The nature of evidence for "healthy planning"

A strategic approach to evidence-based planning

Dr. Marleen Bekker,
Maastricht University and Radboud University
ESRC seminar 29 June 2015 Bristol

Outline

1. Problem analysis
2. An action study:

                                       The provincial Aspect policy on health in North Brabant

3. Method: Responsive evaluation
4. Results: Perceptions and interactions

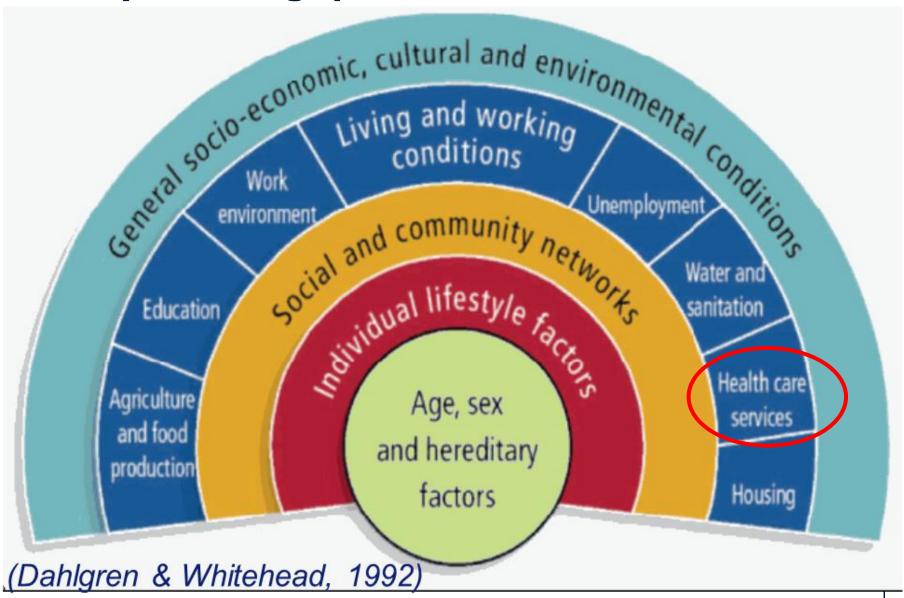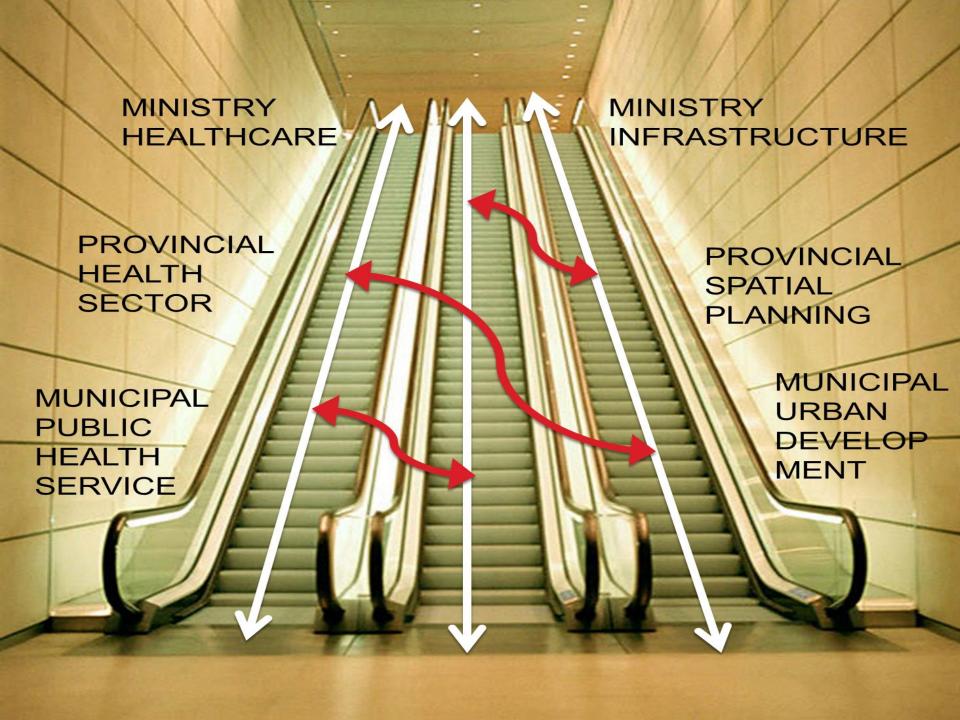   Agendasetting: what does not work

                                         What does work?

                                       Conditions

5. Conclusion: A strategic approach to Healthy Planning

Healthy Planning: part of Health in All Policies

(Dahlgren & Whitehead, 1992)

MINISTRY HEALTHCARE

MINISTRY INFRASTRUCTURE

PROVINCIAL HEALTH SECTOR

PROVINCIAL SPATIAL PLANNING

MUNICIPAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

MUNICIPAL URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Problem analysis:
uniform HiAP strategy vs. pluriform practice

➢ HiAP does not (yet) lead to sustainable change at scale
➢ Generic models lead to different outcomes (Wismar et al 2013)
➢ EU HiAP not beyond articulation and agenda status (Koivusalo, 2010)
➢ Ambitions curtailed within health sector (Bekker, 2007; Steenbakkers, 2012)
➢ Political and implementation factors underanalysed (Bekker et al, 2004; Wismar et al 2013; De Leeuw et al, 2011)

What defines implementation practice (Hill and Hupe, 2003)?
• Disturbance because multiple stakeholders are affected
• Support temporary & requires maintenance

How to circumvent sectoral boundaries?
An action study

- Govt funded research 'Instruments for Integrated Action' (ZonMw funded, 2012-2014)

Questions:

1. How is support among stakeholders for integrated action on health being built and maintained in policy practice?

2. How to develop a method (or systematic approach) for monitoring and evaluation sensitive to:
   - Stakeholder perceptions and experiences, and
   - capricious and unpredictable course of events?

- Collaborative case study: provincial 'aspect policy' on health

The province of North-Brabant

North-Brabant

Provincial policy orientation

urban
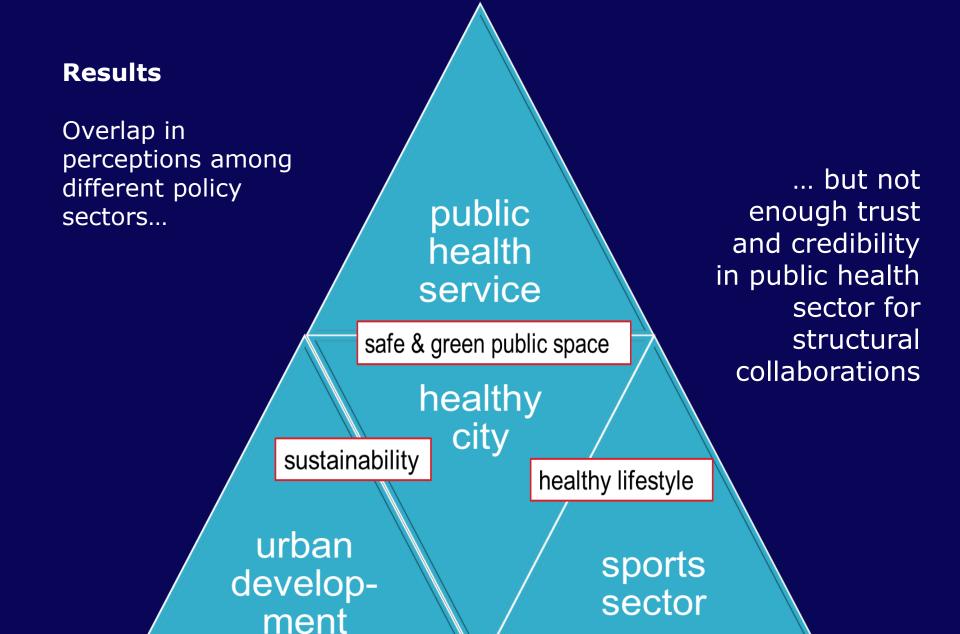policies

health
promotion

health
protection

rural
policies

Method: responsive evaluation

(Stake, 1973,2010; Abma, 2004, 2005, 2006)

➢ informational needs, expectations and capacilities for generating, processing, and using knowledge effectively

➢ 'Double loop': evaluation of content AND capability

➢ Additional to facts and figures, RE asks for stories, experiences

➢ Identifying issues and concerns, postponing assessment and consensus

➢ Purpose: create mutual understanding, credibility and trust

12 multi policy group interviews

Results

Overlap in perceptions among different policy sectors…

... but not enough trust and credibility in public health sector for structural collaborations

public
health
service

safe & green public space

healthy
city

sustainability

healthy lifestyle

urban
develop-
ment

sports
sector

HEALTH

Infectious diseases control

Environmental health risks

Social isolation
Participation and personal capacities
Mental health

Sewerage
Traffic safety
Environmental standards
Sustainable climate, energy
Sustainable building

Less food, more exercise
Lifestyle and behaviour

HEALTHY CITY
Citizen experience
Vulnerable groups
Citizen initiative

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Nature and landscape

Public green
Safe playing areas
Biking and hiking trails
Multifunctional spaces

SPORTS

Healthy lifestyle
Social value of local sports associations
Facilities in public space
Cruijff and Krajicek courts
Citizen initiative

Agendasetting and sustainable change in cross-cutting themes: what does not work?

- 'Activist' approach

- Relying on moral superiority of health over other topics

- Relying (exclusively) on scientific facts

- Technical reports without opportunities for deliberation: 'Who takes up the role of political entrepreneur for health?'

- Being too prescriptive: Driving out any choice of alternatives

What does work?

- External agendasetting strategies:
  - Authoritative community leaders
  - Scientific authorities (note: ≠ relying on facts)
  - Economic leaders displaying corporate social responsibility

- Positive labeling

- Visible pet pilots alongside ('politically unattractive') longterm investments

- Creating room for citizen or community initiative

Under conditions of:

- Variation in opportunities for community initiative with regard to:
  - big cities and rural communities;
  - type of economic activities, commitment and labour force;
  - organisational capabilities;
  - Intramunicipal tensions and dilemmas

- A flexible mindset in governmental policy officers:
  - serviceable attitude (and aptitude)
  - Long term focus
  - Awareness of fundamental interdependencies
  - Being satisfied with what is reasonably attainable in small steps
  - Understanding and acting with informal rules of political game

A strategic approach to healthy planning =

… about fundamentally understanding and acting with planning practices, vocabularies, and stakeholders implementing and coproducing impacts

… embedding scientific evidence on health impacts in fertile ground

1. organising professional 'Socratic' dialogue
2. exploring issues and concerns
3. Exploring experiences in what works and what doesn't
4. Feeding back results and lessons learned
5. Adapting and revising what does not work
6. Institutionalise this procedure of 'recursive learning'

Thank you for your attention!

Contact: m.bekker@maastrichtuniversity.nl