

Planning for a Positive Impact

Health

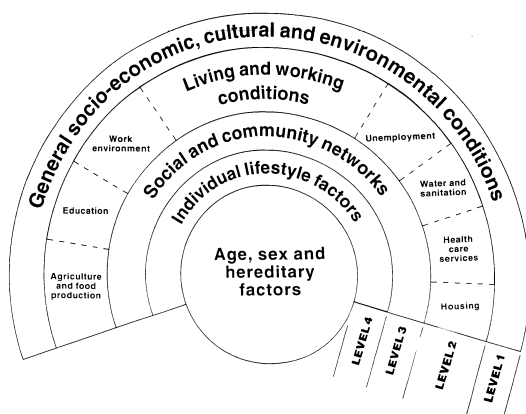
Poor health cannot be explained simply by germs and genes. It is influenced by how we live and work and feel about our lives. Health, in its broadest sense, includes the following:

- Access to quality health services
- Confidence and self esteem
- A sense of belonging within a community
- A sense of physical and emotional well-being.

Inequalities

The extent to which we experience good health is influenced by a variety of factors, many of which are unevenly distributed within the population. These factors, otherwise known as determinants of health include the following:

- Socio-economic circumstances
- Education
- Employment opportunities
- Lifestyle choices
- Decent housing
- Cultural norms/health beliefs
- Access to quality health services
- Access to leisure amenities
- Exposure to adverse physical environmental conditions
- Community networks
- Genetic/biological factors
- Access to affordable, reliable transport
- Sense of control over own life



The purpose of this exercise is to help planners to focus on the broader picture of health, in order that planning can take into account these different factors which have a bearing on how health, and ultimately health inequalities are determined. The exercise is a brainstorm which should involve a multidisciplinary team, and which should be the first stage of the planning process. The questions and the diagram are for guidance and to stimulate ideas.

Source: Dahlgren & Whitehead, 1991

1. What health issue is the project trying to address?
2. What evidence is there that health inequalities exist in this health area?
3. Who is most at risk and why?
4. Where in the diagram are the main factors determining health?
5. What effect will the project have on reducing or increasing health inequalities?
6. Will those most at risk benefit the most?
7. To what extent will this project positively impact on the broader determinants of health as illustrated above?