



Building Healthy Communities Newsletter, Issue No 5, June 2010



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WELCOME

Welcome to the fifth newsletter of the Building Healthy Communities network. We are delighted to share the progress and achievements of the BHC initiative and hope that you find our work interesting and informative. We know that BHC is relevant to all areas of the EU and we hope that this newsletter helps to spread the news of our work.

In this newsletter we pick up on the theme of healthy sustainable lifestyles which featured in the BHC second thematic workshop, held in Torino in March 2010. Here you can read a summary of the workshop activities. As a reminder of the context for this theme, we include an overview of EU policy on combating health inequalities. Also in this newsletter, we continue our 'City Profile' feature with a look at Barnsley in the UK and an interview with Stephen Turnbull, the Assistant Director of Public Health for Barnsley and key contact for the BHC network.

Our round up of news from BHC partners includes the 2010 World Health Day campaign in Łódź, community health events in Lidingö, planning a sustainable future for the city of Lecce. Plus BHC's Lead Expert, Marco Santangelo gives his account of the HOPUS closing conference and the International Federation for Housing and Planning conference in Rabat, while I recount my participation on behalf of the BHC network at the launch of the Committee of the Regions Technical Platform on Health.

As always, you can find more information about the Building Healthy Communities project activities and outputs on <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/quality-sustainable-living/building-healthy-communities-bhc/homepage/>.

*Luisa Avedano
Strategic Manager
Torino*

Combating health inequalities: an overview of EU policy

Liz Mackie from The Gilfillan Partnership presents a brief overview of EU policy on health

Health and wellbeing are important to each and every one of us. While national, regional and local authorities have primary responsibility for health and are best placed to reduce inequalities, the EU can add value to this by taking actions which complement the work done in Member States, for example in relation to cross border health threats, patient mobility and reducing health inequalities.

A recent European Commission Communication¹ identifies the large disparities and inequalities across the EU in spite of the fact that the average level of health in the EU has continued to improve over recent years. Differences between the most advantaged and most disadvantaged sections of the population remain substantial and in some instances have even increased.

Between EU Member States there is a five-fold difference in deaths of babies under one year of age, a 14 year gap in life expectancy at birth for men and an eight year gap for women. Large disparities in health are also found between regions, rural and urban areas and neighbourhoods. People with lower educational levels, job status or income have a tendency to die younger and be sick more often. The combination of poverty with other vulnerabilities such as childhood or old age, disability or minority background further increases health risks.

The Communication sets out actions that the European Commission will take to help address health inequalities including:

- collaboration with national authorities, regions and other bodies;
- assessment of the impact of all EU policies on health inequalities to ensure that they help reduce them where possible;
- regular statistics and reporting on the size of inequalities in the EU and on successful strategies to reduce them; and,
- better information on EU funding to help national authorities and other bodies address the inequalities.

The Communication has been in the pipeline since the Commission adopted its new Health Strategy in October 2007. The Health Strategy aimed to provide, for the first time, an overarching strategic framework spanning core issues in health as well as health across all policies and global health issues. The Strategy aimed to set clear objectives to guide future work on health at the European level, and to put in place an implementation mechanism to achieve those objectives, working in partnership with Member States. The Strategy focused on four principles and three strategic themes for improving health in the EU. The four principles were:

- taking a value-driven approach;
- recognising the links between health and economic prosperity;
- integrating health in all policies; and,
- strengthening the EU's voice in global health.

The three strategic themes were:

- fostering good health in an ageing Europe;
- protecting citizens from health threats; and,
- dynamic health systems and new technologies.

1/ Solidarity in Health: Reducing Health Inequalities in the EU (COM(2009) 567 final 20/10/2009)

2/ 'Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013'. (COM(2007) 630 final 23/10/2007)

The Health Programme is the European Commission's main instrument for implementing the EU health strategy. The Programme aims, through projects and other actions it funds, to improve the level of physical and mental health and well-being of EU citizens and reduce health inequalities throughout the Community. The Programme, with a budget of some €300 million between 2008-2013, is implemented by the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers. The Programme supports health-promoting and preventive actions that address the major health determinants e.g., nutrition, physical activity, or smoking. The Programme is implemented in the form of annual work plans, which the European Commission adopts. The objectives of the current programme are to:

- improve citizens' health security;
- promote health, including the reduction of health inequalities; and, generate and disseminate health information and knowledge.

Developing Local Action Plans for Healthy Sustainable Lifestyles

Delia Giorgianni from QeC-ERAN is Project Assistant to the BHC network. Delia took part in the BHC second thematic workshop in Torino in March 2010 and gives her account of the workshop activities

In March 2010 the city of Turin (Italy) hosted the Building Healthy Communities Second Thematic Workshop. The workshop theme was Healthy Sustainable Lifestyles and its focus was on the Local Action Plans developed by each of the partner cities. More than 50 people from ten different cities took part at the event.

During the three workshop days the delegations from Amaroussion (Greece), Bacău (Romania), Baia Mare (Romania), Barnsley (UK), Belfast (UK), Lecce (Italy), Lidingö (Sweden), Łódź (Poland), Madrid (Spain) and of course Turin, presented and debated on their local situation, the state of the art of their Local Action Plans, the different approaches they are adopting in undertaking actions pertaining to health and quality of life, and the challenges and problems they face. Along with the delegates from the partner cities, representatives from three other URBACT II networks also took part: Fiorenza Deriu, Support Expert for the Active Age project, Heidrun Feigefeld, Lead Expert for the Suite project and Federico de Matteis, Lead Partner for the Hopus Project.

On Friday 5 March the whole group of participants visited Cascina Roccafranca a cultural and community centre established through the Urban 2 Program and the European Regional Development Fund.

The Centre is the result of the renovation of an ancient and abandoned seventeenth century building that now provides a public space of 2500 square meters where social events, training and projects are developed. The Centre has Foundation status constituted by the Municipality of Turin, which provides funds, services and staff, and the local organisations which contribute with their collaboration on the projects and the activities carried out by the Centre. For more information on Cascina Roccafranca see www.cascinaroccafranca.it and URBAN 2 Program.

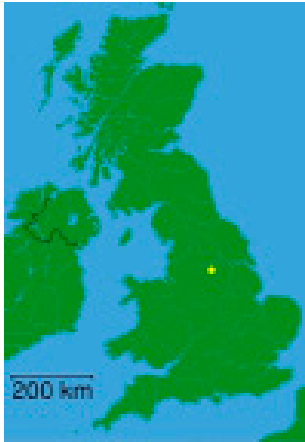
On the last workshop day all the participants were involved in a social activity, the Kitchen Club, during which they cooked their own dinner in a social kitchen. The Kitchen Club is part of a pilot project which uses this innovative shared cooking approach to build better relations among the participants.



Paula Jagric from Lidingö at the Kitchen Club

CITY PROFILE: BARNLSLEY

Located in Yorkshire and Humberside in England and with a population of around 218,000 people, Barnsley is one of many English towns making the transition from an industrial to a service economy. Once a town where the weaving and coal mining industries flourished, industrial restructuring, including closure of the coal mines in the 1980s and 1990s, has transformed Barnsley. Barnsley is proud of its industrial past. But the legacies of heavy industry and of economic restructuring include higher than average levels of poverty, unemployment and deprivation in some parts of Barnsley, resulting in significant health inequalities.



The Barnsley 2009 health profile shows that although the health of people in Barnsley is improving, it is worse than the England average on many indicators. Life expectancy, deaths from smoking, early deaths from heart disease and stroke and from cancer are all worse than the national average. There are health inequalities in Barnsley by ethnicity, gender and deprivation. A greater proportion of Barnsley's residents live in deprived areas than the national average and those living in deprived areas have shorter life expectancies; average life expectancy for men in

Barnsley is 75.3 years and for women 79.7 years, compared with the average for England which is 77.7 years for men and 81.8 years for women. Ethnic minority groups in Barnsley, in common with the rest of the UK, experience higher levels of deprivation, which is linked to poorer health. Barnsley has one of the worst results in England for the number of older people who are 'not in good health'.

While some of Barnsley's health statistics look bleak, the good news is that the overall trends are towards improvements. Early death rates from heart disease and stroke and cancer have all declined over the past 10 years. The prevalence of adult smoking has fallen as has smoking during pregnan-

cy. Barnsley is doing significantly better than the rest of England in tackling homelessness and violent crime. Addressing Barnsley's health problems is a long term challenge involving many agencies including Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Barnsley Primary Care Trust (the local agency of the National Health Service) and a range of other public, private and civil society organisations, several of which are engaged in the Building Healthy Communities network through the Barnsley Local Support Group. Barnsley's health priorities include reducing deaths from circulatory disease in the under 75s, obesity in primary school children and teenage pregnancies.

For the future, Barnsley has begun an ambitious programme of redevelopment under the banner 'Remaking Barnsley' with the aim of transforming Barnsley town centre into a thriving metropolis for the 21st century.

FOCUS ON BARNSELEY LOCAL SUPPORT GROUP

Stephen Turnbull is Assistant Director of Public Health for Barnsley and co-ordinator of the Local Support Group. Stephen explains the challenges facing the Local Support Group and what Barnsley is learning from its involvement in the Building Healthy Communities network.

What are the objectives of your Local Support Group?

The BHC programme in Barnsley is very much focused around developing the Local Action Plan (LAP). Our focus within this plan is to support communities to become more active as this is a significant way to improve health in its widest sense. We are focusing on young people in a deprived area being more active in their journey to a new school. In taking forward this work we have developed a number of other areas that the LSG remain interested in, including Health Impact Assessment.

Which agencies are involved in your Local Support Group?

The main agencies are Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Community Partnerships, Barnsley Premier Leisure, Voluntary Action Barnsley and Yorkshire Forward (the Managing Authority). Each agency is involved as they recognise that they have a role in building a healthier community.

What has your Local Support Group achieved so far?

We have made progress on two main fronts. Firstly, we are taking forward the 'Health in all policies' work. We have begun to build a network of interested officers from within the Local Authority who can influence the wider determinants of health and have taken forward work on Health Impact Assessment. Secondly, we have made progress in developing the Local Action Plan. Our Local Action Plan is looking to work in a deprived area with high levels of health need. We are looking to use an opportunity presented by the building of a new Advanced Learning Centre (ALC) in the area. This new facility will provide high quality education for children and young people –this in itself is a positive develop-

ment which will help to raise aspiration and also positively health. Our primary concern in this project is to encourage young people and their families to access the facility using active travel options rather than relying on their cars. We are hoping to use the LAP to further develop active travel options to other facilities including employment opportunities. Barnsley is building a range of new ALCs and if we can make a success of this project we would be looking at replicating our success.

What challenges does your Local Support Group face?

Our LSG faces a range of challenges, broadly these fall into three categories

First, partnership working: whilst we have a good range of agencies involved in the LSG these are in many ways only part of the picture. We have to be in contact with a whole range of partners across the public, private and voluntary/community sector. Even now we are making contact with new organisations, projects and people who are part of a complex picture.

Second, health: Improving health across a population is tremendously important and rewarding. If only it was easy too! Even though we are looking at a very specific issue, i.e. supporting children and young people to choose more active travel options to school, the complexities are still huge. We have discussed and investigated such a range of issues, examining bus routes, the built environment, access to local employment sites, community safety, access to bicycles, incentives, skills, and motivation and still there are many other factors that affect this fundamental issue.

Third, expectations and reality: We recognise that we may not be able to do everything that we hoped for. Availability of funds is going to be limited and whilst we will do what we can with what we have there is a very real issue of raising expectations both for ourselves and more importantly for the community that we are looking to work with.

How has your Local Support Group been involved in the trans-national elements of the BHC project and what benefits has this brought to your local work?

We have been involved in both exchanges and thematic meetings. Our experiences at these events have been universally positive. Two of our officers attended the exchange visit to Belfast City to look at their approach to Health Impact Assessment. This had an immediate and positive impact. On return from the event we started work on undertaking a Health Impact Assessment of our Local Development Framework Core Strategy. This is the strategy that sets out the new areas of housing and industrial development over the next 20 years. Having an understanding of how this strategy will affect the health of Barnsley helps to influence this work and the work programmes of agencies.

We have also attended the thematic workshops, like the recent one held in Turin. There is no doubt that all of the cities involved in BHC have a lot to learn from each other and we have been able to use some of the information from other LAPs in taking forward our plan. In this world of high technology and communications there is a lot to be said for sitting down and meeting people face to face.

LAUNCH OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS TECHNICAL PLATFORM ON HEALTH

Luisa Avedano took part in the launch of a new working tool presented by DG SANCO in collaboration with EUROREGIO III project, led by HealthClusterNet network. The context in which the Platform was launched was presented by Professor Jonathan Watson, Director of the HealthClusterNet network.

“Within the European Union there has been growing recognition of the important contribution of health in achieving sustainable regional development. It has been acknowledged that health is a key factor for economical development and social cohesion as it contributes to EU citizens well-being, economic wealth and prosperity. This is reflected in the EU’s Cohesion Policy and in the 2007-2013 programming period wherein Structural Funds explicitly included health sector investment, with an early emphasis on health infrastructure. At midterm of the current programming period, it is crucial to start defining the role health-related investment will play after 2013 to consolidate an efficient and ambitious Cohesion Policy.

Local and regional authorities are responsible respectively for health services and healthcare in many Member States and are therefore key actors on health related issues as they are best placed to ensure that services meet local needs. It is then very important to have them closely involved in shaping and implementing EU strategies in this field. The EU Health Strategy for 2008-2013 objectives could be effectively implemented by involving regions in areas such as health promotion, sustainable health workforce, health inequalities and health investments from the EU Structural Funds. The Committee of the Regions Technical Platform on Health offers an opportunity for local and regional authorities to share their experience and collaborate on their priorities.

To get access and benefit from Structural Funds there are clear challenges for the health sector including: expertise about how Structural Funds work, difficulties to translate linkages between health objectives and Cohesion policy priorities and objectives to ensure sustainable operation by complementing infrastructure investment with human resources capacity, to ensure strategic impact if health investments, and to use cross-sectoral policy approach. To increase health investments and maximise health gains in the next programming period, DG SANCO aims to introduce health priorities in the future SF Regulations and to support Member

States and regions to include health in the national and regional development plans. For these reasons EUROREGIO III project and DG SANCO decided to start working together and the first concrete step was the Conference: Structural Funds and Health: learning lessons and next steps”

Luisa presented some of the early BHC findings as well as some of the challenges that the partners involved in BHC are facing in the design of Local Action Plans. It was an interesting occasion for comparing different readings and points of view about the use of Structural Funds and the way local authorities are trying to get as many advantages as possible for the actual Regional Operational Plans. The programme of the day can be found at: www.healthclusternet.eu/pages/events

BHC PARTNERS' NEWS

World Health Day in Łódź

The City of Łódź joined in the 2010 World Health Day campaign *1000 cities, 1000 lives* with three days of activities in April 2010 which focused on opening up public spaces for health benefits. Under the title *World Health Day in the Green Ring of Tradition and Culture*, the Łódź activities centered on the area of the Green Ring of Tradition and Culture, which is the focus of the Building Healthy Communities project in Łódź.

On 9 April members of the Third Age University, a non-governmental organization for senior citizens, took a guided walking tour along Narutowicz Street - one of the most interesting streets of Łódź with many important historical and cultural objects, including the Concert Hall, the Great Theatre, the Fabryczna Railway Station, the Moniuszko Park and the Polonia Hotel. Their destination was Matejko Park, part of the Green Ring. The following day, children from Łódź orphanages took part in



Łódź residents take part in the World Health Day activities

two walking tours leading to the Botanical Gardens; one tour started from Poniatowski Park through Zdrowie Park and the other from Lublinek Forest through the residential area of Retkinia. On Sunday 11 April Nordic Walking instruction and an 8-kilometre march was organized in Zdrowie Park. On the same day a health promotion event took place in Promieniski Park. The participants were offered Nordic Walking instruction, exercise in a gym, physical fitness displays, mammograms, blood pressure and BMI measurements, open-air games for children and healthy diet consultations.

Building Healthy Communities in Lidingö

The City of Lidingö arranged a dialogue event as well as a healthy area walk for residents of its Gångsätra district on 31 May 2010. These events were the last in a series of meetings that started with an Open House event in January. Residents and associations were invited to voice their opinions on health issues such as the outdoor environment, healthy ageing and other activities in their neighbourhood. These dialogues are part of Lidingö's work within the Building Healthy Communities network and the district of Gångsätra is a pilot in implementing the city's health policy. "Many people expressed appreciation that we collected their opinions and we have received many interesting ideas from the residents," says Jeccika Eriksson, local BHC coordinator. "We will now compile the comments and see how we can synchronize the opinions within the city departments," explains Paula Jagric, Local Support Group coordinator. "One upcoming action is to build an outdoor meeting place with a shelter and BBQ where several generations can meet. Some other measures are already completed, such as an expansion of the skateboard park. Another important opinion has been that there should be more activities for the elderly. We have therefore opened up activities in the pensioners' home to all elderly living in the area. Other actions are underway but need to be planned carefully".



Dialogue with the community in Gångsätra district

A sustainable future for the city of Lecce

Students from the Universities of Lecce and Genoa are helping to envision the future for the city of Lecce. The future of Lecce involves its coast, its countryside, the economic development and the valorisation of its precious identity: the historical centre. A two day event in Lecce on 6 and 7 April 2010 brought the student team together for sessions on planning the future of the city in ways which are ecological, sustainable and sensitive to the landscape. The team includes students from the University of Lecce Environmental Health Sciences Department and the University of Genoa Urban Planning Department. The two Universities are exploring good practice in city developments which take a sustainable approach to land and resources.

At this first round table event, students from the Faculty of Architecture of Genoa were invited to suggest visions of the coast, the countryside, the university and city, the city centre, and the suburbs. On day one, the students visited Lecce and its territory investigating its weak and strong points, transforming them into visions of change during the second day.

These young architects imagined agriculture in the suburbs, the coast as a natural park, the famous amphitheatre of Lecce as a lecture-hall, the ancient wall as a green-filter for the historical centre; images which envision a natural, ecological, landscape sensitive to the transformation of the territory.

The students presented their projects to the Mayor of Lecce, Dr. Paolo Perrone, the assessor of Urban Planning, Mr. Roberto Marti, the director of The Urban Planning Bureau, Arch. Luigi Maniglio, and the professor of Urban Planning of Genoa, prof. Mosè Ricci, in the prestigious hall of Palazzo Turrisi Palumbo. This round table was also the occasion to present projects that are already in progress engaging important actions for a sustainable transformation of the city of Lecce. In this context Silvana Di Sabatino introduced Building Healthy Communities project for the city of Lecce: *“Urban and Sub-urban re-qualification plans through target actions to remove aerial high tension cables with emphasis on city outlook improvement to reinforce citizen city good perception and use of public space”*

The first step for ecolecce is to promote urban valorization projects, support citizens' involvement and critical perception, demonstrate the importance of involving citizens in planning; furthering sustainable development and urban requalification, BHC's proposals work perfectly in the frame of ecolecce.

BHC at the HOPUS closing conference

The URBACT II HOPUS project (Housing Praxis for Urban Sustainability) held its final conference in Rome on 22 and 23 April 2010. The conference summarised the project's two years of activity and presented the final output, the book *Housing for Europe: Strategies for Quality in Urban Space, Excellence in Design, Performance in Building*.

Marco Santangelo, Lead Expert for the Building Healthy Communities project, was invited to present the work of BHC and to explore the synergies between these URBACT II projects. Marco presented the BHC network's approach to urban regeneration, highlighting the link between health and quality of life that characterises the BHC approach, the network's work to establish quality of life indicators and on defining a toolkit for housing and city policy makers. The conference closed with a lively round table focused on possible answers to the question “would I want to live in this

place?” and on the consequences that such questions brings to policy, projects and place-making. Partners of the HOPUS group showed great interest in continuing the collaboration on such issues even with smaller events, so to maximise possibilities of future exchanges.

Although HOPUS has now ended, the tools and other outputs from HOPUS contribute to a shared set of resources for URBACT II related projects, and the collaboration among experts and partners will continue at the programme level through Cloud activities. Clouds are groups of URBACT II projects that work together to develop common activities. BHC is part of a Cloud that includes HOPUS, SUITE (on urban and social inclusion through housing) and two new projects: Together (on social inclusion and cohesion in cities) and Bring Up (on brownfields integrated urban policies).

BHC in Rabat

As BHC Lead Expert, Marco Santangelo was invited by the URBACT Secretariat to take part in an international conference organised by the International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP). The conference took place in Rabat, Morocco on 16 to 18 May 2010. The conference was a joint project of IFHP with COFHUAT, the French and Moroccan Ministries in charge of urban policy and the Municipality of Rabat. The conference was developed within the context of the Barcelona Process and the Union for the Mediterranean by taking current urban problems and policies as an issue that concerns everybody in their daily lives. Presentations at the conference focused on the improvement of the physical urban environment and of the quality of life and the reduction of urban inequality.

Marco presented the Building Healthy Communities network in the “Urban Renovation” session, highlighting the main findings from the BHC network activities so far. Marco found interesting links with a similar project that is being developed in Japan which relates people's well-being with health development in urban policies.

EU NEWS

Events

EU Open Health Forum 2010

Under the theme *Together for Health – A Strategy for the EU 2020*, the EU Open Health Forum takes place in Brussels on 29-30 June 2010. Organised by DG Health and Consumers, the Open Health Forum is a mechanism for the Commission to engage with public health stakeholders and is organised to maximise consultation, networking and exchange of ideas. More information is available on http://ec.europa.eu/health/interest_groups/eu_health_forum/open_forum/2010/index_en.htm#fullwidth.

IUHPE World Conference on Health Promotion

The 20th International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) World Conference on Health Promotion is focused on health, equity and sustainability and aims to build bridges between the fields of health promotion and sustainable development. The conference is on 11-15 July 2010 in Geneva, Switzerland. More information and booking details are on <http://www.iuhpeconference.net/>

Research

Focusing on obesity through a health equity lens

A second edition of the EuroHealthNet report on health inequalities and obesity has been published. First published in 2009, the report draws on over 100 projects running in 28 different countries to provide a rich source of ideas and information on tackling obesity and promoting health equality. An essential resource for health practitioners and policy makers throughout the EU, the report can be downloaded for free from <http://www.eurohealthnet.eu/images/publications/ym%20kuipers%20-%20focusing%20on%20obesity%20through%20a%20health%20equity%20lens%20-%20edition%202.pdf>

Funding

Preparatory Action in the field of Sport

The Sport Unit of DG Education and Culture is calling for proposals for transnational projects to identify and test networks and good practice in the field of sports. The objectives are to: fight against doping; promote social inclusion in and through sport; promote volunteering in sport. The total budget is €2,500,000 and EU financing is available for up to 80 percent of project costs. Projects must begin between December 2010 and March 2011 and end by 30 June 2012. Public bodies and civil society organisations in all Member States are eligible to apply. The application deadline is 31 August 2010. More information and application details are available from http://ec.europa.eu/sport/preparatory_actions/doc866_en.htm.

LIFE+

The next deadline for proposals to the 2007-2013 LIFE+ programme is 1 September 2010. LIFE+ funds projects in three broad areas: nature and biodiversity; environmental policy and governance; information and communication. The environmental policy and governance objective includes actions on environment and health and on urban environments. The maximum EU co-financing rate for LIFE+ projects is 50 per cent. Applications must be made to the national authorities by 1 September who will then forward eligible proposals to the European Commission. Details of national authorities for the LIFE+ programme can be found at <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/contact/nationalcontact/lifepusenv.htm>

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Newsletter

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