

The PoHeFa Method

Roadmap

1. The project behind the PoHeFa Method

The PoHeFa project was originally initiated because, experiences from working with local authorities had shown that, local authorities very often do not have an overall strategic and structured approach towards health promotion. Often their activities are based on impulsive decisions, the activities are implemented in order to have a short term political effect and most often they are not evaluated in order to measure the effects.

The PoHeFa project wanted to develop and present a method that local authorities can apply in order to obtain a better overview and understanding of their visions, strategies and concrete activities, ensuring a better and long term effect of their investments in the area.

2. The overall objective of the PoHeFa Method

The overall objective of the PoHeFa Method is in overall terms to introduce a strategic and structured working process in relation to planning, implementation and evaluation of health promoting activities within children, young people and their families.

Specifically the PoHeFa Method raises the awareness within municipal decision makers and professional practitioners on how socio-cultural factors in local settings, have an important influence on lifestyle choices and the general health within children, young people and their families. Hence the socio-cultural factors must be taken into consideration already in the planning and implementation process, in order to develop health promoting activities that have a better possibility to have a sustainable effect.

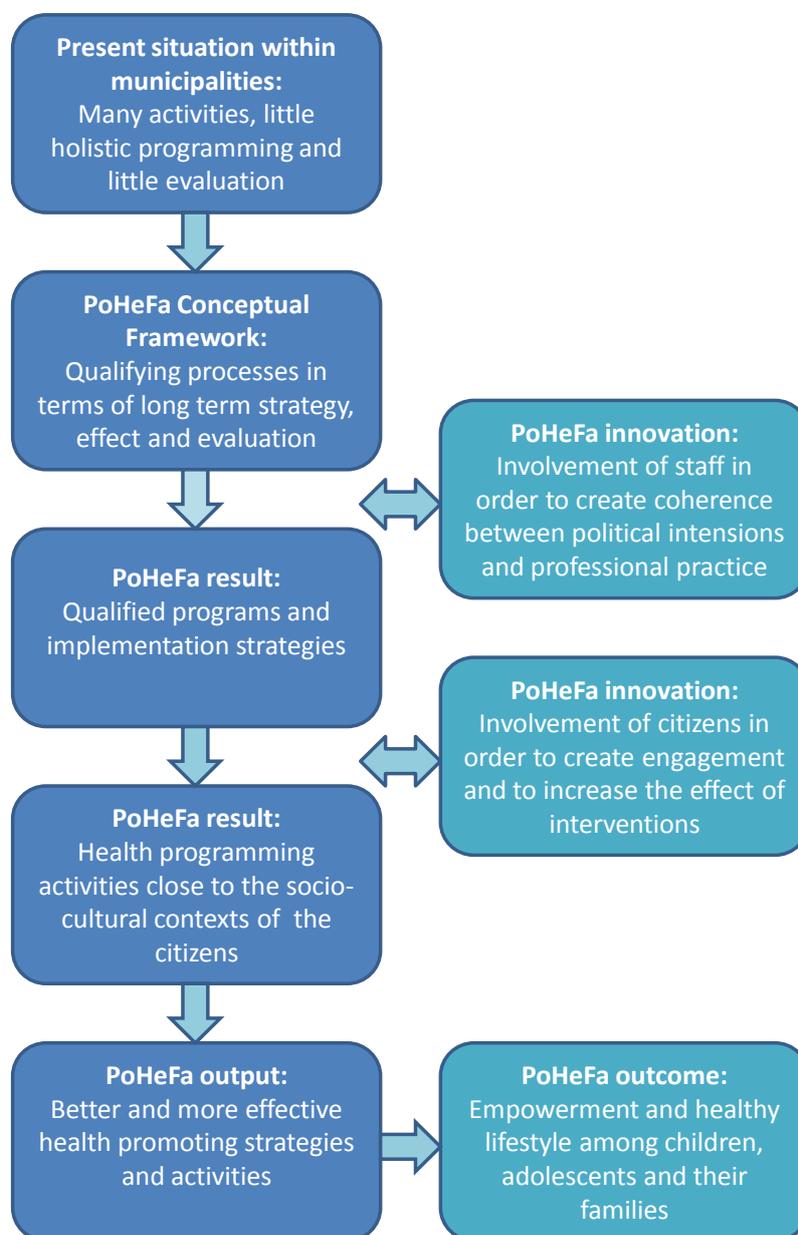
3. The PoHeFa Method takes a dialogue oriented approach

The PoHeFa Method promotes and supports a dialogue based management culture within local authorities, using both top-down and bottom-up communication. In order to ensure that the socio-cultural context is taken into consideration when planning, implementing and evaluating health promoting activities, the PoHeFa Method raises the following two questions which should be the basis for the establishment of the dialogue based management:

- What do the health practitioners know from their practical work, which is important in order to formulate good policies, strategies and sets of action?
- What should we know about the citizens in order to define useful activities and how can we enter into a good dialogue with them in order to evaluate the activities?

In a schematic form, the dialogue based management looks like this:

Figure 1: The innovative dialogue based aspect of the PoHeFa Method



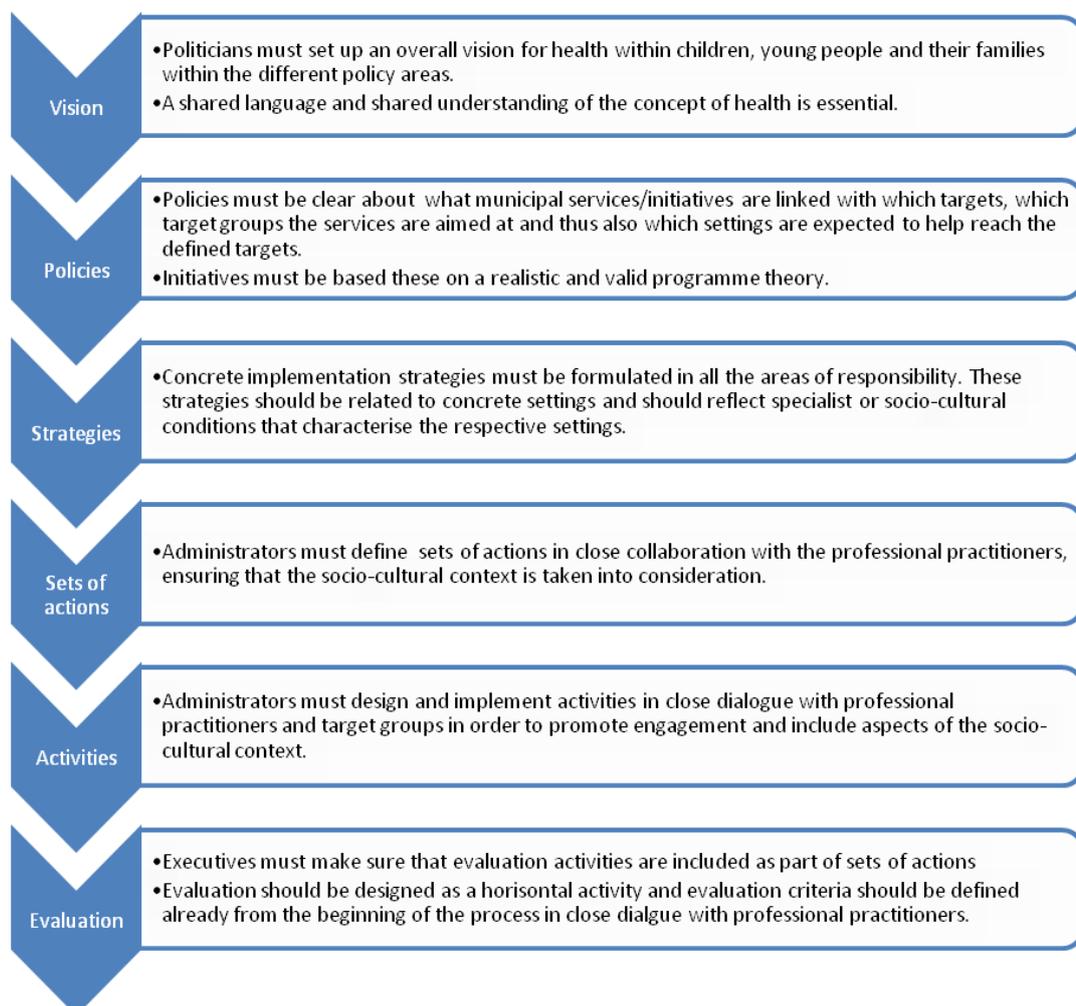
4. The PoHeFa Method establishes a good political “working culture”

During the PoHeFa project, partners noted a political tendency to go straight to execution of health promoting activities without making sure that:

- The activities are in harmony with the overall vision in the health promoting area.
- All relevant policy areas are involved and that there is coherence between the different policy areas.
- The activities are based on a valid program theory taking the socio-cultural context of the target group into consideration.
- Both professional practitioners and target groups are actively involved.
- There is a clear implementation and evaluation strategy.

Applying the following levels of responsibility will provide quality and effectiveness in the health promoting areas:

Figure 2: Levels of responsibility



The PoHeFa Method clarifies and stresses the importance of different levels of responsibility in order to ensure coherence between policies, strategies and concrete activities.

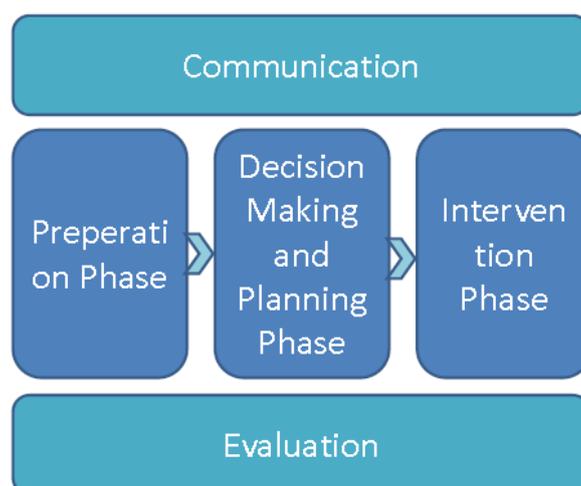
5. The PoHeFa Toolbox

Within the PoHeFa project, 12 local authorities from 6 European countries (Denmark, Finland, UK, Germany, Italy and Cyprus) have worked with the PoHeFa method in practice.

These 6 countries are very different in relation to political structures and culture, but despite the differences, the PoHeFa method has shown to be very useful in all countries, because the method is quite user friendly and flexible to apply in different countries.

Based on experiences from the practical work in the local authorities, the PoHeFa Method and the available tools have been divided into five main phases as explained below:

Figure 3: Five main phases



Communication

- How to create a common understanding of the concept of health through communication.
- How to communicate and share knowledge, strategies and results in order to create a) a common “healthy” culture on local level and b) a foundation for joint action and identification of synergy effects.

Preparation phase:

- How to prepare a policy analysis for the local authority in order to get a comprehensive overview and understanding of the correlation between policies, strategies, resources and interventions.
- How to ensure a structured involvement of local actors in the planning phase, such as health professionals and citizens.

Decision making and planning phase:

- How to prepare an informed decision making process.
- How to create a common political and strategic approach to health promotion, meaning that the local decision makers should have a common understanding of causes and effects in order to assure quality in intervention.
- How to ensure a broad collaboration on local level.

Intervention phase:

- How to create a cross-sectorial focus.
- How to ensure the involvement of citizens.
- How to work explicitly with the socio-cultural context of the target group.
- How to ensure that interventions are based on a baseline, which makes it easier to evaluate the effects of the interventions.

Evaluation phases

- How to create a culture of evaluation on a continuous basis.
- How to ensure that evaluation becomes an integrated process oriented activity starting already at the beginning of the project.