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.

The Directory

The directory¹ 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).

¹ The directory is a joint publication by WHO & UN-Habitat
All the resources were scanned and classified according to their characteristics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directory reference number</td>
<td>A reference number – accompanied by “D”, which refers to “directory” – is assigned to each resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of resource</td>
<td>Main title of the resource. It does not include any other information (e.g., date, authors, etc.) but only the title.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target audience</td>
<td>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…) • PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS • URBAN PLANNERS (also including urban designers, developers…) • ACADEMICS • CIVIL SOCIETY (including civil society organizations and associations, communities, different population groups…) • OTHERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URL resources</td>
<td>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).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of resource</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language of resource</td>
<td>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).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Keywords
Terms that describe the main features of the resource. Keywords are based on the WHO list of health topics ([https://www.who.int/health-topics](https://www.who.int/health-topics)) and on those keywords already identified in the Grant et al., 2022 publication.

### 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 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 resource 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.

### WHO Department/Region
Only for WHO resources, this tag indicates which WHO Department or Region is the resource related with.

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**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 120 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)

References


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