

Evidence-informed Policy Network (EVIPNet) Europe

First EVIPNet Europe Training-the-Trainer Workshop, Bled, Slovenia, 14–17 October 2014



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Introduction

EVIPNet Europe is an initiative of the WHO Regional Office for Europe. It aims to increase country capacity in developing health policies informed by the best available research evidence – in line with and support of "Health 2020" (1). EVIPNet Europe institutionalizes knowledge translation (KT) – the process of fostering research use in policy-making – through the establishment of national country teams (so-called knowledge translation platforms). These groups plan and implement KT activities at country level. The following summarizes the first EVIPNet Europe Training-the-Trainer (TTT) Workshop in Bled, Slovenia.

Capacity-building workshop on evidence briefs for policy

From 14 to 17 October 2014, EVIPNet Europe held its second multicountry meeting, a TTT workshop on using research evidence for policy-making (EIP) in Bled, Slovenia. The objectives of the EVIPNet Europe TTT workshop were to:

- enhance participants' skills in acquiring, assessing, adapting and applying research evidence;
- teach the fundamentals of how to prepare evidence briefs for policy and organize policy dialogues; and
- enable participants to become facilitators for future EVIPNet Europe capacity-building events.

There were 18 participants from the EVIPNet Europe country teams and the heads of the country offices from 12 Member States. The main purpose of the workshop was to exchange experiences and lessons learnt, and to increase knowledge and skills in facilitation techniques for participants to become future facilitators of EVIPNet workshops. The workshop was facilitated by the WHO Secretariat of EVIPNet Europe and EIP experts from various parts of the world including Belgium, Chile and Uganda.

Workshop content

The 3.5-day workshop covered three major components.

Part I EIP concepts, EVIPNet Europe updates and country experiences:

- definition of evidence and its role in policy-making;
- EVIPNet Europe's mandate, methods and current activities; and
- exchanges of experiences and lessons learnt from pilot countries, mainly Slovenia, the Republic of Moldova and Tajikistan.

Part II Sessions on EIP methodologies:

- clarifying a problem, describing policy options and bringing about change;
- finding and assessing evidence;
- rapid response mechanisms;
- evidence brief for policy development; and
- policy dialogue.

Part III Sessions on teaching and facilitation methodologies:

- adult learning principles; and
- facilitation techniques.

Workshop results

Workshop participants gave a high rating to the quality of the technical and teaching methodology sessions. There was a substantial increase in knowledge and skills in all areas, particularly prominent in the area of workshop facilitation and teaching EIP sessions.

The opportunity to meet face to face with other EVIPNet Europe champions was invaluable and indispensable in increasing participants' capacity; it also allowed them to build close ties and mutual support and to share resources and information. To foster and strengthen this network of excellence, the WHO Secretariat of EVIPNet Europe will explore options to set up a virtual forum in which the network members can participate in a facilitated dialogue on EIP topics.

Following this workshop, the national champions will have immediate opportunities to apply their teaching methodology skills and co-facilitate EVIPNet Europe's national capacity-building workshops. Once they have adequate hands-on experience, they will be able to plan, organize and conduct the workshops with minimum guidance from the Secretariat and enable sustainable, country team-driven capacity-building effort.

"This was one of the best trainings I have been to! I was able to learn from the facilitators and from each other to get motivated and energized, which is necessary for us to go on."

Workshop participant

Reference

1. WHO Regional Office for Europe. Health 2020: a European policy framework and strategy for the 21st century. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2013 (<http://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/health-2020-a-european-policy-framework-and-strategy-for-the-21st-century>, accessed 6 May 2015).