Implementing healthy public policy
(some) reflections on the role of HIA

Dublin, 16th June 2007

Josep Figueras
European Observatory on Health Systems
The origins…

- Alma Ata Declaration 1978
- Ottawa charter 1986
- Health for All movement
  - Healthy public policy
  - Intersectoral action
- WHO Commission on Social Determinants
- Health in All Policies
- New EU Health Strategy
The implementation gap

• The role of health determinants is known
• The policy guidance is in place
• Effective strategies to address determinants
• But…. much less progress than expected
• Why!?
• What works?
• Are there lessons for HIA?
1. Political (MoH) leadership

- MoH: limited power and resources
  - Urgency of health care issues
  - “HIAP comes on top of everything else!!”
- Ideally: health agenda owned by other sectors
- Yet in practice: costs and unclear benefits
- Empowering ministries of health
  - Political will
  - Governance mechanisms
2. Demonstrate the links between health and key policies / issues

• Health as a driver for economic growth
  – *Health and Wealth*
Relevant channels from health to the economy: a simple framework

Source: The Contribution of Health to the Economy
Surke, Mckee et al 2005
Figure 10: Projected GDP per capita (US $) path for Estonia (based on fixed effects estimation) conditional on three future adult mortality scenarios

2. Demonstrate the links between health and key policies / issues

• Health as a driver for economic growth
• Lisbon agenda (competitiveness, social cohesion)
• Demographic crisis
  – Compresion of morbidity
  – Late retirement: increasing labor market participation
• Financial sustainability
  – The *Wanless reports* in the UK
Solidarity/participation at the core of European health policy
Solidarity and social sustainability

- Health and social cohesion
- Economic impact of reduced solidarity
- Equity and economic growth
2. Demonstrate the links between health and key policies / issues

- **Health Impact Assessment**
  - HIA: health, equity, participation
  - Show links with key policy issues
  - Step up the economic analysis of benefits
3. Strengthen the knowledge base

We need more on …

Economic pact of health
Impact of interventions on determinants
Economics of prevention
– Economic evaluation complexities
Process / politics of implementation
3. Strengthen the knowledge base

Table 4.2  Selected aspects of health intelligence for HIA

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Wismar et al The Effectiveness of Health Impact Assessment
3. Strengthen the knowledge base

Implications for HIA...

- Key to gather evidence on determinants
- Step up the evidence base
- Increased data / rigour on impact
- Political / stakeholder analysis
4. Intersectoral mechanisms

- Horizontal public health committees
  - Sweden, national committee for public health
  - England, cross government Ministerial PH committee
  - Finland, an advisory board for public health
4. Intersectoral mechanisms

- Horizontal public health committees
- Ad hoc committees on specific initiatives
- Intersectoral policies and programmes
- Formal consultations
  - the Welsh assembly government
- Public health reporting with other sectors
  - the Finnish public health report
  - The Dutch national report: Health on course
- Formal communication between sectors
  - e.g. bilateral meetings of permanent secretaries in Finland
- EU co-ordination
4. Intersectoral mechanisms: targets

France

“To reduce cancer related mortality by 20% by 2010.”

“The government has increased the price of cigarettes by 45% in the first two years – and we have 1.8 million fewer smokers as a result”

David Khayat,
the National Cancer Institute
4. Intersectoral mechanisms: targets

UK

“Halt the year on year rise in obesity among children aged under 11 by 2010”

Healthy Start initiative

- £235m invested to transform school lunches
- £1.5bn invested in school sport
4. Intersectoral mechanisms: HIA

No legal mandate in many countries

Table 12.1 Policy, regulation or other means of endorsement to provide a framework and basis for action for health impact assessment

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O, policy; R, regulation; O, other means of endorsement.

Wismar et al The Effectiveness of Health Impact Assessment
4. Intersectoral mechanisms: HIA

And funding is scarce

"If the HIA is not embedded in the organizational structure of decision-making bodies, benefits to intersectoral working may be lost"

M Gabrijelcic and N Scagnetti

Wismar et al The Effectiveness of Health Impact Assessment
4. Intersectoral mechanisms: HIA

- Moving from ad hoc HIA ....
- To institutionalisation of HIA
- Integrated into intersectoral structures
- Linked to governance mechanisms
  - Targets, incentives, ...
- Across levels: local, national, supranational
- Proactive / strategic HIA
- Timing / windows of opportunity
4. Intersectoral mechanisms

“The character of governance is determined by the personal qualities and traits of the ruler”
5. Setting effective partnerships

Creating ‘win-win’ situations

- Public Health Interests
- NGOs Industry Interests
- Other sector Interests

Win-Win

Figuera and McKee
6. Raise public & policy makers awareness

- Communication and social marketing
  - “The understanding of health arguments by other sectors is a challenge to us and not to them!”
- It breeds political will
- It supports (tough) regulatory action
- It enables advocacy
6. Raise public & policy makers awareness

Benchmarking ‘Naming and Shaming’

![Bar chart showing retailers' health responsibility index score (out of ten) and social class D&E shoppers as a percentage of mail customers (grocery shoppers).]
6. Raise public & policy makers awareness

**Implications for HIA**

- HIA: key in communication
- HIA as a decision support tool
- Or HIA as an advocacy tool
Addressing the implementation gap

1. Political (MoH) leadership
2. Demonstrate the links between health and key policies / issues
3. Strengthen the knowledge base
4. Intersectoral governance
5. Setting effective partnerships
6. Raise public & policy makers awareness
7. Strengthen the role of supranational agencies
8. Building capacity