

National equity-oriented public health strategy for Sweden

Ms Annika Nilsson

State Secretary

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

SWEDEN

Building a public health policy is a process – not a one shot game

- A process that takes time
- A process that involves many stakeholders and partners
- A process that needs fuel

Why determinants ?

- **Politicians cannot directly prevent deaths and ill health, but can indeed influence the underlying causes – the upstream approach**
- **Why inequalities?**
- **A profound political commitment based on values and human rights**

The overall Public Health objective:

“The creation of social conditions to ensure good health, on equal terms, for the entire population”

- 1. Participation and influence on society**
- 2. Economic and social security**
- 3. Secure and favourable conditions during childhood and adolescence**
- 4. Healthier working life**
- 5. Healthy and safe environments, and products**
- 6. A more health promoting health service**
- 7. Effective protection against communicable diseases**
- 8. Safe sexuality and good reproductive health**
- 9. Increased physical activity**
- 10. Good eating habits and safe food**
- 11. Reduced use of tobacco and alcohol, a society free from drugs and doping and a reduction in the harmful effects of excessive gambling**

Key issues

- **Most health determinants mainly fall under the responsibility of other policy areas than health and medical care**
- **How to convince other Ministries to apply a public health perspective in their respective policy areas**
- **How to set up an executive structure**

Our solution

- **Identify health objectives in existing policy areas and put them in a public health context**
- **Appoint a special Minister of Public Health and strengthen interministerial mechanisms**
- **Establish a National Steering Group for public health issues in which the most relevant national agencies are represented by their respective director-generals**
- **The Swedish National Institute for Public Health – the coordinating agency**

Implementation

- **Governmental directives to all concerned state agencies to take action on objectives under their sectoral responsibility**
- **The National Institute of Public Health to support and facilitate implementation for sectoral agencies and to publish a Public Health Policy Report**

The Public Health Policy Report

- The first was published in October 2005 (one every fourth year)
- Based on 38 principal indicators for determinants under each objective
- Focuses on how the policy is being implemented and to what extent it is contributing to achieving the objectives
- Analyses the development of socio-economic and gender inequalities
- Analyses actions and interventions
- Guides the Government to further develop the public health policy
- Will be presented to the Parliament

Some reflections ...

- **It takes time to get from action to results**
- **Public health policy must have strong support from the Parliament**