

Finnish examples in health promotion inspire the administrators in St Petersburg

Practical application of PYLL analysis, good practices of strategic planning in municipalities and health in all policies were the key topics of the study tour to Finland organized by the project "Healthier People – Management of Change through Monitoring and Action". 9 participants from St Petersburg – representing administration of Kalininsky District, Committee for Social Policy, Medical Information and Analytical Centre as well as the NGO Development Centre visited Lappeenranta, Lahti and Helsinki on their tour on 12 – 14 February 2013.

The team is involved in the work on Strategic Intervention Plan for Kalininsky District – a document that is being produced in the frame of "Healthier People" project after the analysis of PYLL (Potential Years of Life Lost) was conducted in the community last year. Therefore, the main interest of the group was in the practical implications of PYLL analysis for local policy making.

Experts – public health practitioners, administrators and researchers from Finland provided extensive information regarding the use of PYLL data for planning of the social and health interventions on the municipal and regional level, partnership for health and the impact of preventive public health of economy. The good examples of anti-tobacco and anti-alcohol policies as well as the role of cancer screening in lowering avoidable morbidity and mortality were also presented.

Probably the most positive experience was the visit to the Health Kiosk in Lahti. The Kiosk – maintained by the City of Lahti – is located in the shopping centre "Trio" and is open to everyone. It allows the costumers to have an access to health care services in a reliable, easy and rapid way. Lahti is the first major city in Finland to offer this type of service. The health kiosk services are provided by three healthcare professionals: a physiotherapist, a public health nurse and a registered nurse and over 22.000 people benefit from it every year. The visit proved to be inspirational to the administrators of the Kalininsky District. *We will implement the idea of Health kiosks in our area as soon as possible.* – says Elena Rahkova, Vice-head of Administration of Kalininsky District – *After coming back home, we will discuss it with the Head of our Administration and the Board, but also with the business – the owners of the big shopping centres.*

I am so impressed! Finnish people have so much energy and willingness to work for health! – admits Zhanna Soldatenkenkova, Head of Statistic Department at St Petersburg Medical Information and Analytical Centre, when summarizing the study trip.

The next step in "Healthier People" project conducted in Kalininsky District is now to finalize the Strategic Intervention Plan for the area. The plan should be written in cooperation with different sectors, institutions and civil society. Yulia Repina, referent of Department for International Cooperation, Health Committee of St Petersburg, believes that the Finnish examples will support the process in the District. *The time for the study trip was chosen very right – now is the best moment for participants from St Petersburg to assimilate the experience of Finnish municipalities which made a huge progress in PYLL analysis an implementing its results in practice* – says Ms Repina.



Guests at Lappeenranta railway station on 13 February 2013

Ms. Karolina Mackiewicz, Coordinator, Projects & Communication, Baltic Region Healthy Cities Association, 19 February 2013