

How to tackle the challenges of growing social inequalities in health by the local and regional development and actions? – was a core topic of the presentations, discussions and debates that took place on 22 – 23 October 2012 in Jurmala, Latvia during the Final Conference of HEPROGRESS project.

The two-day conference gathered together project partners, public health professionals and academics as well as local decision makers. The conference was third of its series, which was initiated in October 2011 in Amata, Latvia and was continued in May 2012 in Sarpsborg, Norway.

Every time the conferences look for ideas, ways and solutions how to achieve a common goal for sustainable community development by reducing social inequalities in health. Over the months, they became the forum that allows for experience exchange on the development of local evidence-based policies, interventions and empowerment planning.

This time, during the meeting in Jurmala the core topic were the **results of the health survey** conducted in Vidzeme Planning region and Østfold County in the framework of HEPROGRESS Project (2011-2012). The outcomes, presented by Project Manager Niels K. Rasmussen, sparked the discussion on what can and should be done in the municipalities, what actions should be initiated by local decision makers and what is their current ability to set priorities in different political areas for targeted actions. This was discussed over the course of two days in the national groups as well as during the common international exchange. It is expected that after the end of the project, the survey will be regarded by local decision makers in Latvia and Norway as a useful tool for planning and development of actions.

However, already now, **positive developments are observed:** e.g. Mayor of Moss decided to consider the health impact of all decisions taken in his municipality, Vidzeme planning region is finalizing its Public Health Strategy and there is the cooperation established between municipalities and universities both in Latvia and Norway. All this promises for better interventions for public health and health promotion, planned on the base of evidence.

Presentations from the Final Conference are [available here](#)

Presentation on the Health survey in Latvia and Norway is [available here](#)

Final Conference of HEPROGRESS

Written by Karolina

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* [HEPROGRESS](#) – Reducing health related social and gender inequalities and barriers to social and economic participation. Evidence based local policies, interventions and empowerment planning is a two-year project conducted by Østfold County Council from Norway and Vidzeme Planning Region from Latvia with the participation of municipalities, universities and other institutions from Latvia, Norway and Finland.

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