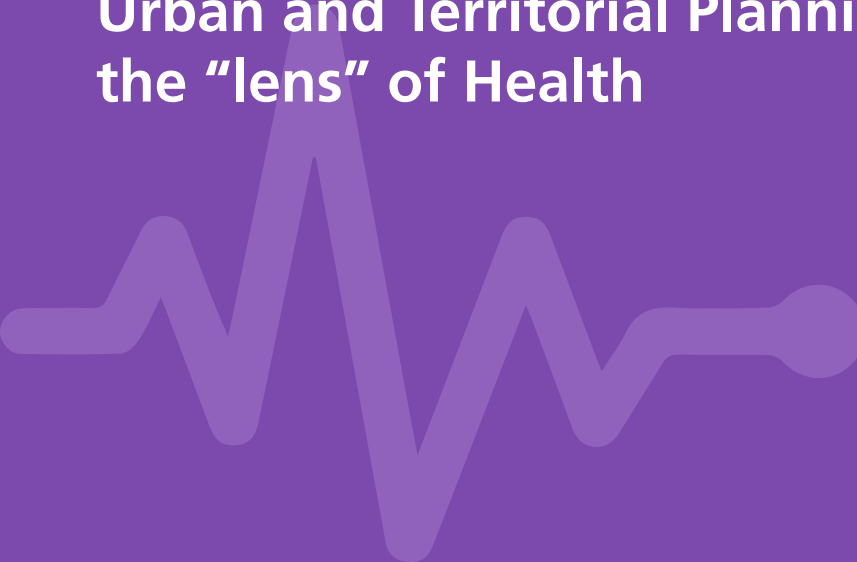




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Implementing the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (IG-UTP) through the “lens” of Health



Implementing the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (IG-UTP) through the “lens” of Health

HEALTH AT THE HEART OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES



There is extensive evidence that urban planning and decisions in city infrastructure and development will affect the health of generations to come. Urban and territorial planning plays a crucial role in ensuring the right to health, promoting wellbeing and improving the quality of life for all citizens. Health is a public good and a key enabler of citizenship.

The 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development explicitly makes a call on “making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (SDG 11), as well as “ensuring healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” (SDG 3). This is to be achieved by mainstreaming equity through indivisible-intersectoral action on all goals impacting urban health, so as to **leave no one behind**.

In addition to preventing death and improving health, sustainable urban strategies have a considerable impact on illness-related expenditures, highlighting the economic opportunities of preventing public health action, compared to expenses on cure. Many sustainable development strategies can offer significant “win-wins” for health and the environment – and benefits can be almost immediate. The International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (IG-UTP or Guidelines) adopted by UN-Habitat’s Governing Council in 2015, will contribute substantially to the ability of cities to shape their own sustainable futures.

They provide with a multi-sector, multi-stakeholder, multi-level approach to planning that enables sectoral integration and to take on the territorial dimension. UN-Habitat is being supported by the Government of Norway, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), with aims the IG-UTP and to include a health lens to this approach for improving the quality of the built environment, resulting in health benefits to urban citizens.

Key figures

- By 2015 the world population will be reaching **9.7 billion** (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division);
- 1 in 3 urban dwellers lives in slums or informal settlements (UN-HABITAT);
- Air pollution cause **6.5 million deaths a year** from heart disease, strokes and cancer; 80% of the world’s urban population, especially in developing countries, breathe dirty air, e.g. from burning waste, dirty fuels, unsustainable transport (WHO 2016);
- Up to **1/3 of the urban population** worldwide still rely on inefficient and unhealthy fuels and technologies for lighting and cooking, causing pneumonia and COPD that can be prevented by sustainable energy policies (WHO 2016);
- **39% of adults** worldwide were overweight in 2014 – that is more than 1.9 billion (WHO, Global Health Observatory);
- Nearly **¼ of global deaths could be prevented** (12.6 million deaths/year) by action on the environment (WHO, 2016);
- In 2015, **91%** of the world’s population had access to an improved drinking-water source compared with 76% in 1990, and 68% of the world’s population had access to improved sanitation facilities including flush toilets and covered latrines compared with 54% in 1990. Still, there are nearly 1.7 billion cases of childhood diarrhoeal disease globally every year (WHO 2016 and 2017).





New opportunities – the time is right for joint action

To realize the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) collective vision of sustainable, liveable and economically vibrant cities, urban decision-makers must apply a “health lens” to fully assess the risks and opportunities posed by their policies and programs, and measure their effects, particularly in regards to housing policies. Key approaches and strategies to adopt are:

1. Development, promotion and integration of clear health-based targets for clean air, water, food security and housing, among others, for a wider adoption within urban policies, strategies and plans.
2. Build and share evidence on health impacts and provide guidance on a wide range of urban planning related policies, such as on household energy, drinking water, housing, etc., anticipating the health benefits and risks associated from specific planning measures and investments.
3. Provide scenario assessments of the expected health impacts and savings from urban policies, to compare current investments against expected health outcome. This can be done through existing methods and tools for health risk assessments, health impact assessments (HIA), and analysis of the costs of inaction as an integral part of urban and territorial planning processes.
4. Health indicators can inform policies that are sustainable and health promoting. Monitoring and tracking health impacts of sector-based policies in cities can provide accountability over the human benefits of sustainable urban development.
5. Map urban health inequity through use of disaggregated data at the local level, in order to inform decision-making targeted towards addressing urban equity priorities.
6. Engage with local stakeholders in the debate by including health topics in community engagement and advocacy within urban and territorial planning processes.
7. Adoption of land-use planning strategies promoting the right to access safe and healthy public spaces that promote social cohesion, support healthy lifestyles and deliver economic benefits.
8. Use of health impacts from policy changes at the municipal level, based on urban governance and integrated approaches to planning across different levels and sectors to influence and trigger national decision-making on sectoral policies.

Next steps...

- Undertake scenario assessments, making use of the IG-UTP framework, for the adoption of an integrated planning approach using a health lens in a select number of UN-Habitat partner cities.
- Identify indicators and disaggregated health data at the urban level to identify priority areas and urban health inequalities.
- Development of a guidance document on Planning and Health.
- Development of the IG-UTP Compendium of Inspiring Practices: Health Edition.

