

“HEPRO-book” published in a prestigious publishing house

Written by Administrator
Wednesday, 04 May 2011 00:00

The HEPRO project, which was carried out in 2005 - 2008, and the WHO Healthy Cities are thoroughly discussed in a publication that is on Amazon.com’s list of “best empowerment books”.

It is Professor Roar Amdam, Volda University College in Norway, who has written the book. He found inspiration for the publication through his expert role in the HEPRO (Health and social well-being in the Baltic Sea Region, 2005-2008).

The project was led by the Østfold County Council and carried out by partners in the WHO Healthy Cities. The book is about public health, empowerment and planning.

– I see it as recognition that the book receives interest on Amazon. It means a lot for the further acceptance, says Amdam.

The book is called “Planning in Health Promotion Work: An Empowerment Model” It is published by the prestigious publishing house Routledge - known to only publish literature of the utmost quality. In the book especially good examples from Vejle (Denmark), Poznan (Poland) and Soenderborg (Denmark) are highlighted.

Relevant to public health environment

According to Amdam, both theoretical and practical planning are dominated by instrumental top-down approach. Here, the planner often acts as an expert who knows the needs of societies and what means that should be used to satisfy these. This approach is strongly criticized, among other things for regarding people and communities as clients. Many argue for a more bottom-up approach where participation, communication and commitment are emphasized.

– The book discusses how these two approaches can be combined in theory and practice and contribute to individual and collective capacity building (empowerment). Such a combination is particularly important in public health work, where a paramount goal is to make people take more responsibility for their own health, says Amdam.

He believes that public health work in many countries has a large potential for improvement when it comes to planning.

– Public Health workers tend to claim that they practice bottom-up planning, while in practice they do the opposite. Therefore, public health environment, and others engaged in planning and development, should read the book and reflect on how true empowerment planning ought to be practiced in their organizations and communities, “says Amdam.

International relevance

Amdam believes the book is relevant for many countries.

- Individuals and nations that are firmly rooted in the instrumental expert-driven planning, will probably find the book either of little relevance or in fact controversial. But the book has a

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universal message: It is basically about how we should work to ensure that the responsibility for people’s health is shared between individuals and the society. This is a debate that hopefully is relevant in all forms of political regimes, he emphasizes.

Amdam points out that there are many highly recognized books within the field of planning and public health, and the book is not designed to compete with any of them. The purpose is to supplement the existing literature with an approach to planning and public health where instrumental and communicative planning are combined in an empowerment model.

The book is used as an inspiration for the ongoing project HEPROGRESS, where health profiles are used to improve the public health planning.

Read more about the book here.

<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415583671/>

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Planning-Health-Promotion-Work-Empowerment/dp/B004OBZYT8>

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