

# **Work Package 6 National Report Sweden**

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## BACKGROUND

The European Network for Action on Ageing and Physical Activity (EUNAAPA) was formed to facilitate implementation of evidence-based knowledge about physical activity and physical functioning and ways of assessing these areas. To gain information about how policymakers, from different sectors and parts of the country, work within this area, they were interviewed through telephone. This report shows the results of information gained through the Swedish policymakers and the results of the workshop.

## METHODS

### Mini Phone Survey

#### *Recruitment procedure*

Twenty-three policymakers from different sectors, backgrounds and geographical sites in Sweden were contacted through mail and telephone calls and agreed to participate in the interview, see Table 1.

**Table 1.** Number of policymakers in the different sectors responding to the interview

	Sport sector		Health Care Sector		Social Care Sector	
	Government/ Political Parties	NGOs	Government/ Political Parties	NGOs	Government/ Political Parties	NGOs
National/ Regional	2	2	2	2	6	2
Local	1	1	4	0	1	0

#### *Interview*

The survey was distributed by the leaders of WP6 in Germany and consisted of questions regarding actions, goals, obligations and resources (Attachment 1). The questions were posed by the Swedish EUNAAPA members, and the participants were asked to respond to the statements according to a 5-graded scale ranging from 1 – “not true at all” to 5 – “definitely true”. The answers were coded and recorded in an excel-file and sent to Germany for analyses.

#### **Workshop**

All policymakers that participated in the Mini Phone Survey were invited to the workshop. The first part of the workshop consisted of presentations of the EUNAAPA project and the results of Work Packages 4 and 5. This was followed by three short presentations of “good examples” from different parts of Sweden concerning health promotion: staff visiting people living in small villages, offering different health related tests; adaptation of the environment to enhance physical activity for elderly people; and group gymnastics for the aged.

The second part started with a short presentation from each policymaker regarding their contribution to the field of physical activity for elderly people. After that a discussion followed, where the following questions were addressed:

- Governmental policy document
- National and European Guidelines
- Physical Activity on Referral (FAR) – how to implement the idea on levels like primary health care, acute geriatrics, residential homes and the like?
- How facilitate for elderly people to be physically active in the community? Accessibility, environment (lamps, benches, prepared walking areas, toilets etc), arenas like gyms, sport centers and the like.
- Founding of a national network

## RESULTS

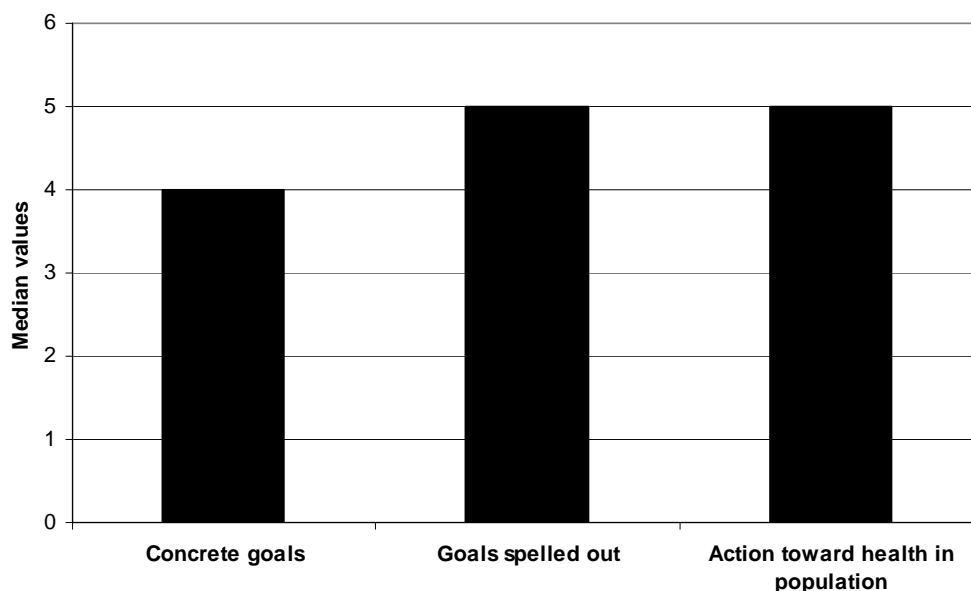
### Mini Phone Survey

#### *Action*

Most of the organizations (70%), that the policymakers represented, reported that they take action in the field of physical activity for elderly people. Lack of actions was mainly reported within the Health Care Sector on the national level and for some of the organizations in the Social Sector also on the national level. The most common reason for not taking action was that it was not part of the obligations.

#### *Goals*

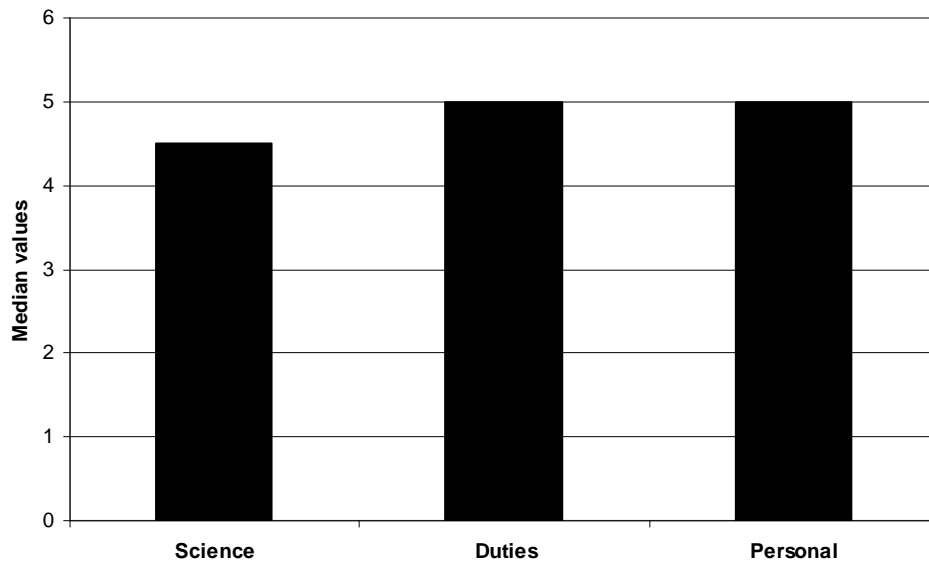
Most of the policy makers, that took action, reported that the goals were concrete, spelled out and aimed at improving health in the population, see Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Median values of the answers to the different statements in regard to goals

### *Obligations*

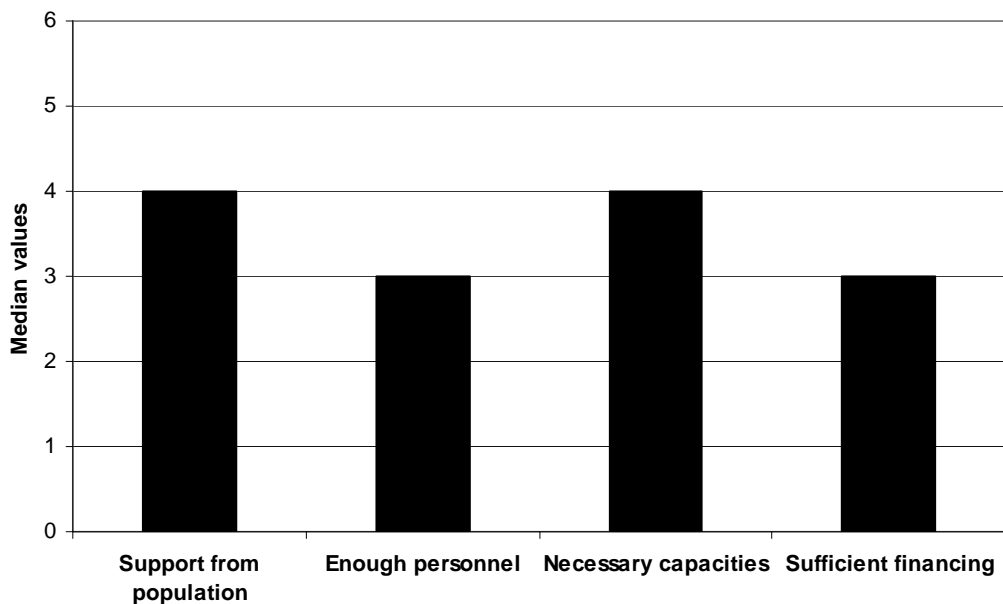
The policy makers stated that the obligations to take action were demanded strongly by science, professional duties and a personal obligation, see Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Median values of demands of the obligations to take action

### *Resources*

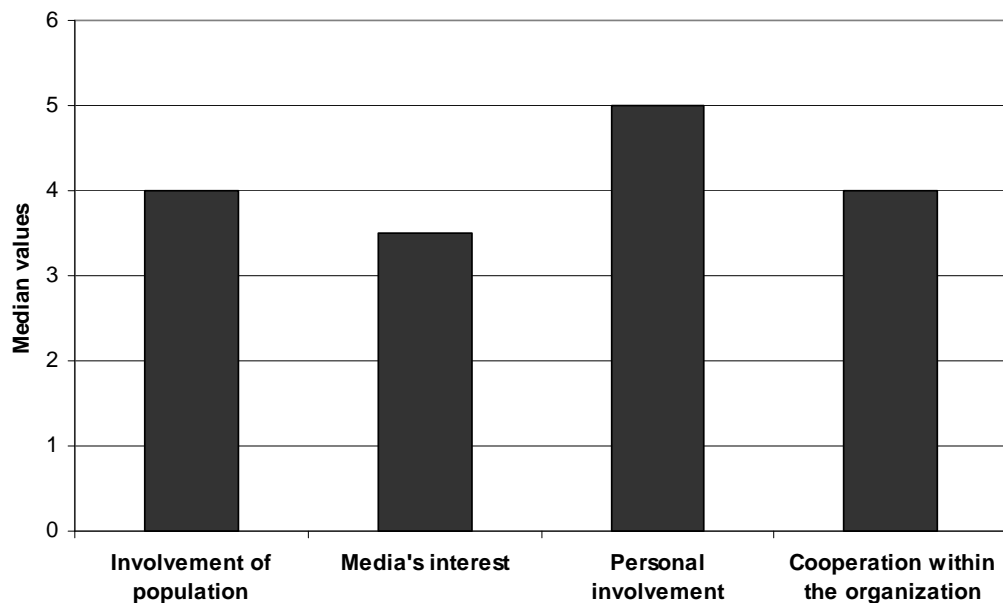
The median values for resources were somewhat lower compared to goals and obligations, see Figure 3. There seem to be a lack of enough personnel and sufficient financing to fulfil the goals.



**Figure 3.** Median values of existing resources to take action

### *Overall set-up*

Opportunities have increased in Sweden during the last year to take action, but there is still a lack of interest from the media.



**Figure 4.** Median values of the overall set-up in relation to opportunities from different areas.

### *Organizations not taking action*

Three of the seven organizations that did not take action had no goals for potential actions. The median (md) values for potential action were similar to those organizations taking action except for “action toward health in the population” md=3, “enough personnel md=2, “personal involvement md=4 and “cooperation within the organization” md=3.

### *Summary of the analysis conducted by the WP6-group*

A general look at the four policy determinants reveals a very favourable policy landscape for physical activity promotion among older people in Sweden. The situation with respect to most items on policy goals and obligations is very positive. There are also few organizations who state that goals of their activities in the area of physical activity among older people are not concrete enough.

The participants raised some problems related to the resources available. This pertains predominantly to a perceived lack of personnel and financial resources. But there were also organisations that doubted that they had the necessary capacities.

Policy opportunities for the topic of physical activity and ageing seem to have increased compared to last year. With the exception of two organisations, most policy makers state that the media’s interest in the topic has increased. Also, involvement of the participants themselves and internal co-operations are evaluated quite favourably. There are some policy makers who assessed the overall situation rather critically, but they come from a variety of sectors.

In relation to policy determinants, organizations on the national level reported more problems compared to the local level.

## **Workshop**

The Workshop took place the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2008 in Stockholm and was hosted by the Institute for Evidence-Based Social Work Practice (IMS). When necessary the IMS provided financial support for transportation to the workshop to ensure that participation was well spread according to the matrix. Of the 23 invited policymakers that agreed to participate, 18 finally participated in the workshop. Unfortunately, both organizations representing the Sport sector (NGOs) on the national level as well as representatives from the Social Ministry did not participate. Reasons for absence were sickness or that other urgent obligations were prioritized. Professor Per Renström, chairman of the Swedish Sport Research Council and member of the Medical Commission of the IOC was invited to lead and summarize the discussion.

Most of the policymakers were not experts in the field of physical training programmes/promotion strategies and physical functioning assessments and had therefore no knowledge in relation to the results presented.

During the presentation from each organization it became clear that several of the organisations within the health care sector on the national level, both governmental and NGOs, did not have specific goals toward the older population and physical activity was only one of many parts of the health promotion goals.

Several topics were discussed during the second section. In conclusion, the workshop agreed upon the following statements:

- Elderly people should, by means of physical activity, be given the opportunity to promote their health and counteract unnecessary functional decline. This should be enhanced through a society planning that considers accessibility, a varied choice of activities and an arena for fitness control, where individually adjusted training and advice can be given. National guidelines for evidence-based physical training and education of providers should be established.
- The participants of the workshop formed a network that, in the nearest future, will be run by the EUNAAPA members. For future work, a national organization will have to take the responsibility. To enhance this, an obligation/assignment from the ministry should be established. The policymaker from the parliament promised to pursue this issue and discuss it with the Minister in charge.

## **DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY**

The national workshop was much appreciated by the participants. It resulted in an increased awareness of both possibilities and barriers and gave a good opportunity to establish contacts between different organizations. The lack of an official obligation and/or assignment from the government seems to be the main reason why organisations like The National Institute of Public Health and The National Board of Health and Welfare do not work specifically with these issues and are reluctant to take responsibility for a national network. To be able to create National Guidelines and to work with further implementation the existence of an official agent will probably be necessary.

Country:	Respondent:
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Dear Madam or Sir,

My institution is part of the EU-sponsored EUNAAPA project (European Network for Action on Ageing and Physical Activity). The project investigates and promotes physical activity as a means to improve the health and well-being of older people throughout Europe. In this context, we would like to learn more about your organization's engagement in the area of physical activity and health of older people.

Please relate all questions exclusively to the **specific topic of physical activity and health among older people.**

**1. Do you and your organization generally take any action with regard to the issue of physical activity and health among older people?**

Yes  → *Proceed to question 2*

No  → *Proceed to question 7*

**2. Please describe this action shortly:**

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**Please relate the following questions exclusively to the above-mentioned action taken by your organization.**

*(Remark for interviewer: If there is more than one action taken by the respondent's organization, ask him/her to name the most important one and to relate the following questions to this action only)*

**3. If you think of the goals involved for you and your organization regarding the action in the field of physical activity and health among older people, to what extent are the following statements true from your point of view?**

	not true at all				definitely true
The goals are concrete enough.	1	2	3	4	5
The goals are officially spelled out.	1	2	3	4	5
The action centres on improving the health of the population.	1	2	3	4	5

4. If you think about the obligations which you and your organization are governed by regarding the action in the field of physical activity and health among older people, to what extent are, from your point of view, the following statements true?

	not true at all				definitely true
Scientific results demand the action.	1	2	3	4	5
The action is part of my professional duties.	1	2	3	4	5
Personally I feel obliged to do something in this field.	1	2	3	4	5

5. Considering the resources available to you and your organization regarding the action in the field of physical activity and health among older people, to what extent are, from your perspective, the following statements true?

	not true at all				definitely true
The population supports the action.	1	2	3	4	5
There is enough personnel.	1	2	3	4	5
My organization has the necessary capacities.	1	2	3	4	5
There are sufficient financial resources.	1	2	3	4	5

6. If you generally consider the overall set-up regarding the action in the field of physical activity and health among older people, how did the following factors change during the last year?

	... has worsened.			... has im- proved.	
The involvement of the population ...	1	2	3	4	5
The media's interest ...	1	2	3	4	5
My own involvement ...	1	2	3	4	5
The cooperation within my organization ...	1	2	3	4	5

**Thank you very much for you participation!**

**7. Please explain shortly why your organization does not take any action regarding this issue:**

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Even if your organization has so far not taken any action regarding physical activity and health among older people, it may do so in the future. Your organization may already have certain goals with respect to this issue. There may also be obligations to become active, or resources for future action. In the following, we would like to get some more detailed information on these issues.

Please relate the following questions to potential action taken by your organization in the field of physical activity and health among older people.

**8. If you think of the goals involved for you and your organization regarding potential action in the field of physical activity and health among older people, to what extent are the following statements true from your point of view?**

	not true at all				definitely true	There are no goals
The goals are concrete enough.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The goals are officially spelled out.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	not true at all				definitely true	Don't know
Potential action would center on improving the health of the population.	1	2	3	4	5	6

**9. If you think about the obligations which you and your organization are governed by regarding potential action in the field of physical activity and health among older people, to what extent are, from your point of view, the following statements true?**

	not true at all				definitely true
Scientific results demand action to be taken.	1	2	3	4	5
Such an action would be part of my professional duties.	1	2	3	4	5
Personally I feel obliged to do something in this field.	1	2	3	4	5

**10. Considering the resources available to you and your organization regarding potential action in the field of physical activity and health among older people, to what extent are, from your perspective, the following statements true?**

	not true at all			definitely true	
The population would support the action.	1	2	3	4	5
There would be enough personnel.	1	2	3	4	5
My organization would have the necessary capacities.	1	2	3	4	5
There would be sufficient financial resources.	1	2	3	4	5

**11. If you generally consider the overall set-up regarding potential action in the field of physical activity and health among older people, how did the following factors change during the last year?**

	... has worsened.			... has im- proved.	
The involvement of the population ...	1	2	3	4	5
The media's interest ...	1	2	3	4	5
My own involvement ...	1	2	3	4	5
The cooperation within my organization ...	1	2	3	4	5

**Thank you very much for you participation!**