Directory for integrating health in urban & territorial planning:

An overview

Background

The directory for integrating health in urban and territorial planning (UTP) emanates from the resources previously identified in these two publications: (i)
"Integrating health in urban and territorial planning: a sourcebook" (UN-Habitat and WHO, 2020), and (ii)
"Supporting a healthy planet, healthy people and health equity through urban and territorial planning" (Grant et al., 2022). The first one aims to guide decision-makers and other actors toward developing cities that are planned and built with a focus on human and environmental health, showing how an integrated approach to health can influence decisions on sectors such as housing, transport, energy, and water and sanitation. The second is a policy paper which describes the background to the sourcebook and the broader initiative of which it is part. The sourcebook builds from the principles of other previous publications (see the figure below).

Timeline of publications on urban planning and health preceding the sourcebook.
The "International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning" (UN-Habitat, 2015) are part of an enabling framework for addressing the challenges of urbanization. The "New Urban Agenda" (United Nations, 2016), a product of Habitat III, was a blueprint for sustainable urbanization. As a follow-up to that, the WHO published "Health as a pulse of the New Urban Agenda" (WHO, 2016a), a document that recognises the relevance of health in all policies and the importance of considering health when addressing Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) other than SDG 3 (health and well-being). Likewise in 2016, the WHO and UN-Habitat published the "Global report on urban health: equitable healthier cities for sustainable development" (WHO, 2016b), which suggests that progress in health depends not only on the strength of health systems, but also on shaping urban environments, taking into account health inequalities.

The reasons behind the directory

Health is crucial for the sustainability of the human population and to preserve everyday routines that allow society to live and coexist on this planet. More than 20% of global deaths are attributable to environmental risks, which could be preventable through healthy environments.

Air pollution, adequate waste management, accessibility to safe-drinking water, availability of natural spaces, resilience to climate change effects, and affordable and healthy food…are just some examples of factors that characterize the places where we live, influence our behaviours, and have a significant impact on our exposure to environmental risks to health.

Therefore, it is fundamental to consider health into UTP, to create healthier environments that promote health and healthy lifestyles, reduce the risk of diseases, and mitigate the environmental and health effects of climate change.

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The Directory

The **directory[1] for integrating health in UTP** is an **online repository** of **open access resources and tools** that provide information about the importance of **planning and designing urban areas from a health perspective**, as well as concrete **guidance on how to do it.**

It includes resources that describe the importance of considering health in UTP, tools that quantify the health and/or socioeconomic impact of planning and designing urban areas from a health perspective, the description of successful initiatives, or training materials on urban planning and health, among others.

Target Audience

The directory is intended to be useful for **all the actors and decision-makers who influence urban environments and/or are concerned with the health of the population.** This includes a variety of actors from different sectors and stakeholder groups: national governments, local authorities, public health and healthcare professionals, actors and stakeholders involved in urban planning and design, academics, and civil society. The directory might be of interest to support the work towards developing healthy urban environments, for all those interested in the basis for our collective wellbeing.

Inclusion criteria

The resources that can be found in the directory:
- are **useful to support the incorporation of health into urban planning.**
- are **open access** (or available upon request).
- are **available** in, at least, **one of the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish, or Portuguese.**
- are produced in a **timespan from 2000 – current year** (prioritizing the most recent resources).
- Fit in any of the **resource type categories** (most of them already defined in the sourcebook): analytical tool; briefing; design guide; evidence; network; overview; self-audit; toolkit; training; video; webinar; web resource.
- are **not scientific research articles** (including systematic reviews).

All the resources were scanned and classified according to their characteristics:

Title of resource
Main title of the resource. It does not include any other information (e.g., date, authors, etc.) but only the title.

Description
Detailed information on the resource. It provides a description of the resource, which might include its functionality, the potential target audience, and the applicability of the resource.

Target audience
Identification of the actors and stakeholders that could be interested in the resource. It includes these options:

POLICY-MAKERS
(including national governments, local authorities, city-managers…)

ACADEMICS

PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

CIVIL SOCIETY
(including civil society organizations and associations, communities, different population groups…)

URBAN PLANNERS
(also including urban designers, developers…)

OTHERS

URL resources
Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) indicate the online address of each resource. Each resource is accompanied by at least one URL. Some resources have two URLs: the first one for the main webpage, and the second one for the pdf (when applicable).

Primary resource category
High-level category that distinguishes the resources by

ACTION-ORIENTED

DESCRIPTIVE RESOURCES

provide concrete steps and tools that urban planners can use to not only address health implications in the context of planning but also health-related concerns through the application of updated frameworks and tools. These have a focus on toolkits, networks of action and design guides to support project planning and implementation phase.

provide general guidance and important background information on the relationship between planning and the health/well-being of communities. However, such resources lack an explicit guideline to implement steps or tools that could be used to consider health in planning or address health implications via planning. This mainly encompasses evidence, overviews and briefs on a specific topic which can be helpful for gaining background knowledge on a topic and learning about previously successful initiatives through case studies.

Type of resource
Typology of the resource according to its structure and use. Each resource has been identified with a primary type of resource (marked with a bold X and dark orange) and with secondary type(s) of resource(s) - when applicable - (marked with a non-bold X and light orange).
Types of resource are the same as those used in the publication "Integrating health in urban and territorial planning: a sourcebook", except for "video" and "webinar", which have been created ad-hoc for this directory.

These are the options:
- **ANALYTICAL TOOL**: Tool for use in quantitative analysis.
- **BRIEFING:** Briefing for a specific approach.
- **DESIGN GUIDE:** Design process with rationale and instructions.
- **EVIDENCE:** Comprehensive subject specific evidence base.
- **INITIATIVE:** Reports on successful initiatives.
- **NETWORK:** Networks of policy and action.
- **OVERVIEW:** Broad overview of a subject area.
- **SELF AUDIT:** Tool to assist with baseline appraisal and analysis.
- **TOOLKIT:** Comprehensive stepwise instructions, with associated policy and evidence.
- **TRAINING:** Training packages.
- **VIDEO:** digital recording of an image or set of images.
- **WEBINAR:** online event (e.g., conference, talk...) delivered to an audience who can also participate and interact.
- **WEB RESOURCE:** Source of online information and links for policy and action.

Language of resource
Language(s) in which the resource is available. All the resources are available at least in English. Some resources are also available in other languages. These are the options:
- **ARABIC**
- **CHINESE**
- **ENGLISH**
- **FRENCH**
- **RUSSIAN**
- **SPANISH**
- **PORTUGUESE**
- **OTHER** (if the resource is also available in another language).

Keywords
Terms that describe the main features of the resource.

Author or publisher
Name of the author and/or the publisher of the resource.

Publication date
The year when the resource was published. The directory includes resources published since the year 2000 until the last update (2022).

Geographical scope
Indicates the area where a specific resource can be applied. This tag includes 3 sub-tags. The first one refers to the question "What is the geographical scope of the resource (if any)?", and these are the options:
- **GLOBAL**
- **REGIONAL**
- **NATIONAL**
- **COUNTRY**
- **CITY**

This is followed by a second question: "If Global/Regional/Country/City, please specify". If the resource is identified with a specific geographical scope, the name of the region/s, country/ies or city/ies where the re-source can be applied will be specified.
Finally, there is a question stating, "Where was it applied?". This indicates the specific area where case studies or practical examples (using the indicated resources) have been conducted.

Scenarios

For a more narrowed search, specific keywords can be added within the search filters. Selecting different options within the filters can refine the search based on the type (e.g., toolkit, network, design guide…) and focus (using keywords) of the resource.

Please note that using more specific keywords might exclude other resources from being visible. It is recommended to start with a broad search based on either descriptive or action-oriented resources, and years of publication, for an overview of available resources before narrowing the search with keywords.

To orient you to how to use the directory, please reference the following example scenarios, which showcase how to search for resources on a specific topic.

Scenario 1
Imagine you are a city planner looking for evidence-based guides to develop a healthy city plan and actions to take. You could use the following search options:

Option A: >Descriptive>Overview>keywords (Urban planning; Health; Cities)

Example of a resource matching the filters: How to develop and sustain healthy cities in 20 steps

Option B: >Descriptive and/or action-oriented>Toolkit>keywords (Urban planning; Health)

Example of a resource matching the filters: Integrating health in urban and territorial planning: a sourcebook

Scenario 2
Imagine you are an urban planner looking for evidence and action-based tools to develop a heat resilient city plan for your context. You could use the following search options:

Option A: >Action>Analytical tool>keywords (Heat)

Example of a resource matching the filters: Heat Resilient Cities: Measuring benefits of urban heat adaptation

Option B: >Descriptive and/or action-oriented (some resources cover both)>evidence and/or toolkit>keywords (Heat; Resilience; Climate change)

Example of a resource matching the filters: Primer for Cool Cities: Reducing Excessive Urban Heat – With a Focus on Passive Measures

Scenario 3
Imagine you work for a national organization responsible for developing a programme for promoting age-friendly cities and are looking for evidence-based frameworks to inform your planning. You could use the following search options:

Option A: >Action-oriented>Design guide>keywords (Age-friendly; Cities; Urbanisation)

Example of a resource matching the filters: National programmes for age-friendly cities and communities: a guide

Option B: >Descriptive and/or action-oriented>Toolkit>keywords (Age-friendly; Cities)

Example of a resource matching the filters: Measuring the age-friendliness of cities: a guide to using core indicators

Strategy for healthier populations

This work is integrated within the strategy of the Air Quality and Health Unit (WHO-HQ) to protect public health through evidence-based actions to improve air quality and ensure access to clean, sustainable energy solutions. This requires engagement and coordination of multiple sectors including – for example – health, environment, transport, land use, housing, and waste. And this is reflected in this directory which brings a broad perspective considering that healthier environments can only be created by considering a multisectoral approach that includes different environmental factors and not only air quality and clean energy access.

The directory is a publicly available database that synthesises knowledge on UTP and health. The aim is that country stakeholders are equipped with this compilation of more than 150 resources to inform decision-makers, and to translate the evidence into policies and actions.

Visit the directory at:

https://www.who.int/tools/integrating-health-in-urban-and-territorial-planning--the-directory

Email:

aqh_who@who.int

Air Quality and Health Unit,
Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health,
World Health Organization (WHO)

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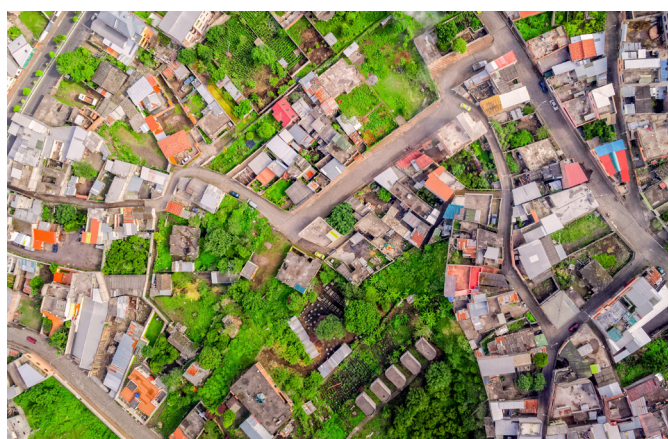Geneva: UN-Habitat and World Health Organization.
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