National equity-oriented public health strategy for Sweden

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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