Healthy and Equitable Urban Planning through Intersectoral Action

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Why urban health matters?

1. Rapid, unplanned urbanization
2. Social and economic inequities lead to inequities in health
3. Improved health increases productivity
4. Liveability creates social stability

“"A developed country is not a place where the poor have cars. It’s where the rich use public transportation.”
- Gustavo Petro, Mayor of Bogotá, Colombia
UN Dept. of Economic and Social Affairs, World Urbanization Prospects 2011
Urbanization and noncommunicable diseases

Unhealthy diet
Lack of physical exercise
Harmful use of alcohol
Tobacco use

1. Cardiovascular diseases
2. Cancers
3. Respiratory diseases
4. Diabetes

The Economist 2003
8/4/2014
Suvi Huikuri, WHO Kobe Centre
Obesogenic environment

Ilona Kickbush, 2013
Health inequities

• Inequalities across different population groups
• Systematic, socially produced and unfair
  but modifiable
• Result of circumstances where people born, grow, live, work and age, and the health system they can access
• Affect everyone
Variations in life expectancy across London Tube stops


8/4/2014 Suvi Huikuri, WHO Kobe Centre
Healthy urban planning: challenges and opportunities

WHO/EURO 2003: Healthy urban planning in practice
Physical activity and healthy diet

UP measures:

• Health promoting infrastructure: Streets, buildings, parks

• Active transportation policies (walking, cycling..)

• Public transportation

• Land use & zoning: Full-service supermarkets, fresh food, restricting fast food outlets
Access to goods and services

UP measures:

• Water and sanitation
• Public spaces, health and social services, education
• Healthy food and goods
• Safe neighborhoods
• Accessible and reasonable-priced public transportation
• Mixed housing
Mental health

UP measures:
• Liveable cities with recreational areas
• Traffic/street design e.g. to control crowds
• Less dense housing
• Sound barriers, car free zones
• Access to health services
Injuries, violence and unsafety

- **Traffic**: safe and well-maintained roads for all road users, tolls, speed bumps
- **Environmental hazards**: flood barriers, strong materials, smart buildings, shadowing structures
- **Crime and violence**: mixed housing, monitoring, livability
Pollution and air quality

UP measures:

• Smoke-free cooking/heating facilities

• Public and active transportation

• Tolls, car free city centres

• Parks, trees

• Avoiding mixed zoning
Intersectoral Action for Health (ISA)

- Shared recognition of the problems, shared determination to tackle them
- Cooperation across sectors to promote health
- Integrating health concerns into the policy-making of other sectors

Strategies:
- Broad, e.g. Health in All Policies
- Specific, e.g. smoking
Tools: ISA booklet

Intersectoral Action on Health

A path for policy-makers to implement effective and sustainable action on health

World Health Organization

Examples of intersectoral action on health

BOX 1

Viet Nam's national mandatory helmet law – success of a multisectoral approach

Motorcycle helmets are a well-documented public health and road safety intervention. With its multisectoral approach, Viet Nam provides an excellent example of how intersectoral action can help save lives and improve health.

Road traffic injury in Viet Nam is a leading cause of death and disability, with more than 14,000 deaths and 140,000 injuries reported by the Ministry of Health in 2009. Statistics from 2001 show that an estimated 60% of all road traffic fatalities were in motorcycle riders and passengers. Some degree of motorcycle helmet legislation has been in place since 1995, but low penalties and limited enforcement coverage made it largely ineffective.

In 1997, a multidisciplinary coordination mechanism, the National Traffic Safety Committee (NTSC) with representatives from 15 ministries and agencies including transport, policy, health and education was established as an advisory body to the Prime Minister on all transportation safety initiatives. The terms of reference of the NTSC include promotion of international...
10 “steps” for intersectoral action

1...5

1. Self-assessment
2. Assessment and engagement of other sectors
3. Analyze the area of concern
4. Select an engagement approach
5. Develop an engagement strategy and policy

6...10

6. Use a framework to foster common understanding between sectors
7. Strengthen governance structures, political will and accountability mechanisms
8. Enhance community participation
9. Choose other good practices to foster intersectoral action
10. Monitor and evaluate
Tools: Urban HEART

User-friendly guide to identify and act on health inequities

Assessment: an indicator guide

Response: guide to best practices

Target audiences:
- Mayors, local authorities
- National government
Urban HEART User Manual

Detailed instructions on the Urban HEART process for those who plan to use the tool in their cities or regions.
Conclusion: promoting health and equity in cities

• Urbanization is an opportunity to improve equity, health and well-being

• Intersectoral action is a possibility to benefit from synergies

• Evidence-based interventions, tools

• Context specificity
THANK YOU!

More information

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