

Session 9: Preparing policy briefs

Health in All Policies Training
Course

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About HiAP policy briefs

- **Why?**
 - To ***influence decision-making*** on public policy in a particular sector
- **When?**
 - ***Early in the process of formulating sectoral policy*** with ***potential effects*** on social determinants of health and important exposure risk factors, or
 - ***Proactively*** if there is a need to change ***existing public policy with harmful effects*** on social determinants of health or important exposure risk factors
- **What?**
 - To provide ***facts for policy decision-making***
 - To suggest ***solutions that benefit both:***
 - The ***primary objective*** of the policy in that sector
 - A ***population health objective***
- **How?**
 - ***HiAP team*** assembles national and international evidence
 - ***HiAP team together with sectoral HiAP focal point*** analyse evidence and jointly propose solutions
 - HiAP team involves specific health programmes as relevant

Basic messaging - example

Health centred

- **Frame:** The **number of diabetes** cases has tripled in the past 20 years. **Health care costs** are escalating and hospitals overburdened. It is diverting resources from other uses and sectors and ruining individuals
- **Values:** The increase in diabetes hampers the **health system's ability** to provide the best possible health care to **all those who are in need** (are sick).
- **Evidence:** The rise in diabetes is [among other things] associated with increases in **overweight** and **physical inactivity**. Poor and vulnerable population groups are suffering double – higher diabetes rates and fewer resources to pay the **medical bills**.
- **Solution:** Health, urban planning and transport working together to reduce the need for individual car transportation and make physical activity the easy and preferred choice.

Cause centred

- **Frame:** Our **streets** are getting more and more **congested and difficult to navigate**. Our politicians prioritize running hospitals and the **street maintenance budget** cannot keep up with the deteriorating conditions. This means that our streets get worse every year.
- **Values:** **Our cities are for all**. While individual motorized traffic has its justification, it should neither be the escape-solution for those who can afford nor crowd-out other users of the cities. Further, **individual motorized traffic is not sustainable in the longer run**.
- **Evidence:** Land use patterns (residential, commercial, office, industrial, etc.) and the **transportation system** (walkability, cyclability, convenience of public transport) are well-known **determinants** for street congestion, physical inactivity, overweight and diabetes.
- **Solution:** Urban planning, transport and health working together to reduce the need for individual car transportation and make physical activity the easy and preferred choice.

Characteristics of effective policy briefs

1. Focused
2. Policy-minded rather than academic
3. Strong evidence
4. Limited scope
5. Succinct
6. Understandable
7. Accessible
8. Promotional
9. Practical and feasible

Structure of policy briefs

1. Executive summary

- One or two enticing sentences

2. Introduction

- Why is the topic relevant? Why should people care? What are the goals of the policy? Etc.

3. Approaches and results

- Summarize facts, issues and context – only what the reader need to know

4. Conclusion

- Based on results, aim for concrete solutions and strong assertion

5. Implications and recommendations

- State clearly what could or should happen next

QUESTIONS & GROUP ACTIVITY

Group activity

In groups

- **Review the policy brief and discuss**
 - Target audience
 - Framing and values expressed
 - Specific sectors mentioned / not mentioned
 - Structure
 - Prioritization of discourse
 - Potential effectiveness

In plenary

- **Elevator-test**
 - Two minutes presentation of the policy – standing / no slides / no nothing
- **Critique of the policy**
 - Two minutes presentation – you can use flip-chart

Policy briefs for group activity

- **NCDs & Climate change – shared opportunities for action** (NCD Alliance and the Global Climate and Health Alliance (2016))
- **Unlocking the health benefits of mobility** (UITP 2016)
- **Tobacco Taxes. To curb smoking and raise revenue, governments impose taxes on tobacco products.** Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2016)