

**Health Barometer****Methods:**

Employees of the Region of Southern Denmark are providing the 22 municipalities in the region with counselling services within health promotion and disease prevention. As a part of these counselling activities, a strategic seminar was held in November 2007 for managers within municipal health work. Due to a structural reform in Denmark in January 2007, municipalities were assigned to new tasks within health. Therefore, the seminar addressed the building up of municipal organisational capacity for working with health. The health barometer was used at the seminar in order to:

- Make the municipalities assess their performance and capacity approximately one year after the reform
- Visualize issues with potentials for improvement of the health work
- Facilitate dialogue on their future ambitions

The tool was not used as a part of a bigger, structured municipal process, but as a means for reflection during a period of ongoing strategy building. The primary reason for using the tool was that it facilitates immediate reflection and dialogue on performance and ambitions. However, it should be noted that the scoring on the health barometer is rather arbitrary and subject-dependent, and that the tool therefore cannot be used for benchmarking or structured evaluation purposes.

The dialogue process was arranged as a workshop within a time frame of 2 hours. After an introduction, the time frame was:

- 00-60 min: Discuss each of the eight dimensions in the health barometer: Rank your performance and describe strengths and weaknesses at your current practice (divided into groups from each municipality)
- 60-90 min: Share your best experience with health work in your municipality (pairs of participants from different municipalities)
- 90-120 min: Discuss your future ambitions for health work within some of the eight themes given a high priority in your municipality (groups as in the first part)

**Targets/Stakeholders:**

The target group was managers within health work in the 22 municipalities in the Region of Southern Denmark.

**Results:**

Our experience with the tool is that it is useful for facilitating dialogue concerning municipal performance and ambitions within health promotion and disease prevention. The health barometer has strengthened the awareness in the municipalities about the importance of discussing ambitions and reaching and communicating shared goals within the municipal organisation.

**Guidelines to the use of the tool:**

The health barometer should be used as a tool to facilitate dialogue on specific process meetings in municipalities. The tool can be used as a very simple self-evaluation tool, but not as a tool for structured evaluation or for comparison or benchmarking between municipalities such as benchmarking.

An internal or external consultant with a process manager role can use the tool for facilitation purposes as it makes participants reflect themselves. If your role as a consultant is more advisory, you would need a more detailed and structured tool for the evaluation of municipal performance.

