

# IUHPE position paper on Health Impact Assessment



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## Summary

Developed by the IUHPE Global Working Group on Health Impact Assessment

### PURPOSE

This position paper on health impact assessment (HIA) and health promotion provides information to guide the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) Board and membership as they take action to enhance the effectiveness of policies, plans, and projects intended to improve the health of populations and to advance health equity.

### DEFINITION OF HIA



Health impact assessment (HIA) is a combination of methods and research tools by which policies, programs or projects can be assessed to identify their potential effects on the health of populations, and the distribution of those effects within populations (adapted from ECHP 1999, Mahoney and Morgan 2001). HIA identifies appropriate action to manage those effects (Quigley et al. 2006).

IUHPE encourages and supports the use of HIA in recognition of the opportunity it offers to increase the positive impacts of plans, programmes, projects or policies developed by all sectors on health.

### PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING HIA AND ITS USE

The guiding principles for HIA are: equity, sustainability, democracy, inclusivity, using multiple sources of evidence, ethical use of evidence, flexibility of the approach and collaboration across multiple sectors and disciplines.

### WHAT HIA IS NOT



HIA is not:

- a replacement for planning activities
- an evaluation, which is typically done during or after implementation
- a descriptive research for its own sake; it seeks to inform decision-making.

### THE STEPS OF HIA

**Screening:** determine whether an HIA is appropriate or required

**Scoping:** set the parameters or the terms of reference for the HIA

**Assessment:** assess potential positive and negative impacts on human health

**Recommendations:** develop actions to enhance health and minimise harms

**Follow-up and Evaluation:** follow up monitoring and use health management plan; evaluate the processes involved in the HIA and its impact.

## USE OF HIA



HIA has been applied to a large range of policies, plans, programmes and projects (land use and spatial planning, transport, housing, energy, extractive industries, waste management, climate change adaptation and mitigation, employment, income) (Kemmer 2013). There are also various forms of HIA institutionalisation and various configurations of implementation of HIA (compulsory, voluntary) at national and local levels.



## IUHPE'S ROLES IN EXPANDING THE USE OF HIA TO PROMOTE HEALTH

IUHPE recognises HIA plays a critical role in promoting health, and will seek to facilitate the inclusion of HIA in all comprehensive strategies to promote health. IUHPE takes the position that health impact assessment:

- plays a meaningful role in promoting health and advancing health equity
- is an important part of health promotion practice and is distinct from planning, evaluation and monitoring
- should be integrated and aligned with other forms of impact assessment
- constitutes a key component of IUHPE's strategic directions, including Health in All Policies, advocacy, translation of research, and workforce development
- constitutes a relevant tool to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations 2012).

IUHPE facilitates the exchange of HIA ideas and developments, and supports HIA in many countries.

IUHPE achieves this through its:

- world and regional conferences; regional committees; peer-reviewed journal
- projects carried out in multiple countries
- research and practice networks, including support of Global Working Groups
- strategic partnerships with international organisations including the World Health Organization, the International Association for Impact Assessment, and other professional associations and civil society groups.



ECHP (1999). *Gothenburg Consensus Paper on Health Impact Assessment: Main concepts and suggested approach*. European Centre for Health Policy. Brussels: WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Kemmer, J. (Ed.) (2013). *Health Impact Assessment: Past achievements, current understandings, and future progress*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mahoney, M. and Morgan, R.K. (2001). Health Impact Assessment in Australia and New Zealand: An exploration of methodological concerns. *Health Promotion & Education*, 8(1): 8-11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/102538230100800104>

Quigley, R., den Broeder, L., Furu, P., Bond, A., Cave, B. and Bos, R. (2006). *Health Impact Assessment International Best Practice Principles*. Special Publication Series No. 5. Fargo, USA: International Association for Impact Assessment. [http://www.iaia.org/uploads/pdf/SP5\\_3.pdf](http://www.iaia.org/uploads/pdf/SP5_3.pdf)

United Nations (2012). *66/288. The Future We Want*. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 July. New York: United Nations. [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E)