Letter from Coordinator

Arja R Aro

REPOPA project has done over half of its journey now. We have come to the stage where the partners eagerly analyze and write the first results of the interventions, which have been running in several countries. These interventions have engaged REPOPA researchers in actual policy making processes on local level. They have also enabled researchers and policy makers to understand each other’s viewpoints and roles in very popular policy game context.

REPOPA experiences have been in demand in several countries e.g. in endeavors to enhance the use of research knowledge in policy making in general (Finland), in setting up interest groups (e.g. Denmark), in sparking off new physical activity intervention (Italy), and also in growing into new research proposals using REPOPA methodology (the Netherlands). The next phase of REPOPA gathers all European partners in a Delphi study to test and validate core indicators for evidence-informed policy making. As the REPOPA coordinator I express my warm thanks to all project partners, stakeholders and networks we have collaborated with, but also to all those interested in our work.

REPOPA Annual Meeting, October 27th - 29th 2014

Adriana Valente and Tommaso Castellani

The REPOPA Annual Meeting was held this year in Rome, hosted by the National Research Council of Italy. The ongoing activities of all Work Packages have been presented and discussed. The meeting has been a crucial milestone for Work Package 4, which has been anticipated to 2014 in order to be timelier with the scheduled agenda. The partners discussed the contents of the Delphi questionnaire, which will be focused on indicators of the level of Evidence-Informed Policy Making.

The last day has been almost entirely dedicated to the discussion of the future. All partners agreed that the knowledge and know-how developed within REPOPA project should be the basis of a future international research project.

One of the next steps will be the organization or a workshop at the next EUPHA conference. Suggested themes are the policy game from Work Package 2, which may be tested internationally in another context, Work Package 2 and Work Package 3 interventions in general, Work Package 4 Delphi ongoing results.
What is REPOPA?

REsearch into POlicy to enhance Physical Activity (REPOPA) is a five year project within the EU research funded Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) financed to:

Build on evidence and experiences on policy making processes

Study innovative 'win-win' ways to collaborate between academia and policy makers

Establish structures and best practices for future health promotion

What we do?

As REPOPA members we will try to integrate scientific research knowledge, expert know-how and real world policy making process to increase synergy and sustainability in promoting health and preventing disease, and promote physical activity in structural policy making.

Access our REPOPA website to read up-to-date findings and get familiar with our line of work:

REPOPA joined the icSPORTS Group as an Academic Partner

Diana Rus

REPOPA has joined the icSPORTS Group as an Academic Partner and Prof. Arja R Aro has participate in the 2nd International Congress on Sports Science Research and Technology Support October 24-26 2014 in Rome, Italy to present the work done by the REPOPA Consortium, in a section called European Project Space Program.

icSPORTS intends to be a meeting point of both academics and practitioners, in order to exchange ideas and developed synergies in the support for many activities directly or indirectly related to sport sciences, including improvement of physical activities, sports medicine, biotechnology and nutrition, sports management, and all imaginable application areas in sports. This activity is part of the effort of the REPOPA Consortium to increase the communication of the project activities and cooperation between our researchers with other programs or beneficiaries.

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Policy game - insights after the implementation of the activity in all three participant countries

L.A.M van de Goor, Hilde Spitters, and Marcel Quanjel

The policy game in the REPOPA-project involved local level stakeholders from the public and private sector to investigate if the policy game strategy - based on needs, context and stakeholder analysis – could be used to improve communication and collaboration between stakeholders in a multi-sector policy making process.

This year the policy game has been played in three real-life cases and have successfully completed. The first game was in Roosendaal the Netherlands, followed by Helsingor in Denmark and Cluj-Napoca in Romania. All three cases were enthusiastic to take part in this innovative one-day intervention. With a working group a list of required stakeholder groups was developed and these groups were approached to participate in each of the policy games.

Representatives of the public and private sector and NGO’s were present in the games, which made the groups diverse and dynamic and a good representation of stakeholder of the local cases. Participants were willing to join the adventure, even though asking a full day of them to participate was for some much. The participants maintained their enthusiasm during the game. As far as the research team is aware of this is one of the first times that a policy game is performed in a real life public health policy setting, since it is more common in the field of consultancy and organization studies. As a first impression the research team could say that this kind of intervention is a good fit to the public health setting and is useful to understand collaboration processes among stakeholders in local policy development. Analyzing the results of the game will give more insight in learning experiences and usefulness of a policy game in such a setting.

Two Dutch participants quoted the following positive learning experiences from the game:

“Because the role you’re playing in the game is similar to your role in your daily work, you see that you make the same choices and decisions in the game as you do in your daily work. This gives much insight in your work and how you deal with information and make choices...”

and

“A policy game could be seen as a pressure cooker. When starting a project with such a session, ideas and networks could faster arise, and in turn would faster lead to concrete plans and their implementation.”
Use of evidence in development of local policies with focus on physical activity

Cathrine Juel Lau

Some of the WP1 results were presented at the Annual meeting for the Danish Society for Public Health as the audience at this conference represents a great number of people from public institutions involved in policy making.

In particular many Danish municipalities are represented. The results presented had focus on results from the Danish municipalities in WP1. There was a good dialogue with the audience following the presentation. Those from the audience most active in the dialogue were policy makers from several different municipalities.

The dialogues were constructive with relevant and critical questions.

New peer-reviewed paper published in Science and Public Policy

Adriana Valente and Tommaso Castellani

A new peer-reviewed paper has been published on the journal Science and Public Policy by a mixed group from the Italian team (Adriana Valente and Tommaso Castellani) and the Danish team (Arja R. Aro and Maja Larsen). The article focuses on some results emerged from one of the stewardship interventions of the Work Package 3 carried out in Italy. Within the Italian intervention, a Delphi-like discussion group has been realised, involving researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders on the topic of relationship between scientific research and policy-making. Among the results, the discussion gave rise to an interesting analysis of the models of science–policy interaction implicitly or explicitly adopted by stakeholders. In recent decades, many different models and frameworks for science–policy interactions have been proposed by scholars, with different perspectives and characteristics.

Our study detected the persistence of the so-called linear model, in which a policy making completely driven by science is envisaged.

Other models include other actors as the stakeholders and the citizens, with different degrees of public engagement and societal participation. Interestingly enough, our results show that these model can coexist in the same individual visions. This article shows as REPOPA results cover a wide scope and go even beyond the health sector. Theories and frameworks developed within REPOPA may be generalised and give rise to new research questions and programmes. The results of this activity will be a very useful basis for the development of Work Package 4 Delphi. The article can be downloaded here.
A workshop on “Public Mental Health Research – Bridging the Gap between Evidence and Policy” was organised jointly by DG Research and Innovation, DG Health and Consumers and DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology on 22 January 2014.

The purpose of this one day workshop was to give an opportunity to researchers who participate in projects funded by the European Commission in the area of mental health to share the outcomes of their projects with other researchers and stakeholders. Moreover, the meeting facilitated dialogue between stakeholders with the aim to build a network between the different players. It is one of the priorities of the Commission to create opportunities for knowledge translation, in order to ensure that evidence generated from research is taken up by the relevant stakeholders such as policy makers, practitioners, civil society, patients and carers, at both European and national levels. This includes identifying strategies, with overcoming barriers, in which the best evidence can move into action in practice, through inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration. For this reason, Maja Larsen was invited as a representative from REPOPA to present the experiences on knowledge integration from the REPOPA project.

Maja participated in a panel discussion with the title “KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION – FROM RESEARCH TO POLICY FOR BETTER PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH”.

The session was chaired by Dr. Matt Muijen, Programme Manager Mental Health, WHO, Denmark. Other panelist where Dottssa Teresa Di Fiandra, DG for Health Prevention, Ministry of Health, Italy; Prof. Tamás Kurimay, Eötvös Lóránt University, Semmelweis University, Hungary; Dr. Robertas Povilaitis, Vilnius University, Lithuania; Dr. Tytti Solantaus, National Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland; and Ms. Rachida Ghalouci, Project Officer, Fighting infectious diseases and global epidemics, Public Health Sector, DG Research and Innovation. Throughout the whole session a lot of interesting discussions about bridging the gap between evidence and policy took place and from the experiences in REPOPA, Maja was able to give examples on reasons for this gap and attempts to bridge it.
New REPOPA Member:
Christina Radl, Research Assistant

Christina Mathilde Radl

Christina Radl has graduated Master of Public Health Science from the University of Southern Denmark in Esbjerg. After graduating, Christina worked in a local NGO focusing on the social inclusion of ethnic minorities. In 2014 she returned to SDU as a research assistant and is currently working on a qualitative evaluation of a communal health project, which will be finished by the end of the year (2014). Along with that she currently prepares her PhD project on patient-provider communication in the Danish health care system. She is Austrian by nationality.

Her research activities have been related to reproductive health, women’s health in developing countries, social inequality, and vulnerable patient groups.

The expertise of Christina most relevant for REPOPA comes mostly from the area of qualitative research and will be integrated in the WP4 Implementation and Guidance Development within REPOPA. We welcome Christina to our team!