

Health Impact Assessment of Local and Regional Public Policies: An Opportunity to Share Health

“Capacity Building for HIA”

Friday, 24 September 2010

Donostia-San Sebastián, Spain

Owen Metcalfe, FFPH



www.publichealth.ie

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Ireland

Population:

ROI 4 million
NI 2 million

Size 82,880sq kms

Demographic Ageing population

Economy Rapid growth followed by recession





Institute of Public Health in Ireland

Aim

Cooperation for public health on the island

Objectives

Strengthen health intelligence

Build capacity

Give policy advice

Budget

€2 million

Staff

20

Tackling health inequalities key to all work

Baseline Study 2001

“The consensus across all sectors and disciplines was that knowledge of HIA is limited to a few at the centre of policy making, partnership and service development. It has not substantially penetrated any sector or group, including the health departments and services. HIA is not yet established in the policy ‘mindset’ in the way that it is in Britain”

IPH Addressed this Deficit

- Bi-lateral meetings with government departments
- Awareness raising seminars
- Newsletter
- Website and email network
- HIA forum
- HIA network group
- HIA resources and publications
- Conferences
- Comprehensive training
- Conducting HIA

Policy in Northern Ireland

Public Health Strategy 2002 ' investing for Health'

HIA has a dedicated chapter under Part 3 which is concerned with structural arrangements for implementing the strategy as well as monitoring and accountability issues

DHSSPS sets out its plan of action including:

- Development of methodology
- Consideration of health into an integrated impact assessment screening tool and in SEA
- Development with IPH and Ministerial Group on Public Health (MGPH) of an incremental implementation plan for HIA
- Work with other departments to support their conduct of HIA
- Work with colleagues in DHC to develop HIA on an all-island basis
- Supporting pilot HIAs

Policy in Republic of Ireland

National Health Strategy 2001 'Quality and fairness'
HIA features as one of four statements supporting the
following objective 'The health of the population is at
the centre of public policy' and states:

'Health impact assessment will be introduced as part of
the public policy development process'

- The Department of Health & Children (DHC) will develop HIA procedures, methods and tools
- DHC will have a key role in supporting other departments and agencies in carrying out HIA
- Regional level structures such as local authorities and county development boards will be asked to consider the impact of their decisions on population health in their area

Bi-lateral meetings with Government Departments

Aim:

To make senior officials aware of HIA and encourage them to consider policy amendable to HIA

Attendees:

IPH, Department of Health and Children and other Departments e.g. Social Welfare and Education

Awareness Raising Seminars

Target audience:

Representatives from different government departments

Aim:

- Give broad policy context for HIA
- Provide information on HIA
- Promote discussion
- Consider how HIA can be moved forward in department

Newsletter

- Quarterly
 - 3500 contacts
- Website
 - Email network 370 members

HIA Forum

Aim:

Regional events to provide those who have attended training or who have an interest in HIA to meet, share experiences, hear about new developments and consider how to progress HIA. (8 meetings)

HIA Network Group

Aim:

Provide a forum for those organisations working with HIA to work collectively and promote an understanding of HIA

HIA Resources and Publications

- HIA Review – Gambling 2010
- HIA Review – Active transport 2010
- HIA - Guidance 2009
- HIA Review – Education 2008
- HIA Review – Built Environment 2006
- HIA Review – Employment 2005
- HIA Review – Transport 2005
- HIA – Practical Guidance 2003
- HIA – Baseline report 2001
- HIA – Introductory paper 2001



Conferences

- National 2003
- International 2007 (190 delegates)
- Presentations at more than 50 conferences nationally and internationally

Comprehensive Training

Aim:

- Prepare participants to undertake HIA
- Increase knowledge
- Increase capacity

Methodology:

- Lectures
 - Theory
 - Practice
- Case study
- Experiential

Duration:

- 3 days

Number of participants:

- Maximum 30

Total number of courses run:

- 8

Skills development

Course type	Northern Ireland*	Republic of Ireland
Multi-sectoral three day course	60	130
Shorter courses	181	166
Input to academic programmes	MPH, HP	EIA, Spatial planning

*Additional short courses delivered by Belfast Healthy Cities

HIA conducted/ underway

HIA	Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland
Number conducted	20	13
Number initiated by government mechanisms	7	1
Number initiated by local champions	13	12

Getting HIA on the agenda



- Bottom up approaches
- Top down approaches
- Champions
- Leadership

Influencing factors

- Awareness of determinants of health/ health in all policies
- Economic crisis – opportunity or threat?
- Administrative reforms –responsibility and leadership

HIA - obstacles



- Legislative support
- Follow through on HIA recommendations
- Evidence of effectiveness
- Capacity and resource issues
- Definitional issues

Barriers to using HIA in Ireland*

- Roles and responsibilities
 - HIA not an aspect of job descriptions
- Lack of Resources/Capacity
 - Time constraints, lack of human and financial resources to conduct HIA
- Lack of commitment/ direction from other stakeholders
 - Others not sensitised to issues
- Policy restraint
 - HIA not mandatory, short time frames

*Review of HIA in Ireland, CENI 2009

What else needs to happen?

- Bottom up approaches alone are insufficient as is reliance on local champions
- More leadership needed within health to sensitise non-health agencies re their impact on health
- More exploration of integrating health into statutory assessment processes
- Dedicated resources (human/ financial/ time) to allow health professionals to support the conduct of HIA

HIA Review Conclusion 2009

Knowledge of HIA is no longer limited to a few people at the centre of policy making, partnership and service development, and it has certainly established itself at least as a concept across other sectors as well as throughout the public health sector. HIA has made significant inroads towards attaining status that it has acquired elsewhere and this is largely as a result of IPH work

HIA Review Conclusions 2009

IPH has had a substantial impact on:

- Developing appropriate tools and guidelines
- Promoting the use of these
- Providing appropriate training
- Providing follow up support
- Providing networking opportunities
- Raising awareness of HIA
- Conducting HIA

HIA Review Conclusions 2009

Difficulties with implementation:

- Legislation
- Appropriate tools
- Availability of resources
- Capacity to undertake HIA
- Role and responsibility issues
- Complexity of process
- Length of time
- Political will

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