Ensure Healthy Lives and Well-Being for All:
Addressing Social, Economic and Environmental Determinants of Health and the Health Divide in the Context of Sustainable Human Development
OPPORTUNITIES FOR...

Development and Health

Social, economic and environmental factors are embedded in development as the three interlinking pillars of sustainable human development. They also, to a large extent, determine population health and the distribution of health.

While health and development are inextricably linked, health and development practitioners often operate in organisational silos.

In order to realise potential co-benefits for both health and development and to prioritise areas for action, it is necessary to take specific steps to integrate health and development. This study shows how this can be done in a practical way.

Study Aims

- To analyse which **social, economic and environmental determinants (SEEDS)** of health/health equity are likely to be affected by development projects managed by UNDP, and how the projects are likely to impact health and health equity.
- To understand the potential for co-benefits for health and development of development projects.
- To develop a methodology to embed health equity into development projects.

The time is right: favourable international context for integrating SEEDs of health and health equity into development

- The post-2015 sustainable human development agenda;
- Non communicable diseases (NCDs) as a development issue (UN Declaration 2011 on Prevention and Control of NCDs through multisectoral action; UN Interagency Task Force on NCDs; Ashgabat Declaration on Prevention and Control of NCDs in Europe and Central Asia);
- Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants of Health and World Health Assembly resolution WHA65.8;
- Health 2020 strategy for health and wellbeing in Europe and Central Asia.
Methods

Out of the over 600 projects of UNDP’s development programme in Europe and Central Asia, a selection of 50 projects was made ensuring that all countries and UNDP’s thematic practices were covered and the high budget projects were prioritised. Project documents were analysed applying a bespoke methodology using a check list of SEEDs and a check list of dimensions of inequity. Interviews with project managers were carried out to add qualitative insights to the desk-based analysis.
UNTAPPED OPPORTUNITIES: UNDP’s development projects are likely to impact on health, either directly or indirectly. There is untapped potential to create synergies between development and health with co-benefits for development priorities and population health improvements.

CHALLENGING HEALTH INEQUITIES: Many development projects aim to target the most disadvantaged groups. Integrating health aspects into development projects can contribute to reducing health inequities.

MONITOR: There is potential for a more systematic approach to monitoring SEEDs for health and health equity in development projects. Where relevant, the impact on health and the distribution of health could also be measured.

BUILD CAPACITY: UNDP works in partnership with regional, national and municipal levels of governance, NGOs and community members. Therefore UNDP is well positioned to support coherent action across the whole of government and the whole of society to improve population health and the distribution of health.

Untapped opportunities: Percentage of SEEDS for which the potential impact on health had not and had been noted, by UNDP’s thematic Practices
RECOMMENDATIONS

Integrating health into development programming for UNDP and development partners

- Fully integrate SEEDs of health/health equity into UNDP programming under UNDP’s Strategic Plan 2014-17, regional programme documents and and country strategies;
- Integrate health aspects into design, monitoring and evaluation of development projects from the start in order to maximise co-benefits for health;
- Monitor implementation of a systematic approach to addressing SEEDs of health/health equity in future UNDP project portfolios;
- Support capacity development for integrating SEEDs of health approaches in the context of development;
- Work with partners in countries to include the SEEDs of health/health equity framework in the discourse on the right to health, the national development plans and the post-2015 sustainable human development agenda.

Modified from UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017

The process of enlarging people’s choices by expanding their capabilities and opportunities in ways that are sustainable from the economic, social and environmental standpoints, benefiting the present health and well-being without compromising the future.
“The challenge is to re-think development,’ as the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017 states. The authors of this report have accepted this challenge and demonstrate that re-thinking what we do as development practitioners, stepping aside from our routines and allowing ourselves a moment of self-reflection can deepen our understanding of complex development problems and open new opportunities to increase our impact.

By looking into the realities of UNDP’s work on the ground, the report shows us how closely interlinked the work on health and development is, to what degree we as development practitioners are aware about it, and suggests how a more conscious strategy to optimize the impact on health and health equity through our development work could become the blueprint for UNDP for its contributions to a multi-sectoral, rights-based approach to health and human well-being.”

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