

Passion Politics Environment and Health

Global IA Developments Challenges Ahead

Carlos Dora
WHO
Geneva



Why governments should intervene?

Competing points of view

Car and Road lobby:
“Benefits outweigh the
Costs, the health
burden is a price
societies pay for
mobility and
convenience they
enjoy.”

Health &
Environment:
“Healthy transport
can improve public
health, safeguard the
environment,
enhance access and
the economic vitality
of cities”



1. To ensure sound economic decisions



On one hand: Society is unlikely to want to make sacrifices to eliminate all risks from transport

However: The Market for transport fails to deliver socially optimal patterns as

Transport Costs are not all paid for the user, and the costs borne by others (external costs) are substantial.

The overall use of transport, particularly more polluting modes, is then higher than socially optimal

The right investments and prices (for pollution, accidents etc.) would correct these distortions

1. To ensure sound economic decisions cont...



The benefits from transport would be further increased if certain journeys were made by different modes, or in the need to travel long distances to meet basic needs was reduced.

2. To ensure policy making draws on existing knowledge and best practice



- Difficulty in accessing information on the health impacts of transport interventions
- Myths about what is good practice are repeated and reinforced
- Scientific evidence is often not translated regarding its implications for policy
- A trusted and balanced information broker is needed

3. To protect the health of vulnerable groups



- Children are vulnerable to injuries, air pollution and noise, their cognitive and physical development require exploration of the neighbourhood and outdoor activity.
- Children and other vulnerable groups are exposed to risks from traffic but enjoy few benefits from it.
- These groups often do not have a voice to influence decisions. Governments need to be that voice.

4. To promote health equity



Exposure to health risks depends on mode of transport used
Need to ensure safety of people using the most common modes

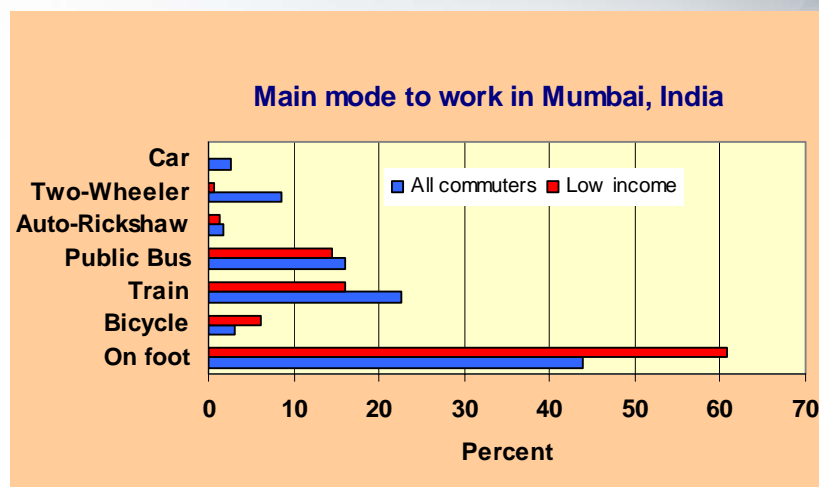
Pedestrians and cyclists do not cause pollution but are exposed to health risks caused by motor vehicle users

Policies that reduce the health risks of the poor help reduce poverty

Healthy mobility for the poor also improves health by increasing access to jobs, education and services

Source: Baker, J. et al (2004) Urban Poverty and Transport: The Case of Mumbai
(Personal communication)

4. To promote health equity cont...



Source: Baker, J. et al (2004) Urban Poverty and Transport: The Case of Mumbai
(Personal communication)

A solution: EIA and HIA

Fundamentals:

- **Prediction** – what are expected impacts ?
- **Systematic**
- **Public/stakeholder involvement** – what are perspectives of those affected?
- **Link to Policy and decision making**
- **Mitigation of adverse effects**



12/9/2005

But: evaluations show limitations of EIA & other IA

- Weak ownership – EIA undertaken because of outside pressure
- Reactive to policy decisions
- Weak capacity for monitoring the IA process
- Little post approval follow-up of recommendations and their implementation
- Little monitoring of outcomes
- Poor/uneven evaluation of impacts (e.g. health)



WHO/UNEP HELI project, 2005

Recommendations have focused on improving the IA process:



- Tools
- Capacity building
- Stakeholder participation
- Ensuring scientific certainty in the policy preparation process
- Timing

Usually from the perspective of
who is doing the IA

But have not been directed at how to effectively contribute to the wider policymaking process



Identified audiences tend to be:

- the developer
- the government

Rather than:

- the population at large
- future generations
- All interested in development that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable

"Passion drives action."



" Information, raw data, does not have passion, until someone transforms it into intelligence, into judgements of comparative advantage, or raises a particular issue in the context of local socio-political trends."

...data needs to be translated into something that will move people, like politics or money, these are **passion parameters"**

HELI decision making paper
key informant No 40

IA at the heart of science and policy dialogue



Modes of Scientific Enquiry competes and coexists other modes of speculation and reasoning, as may be reflected in traditional knowledge, values, religion, amidst conditions of change, economic need, deprivation and social unrest.

Tension between scientists trained in dispassionate enquiry and discussion and need to frame evidence in terms of passion parameters, of the public or politicians.

The passion of the scientist and of the politician continue to shape the development and the debates on HIA

Good practice in IA process and procedures is essential but not sufficient:



Drivers of policy:

- Good press /seen to take social & environmental responsibility on board
- Fear of litigation
- Economic development

How to improve the impact of IA on the policy process?



- Monitoring, information, transparency
- Knowledge base on consequences of certain policies and strategies for H&E, and other priorities
- Clarifying costs and benefits, and the links with economic growth and development
- Engage wholeheartedly with key constituencies (e.g. public health, specific sectors – energy, transport)
- Create a demand, communication about the wider benefits of certain policy options and scenarios

HIA in SEA protocol hit some good targets:



- Consider Broad Determinants of Health
- Includes Health Benefits
- Engages Health Authorities & Experts
- Relates to Health Goals

The SEA Protocol: A frame for SEA Directive implementation



Article 1

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this Protocol is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment, including health, by:

- a) Ensuring that environmental, including health, considerations are thoroughly taken into account in the development of plans and programmes;
- b) Contributing to the consideration of environmental, including health, concerns in the preparation of policies and legislation;
- c) Establishing clear, transparent and effective procedures for strategic environmental assessment;
- d) Providing for public participation in strategic environmental assessment; and
- e) Integrating by these means environmental, including health, concerns into measures and instruments designed to further sustainable development.

Emerging issues with potential for HIA



Commission on the Social Determinants of Health:

- HIA as a tool to address those determinants

Reporting on the Right to Health to the UN Commission on Human Rights

- Special rapporteur identified HIA as a means to judge if governments ensure the right to health when pursuing economic development.

HIA and Development



- Reduce Global Health Inequalities
 - Implement inter-sectoral action for health
 - Test tools for development that is sustainable for health
1. **Project** using HIA, SEA and Economic tools
 2. **Strategy** for mainstreaming health in international development cooperation

HIA & Development Project



1. **Understand the demand:** what health impact information decision making use, in what format? Country Context & Local Decision-making Process.
2. **Give Guidance on where to find the Knowledge:** Briefs on Key Environment & Health Hazards Tailored to Policymakers.
3. **Inform about Decision Support Tools:** Impact Assessment & Cost-Effectiveness/Cost Benefit Analysis.
4. **Collaborate in Pilot Intersectoral Projects:** involving Health, Environment & Economic Sectors.
5. **Build Capacity:** Workshops for dialogue & Knowledge Exchange.

Pilot Integrated assessments

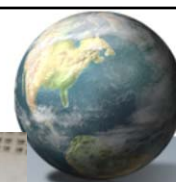


- **Uganda:** Livestock Management options, including use of Agro-Chemical, implications for health, food and trade.
- **Jordan:** Water Scarcity and Security: Health and Environment Costs/Benefits from Integrated Water Management options.
- **Thailand:** Environmental Health Impact Assessment of Pesticide Use in Agriculture.
- **China:** Urban transport and land use options for large cities.

Projets intersectoriaux pilotes

- **Ouganda:** Options pour la Gestion des Bétails, comprenant aussi l'Utilisation d'Agents Agro Chimiques, Implications pour la Santé, les Aliments et le Commerce international.





THE ISSUES RAISED

- Increasing pesticide imports, with inadequate monitoring of use
- Deregulation and subcontracting of farming, with deregulation and less training in safe use
- Marketing strategies to maximize pesticide consumption
- Evidence of increased health and environmental harm from pesticides, and public concern
- Residues on goods have harmed agricultural exports
- Inadequate public access to policy decisions on pesticides



POSSIBLE POLICY SOLUTIONS



- Strategic level – Promotion of organic farming
- National policy level – Monitoring system for pesticide use
- Community level – Community/occupational information on pesticide use
- Flagship issues- Banning of specific agrochemicals, such as paraquat

EARLY FEEDBACK



- Interest among key actors in working with experts from other agencies
- Agreement that much of what we already know is not reflected in policy
- Many suggestions on practical improvements that could be made to policy
- Commitment from agencies to endorse findings and integrate into future policy



Looking ahead from IMP3



- Focus on the political processes and decision making – how is it that different assessments contribute, the best EIA and HIA for that purpose
- Work on the demand – need for wide ownership of H&E issues as part of strategies for economic growth and social development
- Avoid the tunnel vision – EIA and HIA are not only about RA or the social representations aspects of an issue.
- Do improve the current EIA and HIA within the context of political and economic drivers
- Connect with other assessment, including CBA, and bring out the added value of having a E and H focus.
- Connect to the key constituencies, public health is a key one