



## Social Determinants of Health Discussion Paper 5



# EVALUATING INTERSECTORAL PROCESSES FOR ACTION ON THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH: LEARNING FROM KEY INFORMANTS

**DEBATES**, POLICY & PRACTICE, CASE STUDIES



EVALUATING  
INTERSECTORAL  
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The *Discussion Paper Series on Social Determinants of Health* provides a forum for sharing knowledge on how to tackle the social determinants of health to improve health equity. Papers explore themes related to questions of strategy, governance, tools and capacity building. They aim to review country experiences with an eye to understanding practice and innovations, and encouraging frank debate on the connections between health and the broader policy environment.

**Background:**

The Department of Ethics and Social Determinants of Health (ESD) [then, the department of Ethics, Equity, Trade and Human Rights] of the World Health Organization commissioned this report. Rene Loewenson of the Training and Research Support Centre carried out the interviews and wrote the report in early 2010. It was presented and reviewed at a meeting in Chile in early 2010, titled Intersectoral Action to Tackle the Social Determinants of Health and the Role of Evaluation, and underwent external peer review in 2011 and 2012. The author produced a final draft in late 2012. The meeting was organized by WHO headquarters staff, and technical counterparts in the Regional Office of Europe and the Regional Office for the Americas, along with the government of Chile. WHO staff collaborated in identifying interviewees. Given the time between the interviews and the final report, recent developments in the field are acknowledged but may not be fully captured in the report. The views presented in this report are those of the author and do not represent the decisions, policies or views of the World Health Organization.

**Acknowledgments:**

The author would like to acknowledge the important discussions during the Intersectoral Action to Tackle the Social Determinants of Health and the Role of Evaluation Meeting of the WHO Policy Maker Resource Group on Social Determinants of Health. The key informant respondents' commitment, interest and cooperation is gratefully acknowledged.

The author would also like to thank the following reviewers for their useful comments: Sarah Cook, Director, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD); Kira Fortune, Regional Advisor, Determinants of Health, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); Tonya MacDonald, PAHO Intern, University of Toronto; and Sarah Lauber, PAHO Intern, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Diana Hopkins provided copy-editing support. Nicole Valentine oversaw the commissioning of the work and the review and production of the publication.

The work was conceptualized by Nicole Valentine and Eugenio Villar (WHO, Geneva), together with Marilyn Rice (PAHO/AMRO), Chris Brown (EURO) and Orielle Solar (the Government of Chile).

**Suggested Citation:**

Loewenson R. *Evaluating intersectoral processes for action on the social determinants of health: learning from key informants*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2013 (Social Determinants of Health Discussion Paper 5: Policy & Practice).

WHO Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Evaluating intersectoral processes for action on the social determinants of health: learning from key informants.

(Discussion Paper Series on Social Determinants of Health, 5)

1.Socioeconomic factors. 2.Health care rationing. 3.Interinstitutional relations. 4.National health programs. 5.Health policy. I.Loewenson, Rene. II.World Health Organization.

ISBN 978 92 4 150536 9

(NLM classification: WA 525)

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Layout by L'IV Com Sàrl, Villars-sous-Yens, Switzerland.  
Printed in Switzerland.

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# Abbreviations

CCP	Center for Civic Partnerships (USA)
CHD	Centre for Health and Development (Slovenia)
CSDH	WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health
EH	Environmental health
EPR	Environmental performance review
EIA	Environmental impact assessment
HIA	Health impact assessment
HiAP	Health in all Policies
IAH	Intersectoral action for health
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NCCHPP	National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy
NST	National Support Team (UK)
PHC	Primary health care
SDH	Social determinants of health
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization
WHO Environment	WHO Department of Public Health and Environment
WHO Euro	WHO Regional Office for Europe
WHO Nutrition	WHO Department of Nutrition for Health and Development
WCSDH	World Conference on Social Determinants of Health

# Executive summary

The 2008 World Health Organization Commission on Social Determinants of Health and the 2011 Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants of Health both articulated that policy-makers and practitioners engaging in processes for intersectoral action for health (IAH) and health in all policies (HiAP) need signals of the efficiency and effectiveness of their approaches. Evaluation can play a role in this.

This report was commissioned in December 2009 and implemented in early 2010 to explore how the evaluation of IAH and HiAP is being implemented from the experience of expertise directly involved in such work. WHO selected 11 respondents for their involvement in work on IAH and systems scale analysis. They were interviewed and the documents they provided were reviewed. The respondents were drawn from local government, national- and global-level institutions, mainly from high-income countries with only two from middle- or low-income countries. The small, non-representative sample and narrow coverage of low- and middle-income settings limits the conclusions that can be drawn, and it is recommended that future assessments be carried out in more low- and middle-income settings, and countries in South America, where the experience may be different. Notwithstanding this, the report provides previously undocumented evidence on experience within the regions covered by the evaluation of IAH.

The report outlines concepts of IAH and evaluation that informed the collection of evidence on four broad questions.

- ① What have been the motivations for evaluating IAH and HiAP?
- ② What have been the purposes of the evaluations that have been implemented, particularly in relation to testing conceptual frameworks, performance and development results, and with what issues for their design?
- ③ What methods have been used for the evaluation of IAH? Are these methods unique and what lessons have been learned from practice?
- ④ How has the evidence from evaluations of IAH been reported and used?

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