Urban Development and HIA: WHO European Healthy Cities experience

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Questions to address

1. How is HIA being applied in the WHO European Healthy Cities Network, and what has been the strength of HIA in contributing to healthy public policy?

2. Is HIA a good mechanism for addressing inequalities in health?

3. What is the future use of HIA in Health in All Policies (HiAP) and how can we ensure that this will be developed?
WHO Healthy Cities Network Phase IV (2003-2008) in the WHO European Region (Designated, Applicants, Associate)

87 Cities
- 67 designated
- 19 applicants
- 1 associate

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Applying HIA in European Healthy Cities: main challenges

Lack of:
• history and knowledge of, or experience in, HIA
• understanding of what HIA can offer
• training
• skilled personnel/experts and capacity for HIA
• a legislative basis for HIA
• political and sometimes professional support
• resources/competing demands for resources

Complexity of concept especially in a local government setting
Applying HIA in European Healthy Cities: countries where HIA was a new concept

- Albania
- Belgium
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Estonia
- France
- Hungary

- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Poland
- Russian Federation
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Turkey
Objectives for HIA in Phase IV

1. Raise awareness & create a common understanding of HIA for politicians & administrators in city
2. Identify entry points for HIA & build on skills, provide leadership and strengthen capacity to apply HIA
3. Share learning & provide evidence of HIA’s contribution to health development
4. Work towards mainstreaming HIA
Meeting Phase IV objectives for HIA

- Sufficient resources: 40%
- Sufficient knowledge: 35%
- Sufficient experience: 25%
- All sufficient: 15%

All objectives meet or exceed the required threshold.
Applying HIA in European Healthy Cities: facilitating factors

- Political support
- Supportive national policy context for HIA
- Training
- Link with an academic or public health institution
- Collaboration with a local health agency
- Materials supplied by WHO Copenhagen or Sub-Network in HIA
- Access to Expert Adviser in HIA
- Belonging to the Sub-Network in HIA, a national network or the HC Network
- Pre-existing culture of intersectoral working
- Previous experience of HIA
Applying HIA in European Healthy Cities: successes

• *Undertaking HIA:* pilot HIA; more than one HIA; a series of HIAs; HIA on all major proposals; mainstreaming HIA; developing local tools

• Impact that HIA had had on *decision-making:* influence on important proposals; “better informed”; “added value”; suggestions were implemented; transparency

• Putting health & HIA on the agenda of other organisations

• Helping other organisations to mainstream HIA
Applying HIA in European Healthy Cities: successes

- Strengthening intersectoral working
- Raising awareness of health for politicians & professionals
- Training
- Stakeholder consultation including the community
- Integrating HIA/health into other impact assessments
Strengths of HIA in contributing to healthy public policy

- Systematic framework
- Encouraged stakeholder engagement, particularly with the community
- Improved partnership working to achieve health gain
- Integrated with concepts behind work of Healthy Cities
- Incorporated existing activities on the Healthy Cities agenda
Advantages of HIA as a methodology

**HIA allows for specificity**

HIA is undertaken on:

- an individual proposal
- that will impact on a particular community
- living in a particular set of circumstances
Advantages of HIA as a methodology

HIA provides a scientific framework

• Uses data as a primary baseline
• Systematic interrogation of:
  – relevant determinants of health
  – Specific population groups
  – Characteristics of impact
• Mechanism to identify differential effects
Advantages of HIA as a methodology

HIA is flexible and adaptable

- Range of techniques
- Range of tools
- Use of different types of information: research from the published literature, grey literature, data and statistics about the community affected, and stakeholder knowledge and experience
- Evidence base/case-studies
- Increased understanding of other sector’s language and problems
- Intelligence of what’s happening in other fields or sectors
Advantages of HIA as a methodology

- HIA provides an appropriate and effective tool to deal with the way in which health or ill health are generated

- Approach to the determinants of health and the interactions and inter-relationships between and among them is not dealt with appropriately or effectively in:
  - Sustainability appraisal
  - Strategic environmental assessment
Applying HIA in European Healthy Cities: successes

“Establishing the intersectoral working groups meant that municipal departments saw HIA as a new, fruitful way of thinking or planning – not a must-do task”

Horsens Healthy Cities
HIA as a mechanism for addressing health inequalities

One of the most important features of HIA is the capacity to identify:

- Inequalities in health
- Sources of inequity

This brings the capacity to address:

- Health and related inequalities
- Sources of inequity
Phase V European Healthy Cities

Overarching Goal: Health and Health Equity in all Local Policies

Cities are expected to address systematically the health impacts of policies and strategies, as well as health inequalities, social inclusion and the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

HIA is a systematic tool to help Healthy Cities deliver on this goal.
HIA and HiAP

The main technical questions

• How are HIA and HiAP related?
• What are the differences?
• What are the resonances?
• What can we learn from our experience of HIA to help us start with the process of HIAP?
HIA and HiAP

Differences in emphasis and message

• The emphasis in “selling” HIA is “how to get health gain” or additional health gain as an outcome from non-health and health-related proposals

• The main message from HiAP is how to achieve the “other” sector’s outcomes together with achieving health gain, which involves:
  – Agreement up front to work together
  – Agreed route map that both sectors will follow
# HIA and HiAP processes

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<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
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<td>Screening</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scoping</td>
<td>Doing it</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appraisal &amp; Reporting</td>
<td>Doing it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Decision-makers</td>
<td>Production</td>
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<td>Monitoring &amp; evaluation</td>
<td>Navigation</td>
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HIA and HiAP

Differences in process

• Emphasis on “Engagement” and “Navigation” – HIA is moving in this direction
• Engagement was incorporated into the Community HIA process developed by Belfast Healthy Cities
• Navigation tends to be the missing element, identified by Belfast Healthy Cities and partners as an area for development
HIA and HiAP

Resonances

• HiAP is using HIA as a tool, by taking main elements of the process

• HiAP uses HIA methods/key skills to identify potential health impacts and ways to address those impacts with the difference that they don’t use – HIA is used during “Doing it” and “Produce”
HIA and HiAP

What can we learn from HIA to use in the HiAP process?

• Systematic
• Determinants of health core to any tools/assessment
• Most promising tool for identifying health and other inequalities
• Has a baseline of the communities affected
• Proposal analysis and context analysis
A future for HIA?

Arguments against HIA

• The burden of impact assessments
• Lack of legislation
• Lack of resources, especially in a post-Credit Crunch world
• Health imperialism
A future for HIA?

Where did we go wrong?

• Lost sight of the original objective – health, and the potential for health gain
• Promotion of the methodology almost as an end in itself
• HIA is a “tool” not a universal panacea
A future for HIA?

- HIA is still evolving
- HIA as a foundation or backbone – taking elements of the process and applying those in the routine practices and procedures of an organisation or partnership
A future for HIA?

- Take it back to the science
- What is the question or series of questions we want to ask?
- Is it appropriate to use HIA to answer these questions?
- Will it be effective to use HIA to answer this question?
A future for HIA?

• Using the basic format or framework for HIA to answer a variety of related questions

For example, URBACT II project in Belfast:

• Using HIA to identify appropriate indicators to track the impact of regeneration on health and well-being
A future for HIA

Darwin’s finches:
• Evolution
• Speciation,

Evolution – variation on a theme into many different forms