Screening process of regional policies in the Basque Country (Spain)

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Why working on screening?

- Need of setting priorities to do HIA based on locally-tailored tools

- Regional level policies can benefit from a screening process (almost rapid HIA) => correct general bias at an early stage which can have important health impacts
Objective

- As part of a validation study of a screening tool for non-health regional policies in the Basque Country,

- the aim is to describe the methodology and preliminary results of this screening process
Methodology

1. Development of a screening tool

- Existing screening tools were reviewed
- Designed a *checklist* based on the WHO Social Determinants of Health Model

Figure 1. Conceptual framework used by the Commission on Social Determinants of Health
Methodology

1. Development of a screening tool (2)

- Structured in 3 sections
  - Relevance of the intervention
  - Identification of health impacts
  - A decision grill about the need for a complete HIA
Methodology

2. Selection of interventions

- Contacts with 3 departments of the Basque Government (political and technical levels) dealing with:
  - Social welfare, housing, employment and transports

- Information about policies was collected based on a questionnaire

- These were classified and typology of regional policies made according to:
  - type of determinant, target population, level of planning (strategic/tactic)

- Policies were chosen for screening
  - Making sure that they were as heterogeneous as possible in terms of the typology & they had not been implemented yet.
3. Screening of selected interventions

- Non health professionals conducted the screening of their interventions on their own using the tool.
- Participation in the workshop about social determinants of health, health inequalities and HIA.
- Professionals and the HIA team jointly conducted again the screening of the interventions.
- Two discussion groups with the professionals were conducted to evaluate the whole process.
Results: the typology

Information about 97 policies was collected

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<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Structural determinants</th>
<th>Intermediate determinants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Whole population</td>
<td>Specific groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tactic/Operational</td>
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<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>53</td>
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|                      | 74                      | 23                        |

Total: 97
Results: the typology

Characteristics of the interventions, by areas

Governmental areas:
- Social welfare
- Employment
- Housing
- Transport

Structural determinants
Normative/Strategic

n=97
Results: the selection

1. **Housing** Plan 2006-2009
2. Economic support for organizations and social movements to promote **peace and human rights** in the Basque Country
3. **Transport Plan** for the Basque Country
4. Economic support for municipalities to **install elevators** or others in urban areas
5. Law to **support families**
6. Economic support for training and advice to promote **business initiatives**
7. Economic support for training in **social market economy**
8. Creation of the **Ombudsman for Children and Adolescents** Office in the Basque Country
9. Basic rule on rights and duties of **immigrants** living in the Basque Country
11. Economic support to regenerate **disadvantaged areas**
12. 5th Plan to prevent **drug dependency** (2004-2008)
13. Operational procedure for **heat waves and extreme temperatures**
14. 2nd Plan to promote social participation of the **gypsies** in the Basque Country
Results: screenings

14 screenings (almost rapid HIAs) were done:

- A short review of the evidence (relationship between the area of intervention and health)
- Identified impacts
- Preliminary set of recommendations in order to make the interventions healthier and more equitable. For example:
  - Gender, disability-related and rural-urban inequities are not systematically considered
  - Identification of disadvantaged areas not always based on objective criteria (deprivation index)
  - Policymaking is not always based on detailed diagnosis of situation
  - Periodic evaluation of results and process of interventions is not systematically done to improve future designs
- Suggestion for a complete HIA or not
Conclusions

Although validation study still in progress:

- Screening tool is useful to set priorities for HIA
- Useful also as a rapid HIA
- Non-health professionals’ views of the process (based on two discussion groups’ preliminary conclusions):
  - The social model of health was unknown but turned out to be useful to raise awareness on the impact of their working areas on health and health inequalities
  - The workshop and HIA team's attitude were judged as essential to gain skills and properly conduct the screening
  - The suggestions formulated were perceived as useful to improve their interventions but interdepartmental relation should be more fluent for effective implementation
Thank you for your attention!

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