8th International HIA Conference
Healthy Public Policy - Is Health Impact Assessment the Cornerstone?

How Healthy is Public Policy?

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www.publichealth.ie
Talk Summary

• Public policy and health

• How healthy is our public policy

• Issues for future work
Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion - 1986

- Building healthy public policy
- Create supportive environments
- Strengthen community action
- Develop personal skills
- Reorient health services
Institute of Public Health in Ireland

• Established in 1998

• Areas of work
  • Information and Health Intelligence
    » Mortality Report
    » Diabetes Report
  • Capacity Building
    » Leadership
    » Health Impact Assessment
  • Policy Advice
    » Anti-poverty Strategy
    » Fuel and Food Poverty

Tackling inequalities is the focus of all our work
Determinants of health

General socio-economic, cultural and environmental conditions

Living and working conditions

Unemployment

Water and sanitation

Health care services

Housing

Social and community networks

Agriculture and food production

Education

Work environment

Individual lifestyle factors

Age, sex and constitutional factors

Source: Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1991
“A healthy population is a prerequisite for economic and social development as much as a result of it. It should be seen as an investment in a common future rather than the traditional economic view of it as consumption of scarce resources”.

Gro Harlem Brundtland
Carlingford, 2006
How Healthy is Public Policy? Some Criteria

- How is policy developed?
- Whose health does the policy affect?
- How does the policy affect health?
Higgins, Lavin & Metcalfe 2006
THE PROBLEM IS YOU'RE NOT EATING PROPERLY.
Influences on Diet and Nutrition

- Income
- Education
- Availability
- Access
- Agricultural policy
- Fiscal policy
“Having accepted that the determinants of inequities lie in many different sectors, there is obviously a need to look at policies in all sectors, assessing their likely impact on health, and especially on the health of the most vulnerable groups in society, and to coordinate policies accordingly”.

Margaret Whitehead
The concepts and principles of equity and health, 1990
Issues To Be Considered For Future Effectiveness

• Robust policy making process
• Health as a valued value
• Medicalisation of health
• Commercial power
• Advocacy ability
• Promote success