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.

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**Coordinators’ corner**
Arja R. Aro, August 2015

**REPOPA** has reached its two major milestones related to the intervention work packages of WP2 (policy gaming) and WP3 (Stewardship-based tailored interventions). These work packages were both resource-heavy with intervention protocol development, evaluation tools development, intervention implementation with several measurement points. Final reports of the intervention WPs (submitted June and September, 2015) reveal the main results and lessons learned. Overall, the interventions succeeded very well as we received the new scientific knowledge we aimed at. Please see the WP2 and WP3 sections for more details. It looks as if the topics and good work done in the two sets of interventions were well received by the European Public Health Conference (EPH) organization, as workshops on both sets of interventions were accepted for the highly competitive conference program. The EPH will be arranged mid-October in Milan, Italy (www.ephconference.eu).

We still need to wrap up the last empirical study of WP4 using the Delphi method; at the moment we lack only the national conferences to validate the evidence-informed policy making indicators, which we developed with the help of 76 stakeholders from different countries. The national conferences are planned later this year and early next year. Please see the WP4 section for more details. Even though **REPOPA** is a research project, it is extremely essential to disseminate our work and findings among different sectors of societies. We need to do this by respecting the priority of scientific publishing of the results though. The Romanian team, together with the coordinating team, has worked the past half of a year to establish a newly constructed website for **REPOPA** with more advanced search and discussion options. One central part of the new website is the umbrella platform for national platforms of evidence-informed policy making. This structure is one of the central expectations of EC, since the idea is to establish structures and networks which are sustainable, which are not dependent on individuals, any particular institution or project. The **REPOPA** partner countries have started their platform developments in different ways and with different progress; the Finnish team have built its work on the existing ministry working group and they can thus already tell about their success stories on using research knowledge to influence physical activity policy making.

One more year – and **REPOPA** will be over! From the coordinating team, the central tasks in the forthcoming year are to support publishing of the results of different WPs, to help WP4 to arrange national conferences and to wrap up the results; however, very central are also dissemination activities to make **REPOPA** known more widely.

This entails to network with projects with similar initiatives, and also to plan the final invitational conference planned to be arranged in Brussels where many decision makers can be attracted to take part.
Getting to know the policy game In2Action. A workshop at the Dutch Public Health Conference by Hilde Spitters

Last April, at the Dutch Public Health conference (NCVGZ), the Dutch REPOPA team had the opportunity to perform the REPOPA policy game In2Action during a workshop.

The target group at the conference was mainly researchers and policy advisors. The workshop was an opportunity to have researchers and policy advisors experience the potential of a policy game towards evidence-informed policymaking. The REPOPA game simulation In2Action aims to involve local level stakeholders from the public and private sector to investigate if a policy game could be used to improve communication and collaboration between stakeholders in a multi-sector policy making process.

The workshop

The participants in the workshop was dynamic and enthusiastic, especially because of the workshop’s interactive character, the good vibe during the workshop and the eagerness of the participants. Participants acknowledged that they would like to hear more about the policy game and some of the policy advisors saw the game as an opportunity for future use in the municipalities they work for.

Future

The policy game In2Action has been integrated in a new Dutch project, VTV In2Action, to enhance the level of evidence-informed policy making in the Netherlands.
Further work on the REPOPA game In2Action by Leena Eklund Karlsson and Annemiek Dorgelo

The WP2 has conducted the carefully planned and into the different country contexts adapted policy games in the three participating countries, the Netherlands, Romania and Denmark. Some of the results will be presented and discussed in the EUPHA conference in Milano in a form of a workshop and a poster.

A success of the REPOPA - In2Action game, comes from the Netherlands, where there was a broad interest for this game at both local and national level. As a result the game is currently being adapted and refined as part of a broader game VTV In2Action (see picture), a collaboration between CBO, Tranzo and the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, RIVM (part of Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport).

VTV In2Action is a game with local stakeholders and policymakers. Together they play the game which simulates the reality of developing and implementing (scientific) evidence in local inter-sectoral health policy in order to bring public health in the Netherlands to a higher level.

In the first part of the game the participants work towards a healthier Netherlands in 2040.

To succeed, participants need to take into account the different perspectives which exist within the society. Within this context participants learn about the influence of chances and their choices. Having this in mind, they come in to action in the second part of the game. In this part, participants are stimulated to collaborate in an (scientific) evidence based local HEPA policy towards an inter-sectoral implementation plan ‘Growing up Healthy’.
REPOPA the Stewardship approach – an update by Christina Mathilde Radl-Karimi

REPOPA’s WP3 has taken giant leaps closer to the finish line. After completing the context tailored interventions in 2014, we have now carried out the second follow up to see if the Stewardship approach has improved the level of evidence-informed policy making in the six cases of all three countries (The Netherlands, Italy, Denmark). Initial results show that the tailored interventions have been received very well by the intervention settings. In general, they report a high level of satisfaction with the processes. Furthermore, it seems that the interventions have success in facilitating structured intersectoral collaboration in integrating research evidence in HEPA policy making. We have analyzed our data and are currently reporting our findings in more detail and planning the upcoming WP3 publications and dissemination.
A Delphi study to develop EIPM indicators
by Valentina Tudisca

A validated list of indicators for evidence-informed policy making (EIPM).

Here is the latest result of the five-year European project REPOP, obtained by a structured discussion between researchers and policy makers working in the field of public health at national and international level, selected from six European countries involved in REPOP. This phase of the project, led by the Italian team within WP4, has just been concluded.

The indicators, still not published, refer to measurable elements that allow to understand if scientific evidence was taken into account, or not, in a specific policy. They concern several aspects, from direct involvement of researchers in a policy development to citation of scientific literature in its documents, to the presence of budget available for communication initiatives to gather knowledge from specific target groups.

These results were obtained by a Delphi study, a participative methodology used to make a group of experts to dialogue in a structured way, at distance, without directly interacting. An initial version of the list of indicators proposed by the REPOP Consortium - on the basis of WP1, WP2 and WP3 results - was submitted to 76 researchers and policy makers to six of the European countries involved in REPOP (Italy, Finland, Netherlands, Denmark, Romania and United Kingdom). Delphi panelists were asked to evaluate the relevance and feasibility of the indicators proposed using an online two round questionnaire and to add comments and propose new indicators. The results of the first questionnaire were summarized and presented to panelists in order to prepare the second questionnaire and finalize the list of indicators. The panelists were asked to evaluate some of the indicators again considering ratings and comments of the others.

The next step is to contextualize the validated list of indicators obtained at national level, by organizing national conferences in every REPOP country.
The main objective of REPOPA is to integrate scientific research knowledge, expert know-how and real world policy making processes to promote health and prevent disease. In this frame, in 2013 a group of Italian experts gave their contribution by participating to a discussion methodology aimed at improving the dialogue between Science and Politics for REPOPA WP3, developing six concrete proposals (published on Science and Public Policy).

Now the identity of participants, firstly anonymous as required by the consortium procedure, was published on the Italian National Research Council website. Here are the names of the 18 panelists, selected among researchers, local and national policy makers, journalists and doctors: Sveva Avveduto, Research Director at National Research Council (CNR); Fabio Bellini, Italian Regional Councilman; Giuseppe Caldarola, ex Member of Italian Parliament and Journalist; Rosaria Conte, Research Director at CNR; Franco Doni, Director of the Health Corporation Società della Salute Fiorentina Nord-Ovest; Letizia Gabaglio, Journalist and Professor of Science Communication; Daniela Galeone, Manager Doctor at Ministry of Health; Pietro Greco, Journalist and expert of Science Communication; Cristina Maltese, President of Municipality XII of Rome; Cristina Mangia, President of the association “Donne e Scienza” (“Women and Science”); Giorgio Modesti, Occupational Doctor; Roberto Moretti, Responsible of the Service of Health Promotion at the local Health Centre in Bergamo and Professor; Susanna Morgante, Manager Doctor at a local Health Centre (ULSS 20) and councilwoman at Municipality 1 in Verona; Giovanna Nicolai, Press Office, Rome Municipality; Luigi Nieri, Deputy Mayor in Rome; Maria Grazia Petronio, Responsible of UOS Ambiente e Salute, local Health Centre in Empoli; Francesco Polcaro, President of Provincial Committee of the Italian Partisans National Association in Rome and Researcher; Alberto Silvani, Responsible of the Office Promotion of Research at CNR.
Project REPOPA interacting in a Danish interest group
by Okje Anna Koudenburg

Initiated by the Danish members of the REPOPA project, the interest group “Research into Practice and Policy in Public Health” was established during the annual Danish Public Health Conference in October 2013 and is formally placed under the Danish Association for Public Health.

The objective of the interest group is to establish a national forum for exchange of knowledge, experiences and ideas across practice, policy and research in the public health area. The interest group is for researchers, practitioners, policy makers aiming to improve public health practice and policy. Through webinars and annual meetings, this group aims at improving the procedures for integrating knowledge from research and other types of knowledge into practice and policy. In order to spread the word about the existence of the interest group and enroll new members, the Danish REPOPA team will put an extra effort in promoting the interest group in different relevant settings this autumn. The first promotion campaign is planned to take place during the annual Danish Public Health Conference 28-29th of September 2015. With the conference headline “Health in All Policies – Collaboration, coherence and synergy” it is expected that many conference participants this year will have a special interest in the field of integrating research into policy and practice. Members of the REPOPA team will therefore be present at the conference distributing flyers and have a dialogue with the participants about the interest group.

Disseminating REPOPA in Canada
by Cody Anderson

The Work Package 5 team from the University of Ottawa has presented the evaluation methodology and findings from the initial stages of the project and the first two rounds of REPOPA evaluation at two national conferences in May of this year. Presentations focused on the novel aspects of the REPOPA evaluation and the benefits that these approaches are bringing to the project. The first presentation, titled Evaluating Research Team Processes for Better Research Implementation, was delivered by Susan Roelofs and Cody Anderson at the Canadian Evaluation Society 2015 National Conference in Montréal, Canada on 25 May. The second, titled Participatory Evaluation Strategies to Strengthen a Policy Research Project, was delivered by Nancy Edwards at Public Health 2015 (the Canadian Public Health Association’s annual conference) in Vancouver, Canada on 27 May. A manuscript has arisen from the presentations and is now under preparation.
Our improved website and platforms are available online

by Diana Rus

The Romanian team, together with the coordinating team, has worked the past half of a year to establish a newly constructed website for REPOPA with more advanced search and discussion options. One central part of the new website is the umbrella platform for national platforms of evidence-informed policy making. This structure is one of the central expectations of the European Commission, since the purpose is to support country evidence-informed policy making by establishing structures and networks which are sustainable, which are not dependent on individuals, any particular institution or project. The online platform is part of the REPOPA website and has multiple features that encourage communication on the topic of evidence into policy making: (1) opened discussions using twitter, (2) country information about REPOPA and countries work groups and networks, and (3) discussion box - specific for each country but also international. But, each partner country was encouraged to join offline existing work groups, task force or diverse interest groups in order to explore the possibility of evidence-informed policy making. I encourage you to access our website and explore the partner countries’ individual platforms: http://www.repopa.eu/content/eipm-umbrella-platform.

Third Cycle of Consortium Process Evaluation

by Cody Anderson

Annual data collection for the REPOPA consortium process evaluation is underway. The 2015 iteration of the REPOPA evaluation began with the Consortium Collaboration Survey in May and June, with a new record of 93% participation thanks to the dedication of consortium members to the evaluation. The third round of the Social Network and Stakeholder Mapping Survey, the Junior Researcher Research Capacity Self-Assessment, and the Work Package Team Interviews are all scheduled for August and September. Findings from the process evaluation will be shared with the consortium in an internal monitoring report released on 9 October, and at the meeting in Cluj-Napoca, Romania on 2 November, 2015, with discussions on recommendations and action steps for the Consortium.
Ranjila Joshi  
**Research Assistant, Unit of Health Promotion**  
**University of Southern Denmark, Esbjerg**  

Originally, I am from Nepal. I had completed my undergraduate education in public health and postgraduate education in sociology in Nepal. I had also worked with different governmental and non-governmental organizations in the field of public health in the rural parts of Nepal.

I started my master degree in public health in University of Southern Denmark (SDU) in 2012 and completed it in 2015. During this period, I also got opportunities to work as a student assistant and course instructor, which, I believe, have added a lot of confidence in me to start a career in public health. After my graduation, I have started working as a research assistant at Unit of Health Promotion in SDU. I have been involved in REPOPA, one of SDU-led research projects, and contributed in data entry and analysis. Besides, I am also working as a member of SDU team contributing in different academic and administrative activities through teaching and providing assistance for undergraduate programs, namely BSc. in Health Education and Promotion, and BSc. in Epidemiology at Princess Norah Bint Abdulrahman University, Saudi Arabia.

I still look forward to take my study one step further that would prepare me to be a very competent public health professional. Besides, personally, I like traveling to new places and exploring different cultures, and strongly believe that life is full of learning opportunities that one should make the most of it.
During June and July 2015, University of Iowa graduate students Owen Parker and Richard Barajas worked as interns in the Health Policy and Management Unit, at the Cluj School of Public Health, Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca Romania, as part of their practicum.

Their work focused on the REPOPA WP2 data analysis process, more specifically into analysis and presentation of questionnaire and observation data collected for evaluation of the WP2 intervention, the policy game. These activities represented valuable experiences for both students, allowing them to get engaged in qualitative data coding using Nvivo Software as well as extracting, structuring and presenting quantitative, questionnaire data for the short and long versions of the Romanian WP2 final scientific report.

The students were also exposed to the overall aim and objectives of the REPOPA project, as well as with the work conducted so far and these aspects enhanced their knowledge and understanding on the importance of studying the development of intersectoral, evidence informed policies in the health domain.
**EUPHA, Milan, October 2015**

Project REPOPA has the pleasure of participating in the EUPHA conference with two workshops on Thursday the 15th of October 2015.

One of the workshops will be on the track ‘European Public Health’ related to WP2 with the title ‘A policy game intervention for fostering the development of local health policies: 3 EU cases’. The REPOPA Consortium partners from Tranzo, Tilburg University and Research into Policy to Enhance Physical Activity (REPOPA) project, The Netherlands are organizers with Prof. Dr. Ien van de Goor as acting chair.

The other workshop will be on track ‘Evidence and public health practice’ related to WP3 with the title ‘Stewardship approach – results from six healthy public policy interventions in three countries’. The REPOPA Consortium partners Unit for Health Promotion Research, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark and Research into Policy to Enhance Physical Activity (REPOPA) project are organisers with Professor, Head of Research Unit Arja R. Aro, Denmark and Research Director Adriana Valente, Italy as acting chairs. We will present our intervention results from all three case countries. Moreover we will discuss cross-country similarities and differences as well as potentials and pitfalls of the Stewardship approach.

For more details please find us in the EPH Conference Programme online bit.ly/1kyOrYf and search for REPOPA.

**HEPA Europe, Istanbul, October 2015**

Project REPOPA will be present at the HEPA Europe Conference in Istanbul, as part of the dissemination work, presenting National platforms for evidence-informed physical activity policy making. The dissemination work package has as one of its main objective “to establish an umbrella platform to support country evidence-informed policy making platforms created in the course of the project”. This includes to: share up-to-date information, documents to be discussed, and debated with different stakeholders. Part of the activities implements so far will be presented to the conference audience.

**icSPORTS, Lisbon, November 2015**

Again this year, REPOPA has been invited to take part in the International Congress on Sport Sciences Research and Technology Support (icSPORTS 2015).

The congress, to be held in Portugal; Lisbon, is a unique opportunity to showcase the innovative research activities carried out by the REPOPA Consortium.

This year we’ll be highlighting results from Work Package 3 - dealing with stewardship approaches for efficient evidence utilization.

**We are live on Twitter**

Project REPOPA has joined Twitter, where you can follow us for regular updates on our activities, participation in conferences, new publications and progress within the project. You can find us via @ProjectREPOPA or our new website http://repopa.eu/ and click on the Twitter icon.