

Presentation at HECA session, Healthy Cities Conference, Belfast 20 October 2003.

Implementing healthy environments for children, drawing on the experience to mainstream health and environment into transport policies in Europe.

A systematic process has been developed in the European Region, to include environment and health considerations into the agenda of transportation policies. The impacts of transportation policies on children's physical and social environment, and their health implications were part of this work.

The first step was to get the buy in of the institution - WHO - to transform the work on traffic injury prevention to encompass a wider range of health impacts of transport. The second step of the work involved getting the buy in of several stakeholders operating internationally, about the fact that there transport had important impacts on health and the environment, and there were great opportunities for win-win solutions - i.e. transport policies that facilitated mobility and reduced congestion, and at the same time reduced air pollution, injuries and facilitated physical exercise. The existing European Environment and Health Committee offered the stage for this negotiation, and the forthcoming Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health a focus for action. This was possible in view of the leadership and perceived need for stronger actions to promote sustainable transport in Europe, from Member States, NGOs and International Agencies.

The evidence on the health impacts of transport and links with environment was brought together, and disseminated widely as part of an outreach strategy. A book and a booklet were produced. New evidence was produced in the form of a study of the health burden of transport related air pollution in three countries, and of two stroke engine mopeds in another country. The findings of the first study had large dissemination by the mass media, facilitate by the launch made during the ministerial conference.

Transport economists were identified as key actors influencing transport policies. Economic analyses of transport health impacts were targeted to this group, this led to changes in the estimates of externalities being done, successfully including better estimates of health impacts such as air pollution. However there was no information on the costs of physical inactivity for example.

The decisions at the London conference, led to a programme of action on transport environment involving environment, health and transport actors. The follow up work has focused on providing more the missing information of relevance to policy making in transport (e.g. economic costs of physical inactivity), tools for mainstreaming health and environment into transport policies (health impact assessment guidance and mathematical models that link up with transport and urban planning models), and knowledge management, with a clearing house which brings together example of solutions and win-win strategies hat worked.

In short the success of the work depended on leadership from a network of actors in transport environment and health, on the ability to understand the needs and to work with the transport sector and interface with their policy processes, and bring together

and use relevant knowledge and experience to help resolve some of the impediments for policy change. This knowledge included positive and negative health impacts, costs of those health implications, experience from interventions and their results, and understanding of the policy levers in transportation and the reasons for governments to take action in the direction suggested.

The impacts of children and solutions specifically involving children were raised in all of these stages. The clearing house for example included worked out examples of transport impacts on children and of solutions for transport sustainable for health and the environment that engaged children or focused in children's settings, such as safe ways to school, walking buses and the like.