources, tools and clear guidance. With the help of extensive and practical tools for developing cross-sectoral cooperation (the model, tool based on a matrix for self-assessment and simulation tool based on a training for the municipalities on cross-sectoral cooperation) that have been tested by diverse pilots in Healthy Boost project, municipalities can boost cross-sectoral cooperation in their work.

Sufficient resources (training, professionals, time, patience, competence, assessment) should be identified in establishing the cross-sectoral cooperation. The different competences brought together can build a better capacity for the future as the professionals in some of the fields may be unfamiliar with the needs and challenges of other sectors.

A common goal for co-creation should be defined. It takes time to do things across sectors, but the result will be more efficient. The starting point should clearly state why change is needed and how the outcome and results are going to be measured and reported. In order to establish sustainable, inclusive and effective links between the stakeholders, multiple representatives from each of them are to be attracted so that the goals and issues can be easily exchanged.

The model of cross-sectoral cooperation for integrated and sustainable urban policies collects the processes, steps to be taken, and advice and good practices related to creating and implementing cross-sectoral partnerships with partners from different sectors, SMEs, NGOs and city residents. The model focuses on enabling various stakeholders (SMEs, NGOs, municipal departments and city residents), co-creation and cooperation with a wide group of stakeholders.

The model encourages creative thinking and viewing things from different perspectives, which is helpful in critical situations or in preventive work in order to avoid certain risks. The model is flexible and has high potential for generalisability.

The training materials developed within the project form a game-like tool which enables municipalities to put the model for cross-sectoral cooperation into use in the scope of the pilot scenarios. They simulate the real-life usage of the model, which is needed for the municipalities to start utilising the model. The training material will lead the cities through all the stages of each of the five domains (Coordination, Motivation, Risk Identification, Leadership and Communication) that comprise the model for cross-sectoral cooperation.



Photo by Katja Tahja.

3. The crucial role of residents and stakeholders should be recognised in cross-sectoral cooperation and decision-making

Complex urban challenges are too great for anyone to tackle alone. Such problems are complex and often cannot be entirely solved by one authority,



Photo by Katja Tahja.

company or organisation. Systematic, coordinated cross-sectoral cooperation is needed to solve such challenges.

The relevant stakeholders should be recognised, and it should be remembered that co-creation is done by people. It is beneficial to stay open to new partners. Building a collaboration takes time. Connections and personal contacts are needed to make it happen. The mediation should be done by an initiator who helps others to cooperate and understand each other, creating both a space and channels for communications for them. There is no single solution that fits all. Each collaboration and each organisation is different.

All the relevant partners from the municipal organisation, stakeholders and other relevant partners should be engaged in mapping and planning from the beginning. Building trust makes collaboration easier. Face-to-face workshops and informal meetings for team building should be organised and the work and knowledge should be shared. Successful similar projects elsewhere in neighbouring cities or countries should be sought out and evidence of them provided. Previous local successes should be given credit. Citizens should be engaged in development processes as much as possible.

Co-creation workshops could be of extra value for developing innovative cross-sectoral actions to promote health and well-being in Baltic Sea Region cities. The examples of the case studies presented in the collection of experiences from



Photo by Healthy Boost project.

co-creation workshops can be used as guiding material. Using a co-creation workshop as a tool to boost cross-sectoral cooperation is not only easy, but also efficient as it maximises the number of different points of view one can gain during one meeting.

The idea behind the co-creation workshops is to boost co-creative design between the partners and to use more participatory methods to engage stakeholders and partners, which results in the enhanced involvement of citizens in the decision-making process. Representatives from various sectors (departments from other branches, NGOs, SMEs, informal groups of citizens) should be invited by the city administrations to participate in discussions, brainstorming, sharing ideas and experience during different types of workshops so that their insights and different perspectives are used to modify solutions according to the actual needs of citizens working in various sectors who have varying needs.

The tests performed during the piloting phase of the Healthy Boost project demonstrated that co-creation workshops add value and that it is worthwhile to make an extra effort to find a space and the time to discuss running issues with representatives from various sectors, such as private companies, NGOs, universities/schools and informal groups.

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