

Health strategies have economic potential

Written by Administrator

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Good public health for and among citizens can save money for municipalities. Not only will the pressure on the social security system be reduced, a healthy population can also strengthen the local competitiveness – even in rural areas.

This is very important knowledge for the Vidzeme planning region, as all of the seven Latvian partners of HEPROGRESS are rural municipalities (Priekuli, Rauna, Pargauja, Jaunpiebalga, Vecpiebalga, Amata and Ligatne). They all are experiencing hardships in response to their opportunities and availability of services.

- Our inhabitants are living in households far away from central areas. They cannot afford the services that are available in cities. With the help of HEPROGRESS, we would like to develop services that are inviting for active and social life in rural areas as well. We have to meet the needs of our children and develop infrastructure and local services which contribute in improving people's lifestyle. We also have to make sure that we have good education facilities and an active participation in the labour market, regardless of what background people have, says the mayor of Amata, Elita Eglita.

Why is it so that a healthy population is important in the economy? One reason is that healthy people have more energy to do a better job during working hours. A population with good health is also more inclined to pursue higher education and start their own businesses.

- Health is one of the most important priorities to secure participation and quality of life. We need to raise our awareness and knowledge on how to improve local facilities for disadvantaged inhabitants. However, we need more information to know how to improve our services and therefore the HEPROGRESS survey is much needed, she says.

Policy planning is a very crucial issue on the political agenda in Amata in response to health and well-being of the population.

- We have to open our mind for the social disparities and barriers for health which we see between different groups of people. There is a risk of stigmatization when we are working to reduce health inequalities. We need to make ethical considerations and secure that our

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inhabitants still feel needed and appreciated as we target this field, says Ms Eglita.