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## **Building professional Health Promotion Competencies by joint project in Estonia and Finland**

### **Background/Objectives**

The skilled workforce is critical to the Health Promotion (HP) capacity building to meet future challenges. To identify and to better respond to future competence needs, a research and development project is conducted jointly by Estonian and Finnish higher education institutions. The project Health Promotion Programme (HPP 2016-2019) is funded by the EU Interreg CB program. The process and results of the HPP-project will be presented here.

### **Methods**

Aligned methods were used in both countries, including focus group (FG) interviews, roundtables, survey and workshops. FG interviews (n=17) with experts addressed their anticipations of future competencies. An e-questionnaire to explore future HP competence needs was developed based on the FG results, previous HP competence research, the IUHPE's definitions of Core Competencies and Professional Standards for HP (2016), and the roundtables. The questionnaire included 77 competence statements structured on nine areas. Survey data were collected in spring 2017 (n=588/Finland, n=249/Estonia) from public authorities, health enterprises, education institutions, NGOs and other interest groups representatives. The internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha) of each nine competence areas indicated a high reliability of the scales (Cronbach Alpha from .787 to .912.). To interpret the results and to design HP study modules, workshops were held with HP experts and professionals.

### **Results**

The areas and statements of e-questionnaire indicate FG Informants' perceptions from Estonia and Finland of future competence needs. They also cover applicable the HP Core Competence areas defined by the IUHPE, with contextual emphasis from EE and FI. Based on the survey results, Enable Change, Comprehensive Knowledge Base and Communication were evaluated in both countries as the most essential future competence areas. Except for Enable Change, Estonian respondents, compared to Finns, evaluated the essentiality of each competence area higher. In single statements on perceived essentiality there were some differences between the countries. Eight 5 ECTS of HP study modules have been developed.

### **Discussion**

HPP-project revealed the importance of identifying HP competence standards globally to develop a shared vision of what constitutes the specific competencies for effective health promotion practice. The applicable HP competence framework should also be adapted for contextual HP structures and needs.

**Keywords:** Health Promotion, Future Competencies, Capacity Building

