



About the NDPHS Expert Group on Social Inclusion, Healthy Lifestyles and Work Ability (SIHLWA)

www.ndphs.org/?sihlwa_eg

Fact sheet 10/2008

Why we need this expert group

People in all countries in our region experience significant problems in health and well-being leading to disease, disability and early death, which to a great extent could be prevented. The loss of human capital – life and health – is mainly accountable to unhealthy lifestyles such as abuse of alcohol and drugs, smoking, accidents and violence, unhealthy diet and lack of physical activity. It has been recognised that the development of public policies in all relevant sectors needs to take place at all levels of society. Similarly, the creation of supportive physical and social environments should include the continued reorientation of health systems and social care systems. In recognition of the above the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) decided to include enhancing and promotion of healthy and socially rewarding lifestyles among its priorities.



Mission

The main role of the Expert Group on Social Inclusion, Healthy Lifestyles and Work Ability (SIHLWA EG) is to assist in coordinating and further developing actions towards preventing harmful and dangerous use of alcohol, promoting young peoples' healthy lifestyles, and enhancing occupational safety and health. The SIHLWA EG aims to bring more coherence and focus on information and action facilitating healthy lifestyles. The Expert Group has also an advisory role and provides professional input to the preparation and implementation of joint activities carried out within the framework of the Partnership.

Areas of action

The following examples of responsibilities of the SIHLWA Expert Group:

- Promote the principles and objectives of the NDPHS in the fields addressed by the three SIHLWA EG sub-groups (ADO, ALC and OSH, see below) and develop strong partnerships with a wide variety of stakeholders to ensure that the NDPHS achieves maximum results;
- Establish and maintain relations with the Partner Countries and Organisations as well as with international and national organisations, and other institutions;
- Advocate and lobby for the improvement of public health and social well-being, provide and communicate "collective knowledge;"
- Improve the general awareness of, and increase positive attitudes towards the SIHLWA Expert Group's field of work;
- Promote public health-oriented service systems and health sector reforms with attention to populations at risk and take into account response capacity in rural and remote locations;
- Contribute to the development of national policies that respond to the needs and requirements of the Partner Countries;
- Map and identify NDPHS Countries' needs for technical and financial support to scale-up national programmes and encourage requests for assistance;
- Support efforts to provide technical and other forms of assistance to government and national partners in planning, implementing and monitoring programmes in SIHLWA's field of expertise.

Activities

The SIHLWA Expert Group consists of three sub-groups dealing with (i) adolescent health and socially-rewarding lifestyles (ADO Sub-group), (ii) alcohol (ALC Sub-group), and occupational safety and health (OSH Sub-group). These sub-groups use the SIHLWA EG framework to discuss issues of common interest, but conduct their core activities individually, while making use of their broad network of institutions, organisations and experts.

The OSH Sub-group has published a thematic report (country reports) on "Occupational Safety and Health in the Northern Dimension Area" (www.ndphs.org/?database_view_paper,22), which provides an overview on the situation of occupational safety and health in the selected countries in our region. It is interlinked with the NDPHS Strategy on Health at Work, which was adopted in November 2007 during a NDPHS' ministerial conference. The ALC Sub-group is planning to follow with a thematic report on "Youth Health" and "Alcohol and Health Profiles" in 2008-2009.

SIHLWA initiates, monitors and implements numerous activities, such as the conducting of ongoing reviews of projects/programmes and activities in NDPHS countries. It also provides policy advice and recommendations on project proposals and its implementation. For instance, it has organised a study tour on "Potential Years of Life Lost" (PYLL) from Vologda, Cherepovets and Republic of Karelia, to be followed by a study on "PYLL" assessment in selected North-West Russian regions. Moreover, all three SIHLWA sub-groups implement flagship projects aimed at improving the health situation in our region, i.e.:

- ADO Sub-group: Russian Federation (St. Petersburg), NCM, and Finland: Alcohol and drug prevention among youth (years 2007-2008, extended until 2009). Financed by Finland;
- ALC Sub-group: Alcohol early identification & brief intervention (EIBI) feasibility in St. Petersburg and Leningrad oblast (year 2008 - project preparation; planned to be followed by a full EIBI pilot project in 2009-11). Financed by Finland;
- OSH Sub-group: Occupational safety and health project in North-West Russia (Leningrad Oblast and Republic of Karelia) (1st phase 2005 – 2007; 2nd phase in 2007 – 2008; 3rd phase planned for 2008 – 2009). Financed by Finland.

Leadership

The Expert Group on SIHLWA is led by Lead Partner Finland together with Co-Lead Partner Lithuania.

Learn more

This fact sheet was developed by the NDPHS Expert Group on Social Inclusion, Healthy Lifestyles and Work Ability (SIHLWA). It can be downloaded in "Papers" section of the NDPHS Database (www.ndphs.org/?database).

Further information about this Expert Group and its activities can be found on the NDPHS website at www.ndphs.org/?sihlwa_eg and be obtained from:

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