

# Local health promotion and prevention as an integral part of sustainable development

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## Local health promotion and prevention

According to the Ottawa Charta of 1986 health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. To reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, an individual or group must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities.

### Community action for health

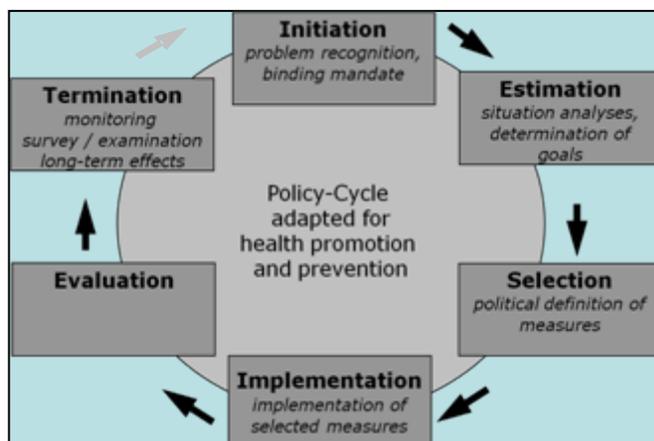
In communities, various problems and challenges arise within public, semi-public or private settings. Addictions, littering, vandalism, but also violence, social problems or even mental health are challenges, which communities have to face. Health promotion and prevention in the psychosocial field, especially in a communal setting, have to aim for participation and empowerment as well as to enhance the areas of social justice and equal opportunity emphasized in the Ottawa Charta.

## Local policy-process

The local policy-process based on the 'Policy-Cycle' by Brewer & deLeon (1983) demonstrates the political community processes and describes six essential phases (see figure, **bold text**).

Jordi & Frei (2007) have adapted the policy-cycle for local policy-processes concerning prevention action-programs.

The six phases can now be described as shown in the figure (*italic text*).



## Practical implementation

How can these ideas be reduced to practice? An approved method is community-oriented work. In doing so, it is essential to work in and with the setting. This means that the organisational structure and the processes have to be analyzed and if necessary to be developed. It is also crucial to involve the people living and working in the community.

Setting-oriented health promotion and prevention has to be understood as an organisational development process. In the communal setting this means that a policy-process has to be started and passed through.

## Sustainable development

The conditions and topics mentioned above accord with the areas of sustainable development, especially concerning social values and environment.

The *social dimension* is a key factor for local sustainable development. Through participation of individuals within the community, enhanced by specific participatory methods, we support an equal balance between different social needs and social powers. In that, options for action that are relevant for health can be enhanced both, on a local and on an individual level.

If the implementation of such processes and the anchoring of the results in the community succeeds, in the political culture as well as in the society, a big step towards sustainable development in the communal setting will be achieved.

RADIX works very successfully with this approach and tries to enhance a coordinated co-action under participation of political responsible persons in the community as well as from the health and social sector. Furthermore, RADIX aims to involve people from all other different areas of life. Doing so, RADIX proceeds systematically and follows quality features on the levels of structures, processes and results.