

Evidence Informed Policy Through Simulation Games

A PRACTICE IN COLLABORATION

REPOPA PROJECT EVIDENCE BRIEF no. 1

a document for policymakers & researchers



1 COLLABORATION WITHIN NETWORKS

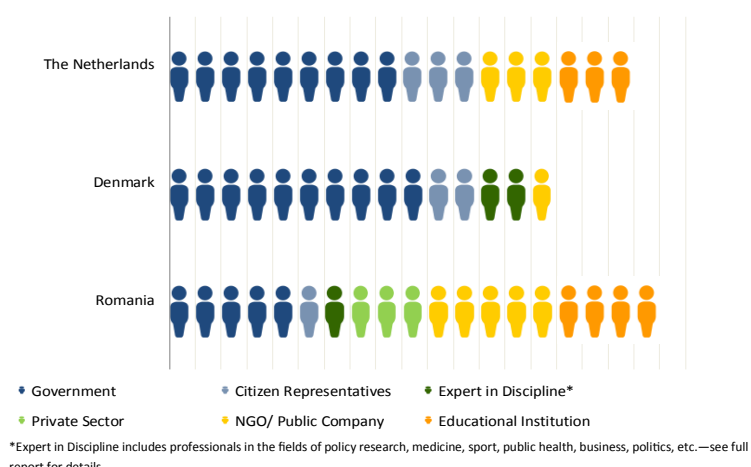
The EU funded REPOPA project operates in 6 European Union countries and Canada, and aims to incorporate evidence and expert insight into the development of health promoting policies.

To examine organizational and process aspects in health enhancing physical activity policy making, the REPOPA team developed a simulation game. Simulating the policy making process let researchers examine group functions like networking, leadership, and cross-sector collaboration, along with identifying facilitators of and barriers to evidence-informed policy making.

2 THE PARTICIPANTS

Members of REPOPA project organized a real life simulation game on three occasions to either participate in or observe group processes occurring during hypothetical policy problem solving. Like the larger REPOPA project, the simulation game was informed by theories and research.

Prior to the game, researchers conducted a systems analysis in each country to identify key players and organizations in the health policy process.



3 SIMULATION GAME



A designated leader kept the group on task, and each site began with materials which

- A** Guided the game process
- B** Described the stakeholders and population
- C** Outlined a multi-sector policy problem

Each site established stakeholder roles within the game that were relevant to the real world

Each team (2-3 players with corresponding roles) was given objectives that matched their designated role. Oftentimes, the games roles closely resembled the occupation of the participant, but not necessarily.

Examples of stakeholder roles included in simulation:

- Local Representatives (e.g. neighborhood council)
- Private Industry Stakeholders
- Heads of Health-Related Government Agencies (e.g. Sport sector)
- Health Administration Professionals (e.g. hospital administrators)
- Representatives from Public Organizations and NGOs (e.g. schools boards, sport NGOs)

Figure 1. The Game Micro Cycle



Once the team was organized, they began the game process. The team tackled their multi-sector issue by completing a full cycle (see left) and debriefing session twice.

4 GAME ADAPTATIONS



Roosendaal, NL

Used simulation game to invigorate network collaboration within regional health policy

Aimed at division of responsibility and funding allocations determined regionally

Aimed to boost cross-sector collaboration by defining benefits for collaborating organizations

Focused on developing safe environments for youth in deprived neighborhoods



Elsinore, DK

Used simulation game to kick start plan of implementing a newly developed policy

Aimed to raise awareness of recent reorganization creating Health and Care sector

Aimed to engage multiple sectors to promote physical activity by defining benefits for collaborating organizations

Focused on population health focus including focus on youth, chronically ill, and special needs citizens



Cluj-Napoca, RO

Used simulation game to establish collaborative relationships in municipality beyond specific projects

Aimed to develop framework to engage local stakeholders under centralized system

Aimed to promote physical activity by improving infrastructure and access to sport resources

Focused on improving local project by expanding resources and sharing information between stakeholders

5 OUTCOMES



During the simulation game, team members shared knowledge and built relationships. Participants were able to identify similarities, differences, and potential barriers of applying evidence into policy in the context of their regions and municipalities.

The simulation game laid the groundwork for collaboratively integrating evidence into policies for health promotion.

The participants gained insights on the importance of leadership aspects such as taking initiative, giving clear directions and sharing responsibility in cross-sector collaboration.

What is REPOPA?

REPOPA is a project funded by the European Commission that brings together scientists, researchers, policy makers, and citizen stakeholders. REPOPA incorporates evidence and expert insight to inform policies that promote public health.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The full report can be found on the REPOPA website at www.repopa.eu

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