Conference Abstract

Integrated community health in Romania – Putting local authorities in the driving seat

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Abstract

Background: Despite of a well-developed network of family physician cabinets, there are still considerable parts of the population with limited access to public health services in Romanian rural communities. Community nursing was abandoned during health sector reform measures in the early 1990s but later on re-established in certain areas. Social services are provided through social extension workers to vulnerable and marginalised groups. However, current working patterns are oriented towards sectorial policies and there is little collaboration and coordination of services at the community level. The Romanian Government takes these factors into account in its newly developed National Strategy for Health 2014-2020.

Objective: The "Widening Access to Health and Social Services" program funded by the Swiss Government puts local authorities in the driving seat to develop local solutions to problems of vulnerable population groups through the design of local social policies, developing intervention programs, better coordination of service providers and impact monitoring of interventions using a quality management framework.

Strategy: The program builds capacity with local authorities to conceptualise community health interventions based on people's needs and community priorities. It enables them to prepare proposals for funding, implement projects and assesses intervention effects in order to make better use of available funding. Training includes measures of situation analysis, health and social status mapping, project planning and budgeting as well as M&E techniques. Participants are informed about and previous experiences and lessons learnt from comparable projects in Romania as well as from regional partners and the international level. Training activities lead the participants through a proposal development process with a final proposal as result. The project funds the implementation of 30% of the proposals. Implementation will be accompanied by a coaching mechanism involving national and district level experts to facilitate implementation and the dissemination of results along administrative lines.

Highlights: Traditional sectorial approaches in Romania are a major cause for fragmentation of services at the community level. The lack of managerial capacity at the level of local authorities limits their active role in the organisation of community integrated health and social services. The training activities are built in a modular way so that learning of methods is mixed with on-site application and continuous peer review mechanisms. The local focus has moved communities

away from "one-size-fits-all" mechanisms supported through vertical interventions to more client oriented, needs based policies and interventions with local authorities having a much stronger leadership role.

Transferability: Based on the evaluation of capacity building results (quality of proposals), effects of implemented interventions (outcome orientation) and local appreciation (client and stakeholder satisfaction), the intervention will be replicated in other than pilot districts in Romanian during the following years.

Keywords

local authorities, capacity building, community-based integrated care, health and social services integration

Powerpoint presentation:

http://www.integratedcarefoundation.org/content/making-transition-towards-integrated-care-driving-change