Forms of Impact Assessment

The growing family of IAs, viewed from a health perspective
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“Capacity Building on Environment and Health”
WHO International Training Workshop, Riga (Latvia), 19-23 March 2012
North Rhine-Westphalian Center for Health (LZG.NRW) / „Regional health policy“ work examples

- Supporting and informing: (local, regional) health policy-makers, health departments, health conferences
- Supporting the preparation, implementation, evaluation of (local, regional) health targets
- Providing basic information on health status, health determinants, health consequences
- Analysing and forecasting: health trends, health gaps
- Estimating health needs, prevention potentials, policy impacts
- Evaluations
1. Context

- Public Health overall goal: to increase **population health**
- Population health = (positively, negatively) affected by +/- all societal sectors; cf. "Health in all Policies"
  -> impulse to try and integrate health considerations into decision-making in all sectors, incl. policies, plans, programs, projects...
- **Regional Health Policy** (cf. WHO CC), incl. HIA methodology and practice

Presentation objectives:
- Discussing HIA within the broader field of **Impact Assessments**
- Deriving conclusions for the way ahead
## (Partial) Policy HIAs, NRW examples

Conducted by LZG.NRW and predecessors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic (English)</th>
<th>Topic (German)</th>
<th>Ref.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drinking water privatization</td>
<td>Trinkwasserprivatisierung</td>
<td>Bull. WHO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Employment Strategy (EES)</td>
<td>Europäische Beschäftigungsstrategie</td>
<td>EPHIA project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Land Use Planning in the Ruhr area</td>
<td>Regionaler Flächennutzungsplan (RFNP)</td>
<td>Handbook O’Mullane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRW Housing Subsidy Program</td>
<td>Wohnraumförderungsprogramm NRW</td>
<td>RAPID project</td>
</tr>
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</table>
(HIA as one special „Health Assessment“)

All stages of the Public Health action cycle (Assessment – Policy development – Assurance) can be supported by Health Assessments, e.g.:

- Health Needs Assessment (HNA)
- Health Technology Assessment (HTA)
- Health Systems Performance Assessment (HSPA)

HIA can be seen as one (important) example of these Health Assessments

The specific missions of the various Health Assessments differ, but still there is significant overlap of concepts, methods, and experiences

Evidently, there is a case for exchange and harmonization
HIA as one special „Impact Assessment“

For appraising the (future) impact of policies, plans, programs, projects, technologies, a range of different IAs has emerged, e.g.:

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Social Impact Assessment (SIA)
- Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)

Im- or explicitly, many of these IAs are related to human health

HIA can be seen as one (important) example of these IAs

Again, the specific missions of the various IAs differ, but there is significant overlap of concepts, methods, and experiences
2. IA „family“: facts and figures

Why care about other IAs?

“Positive” motivation = harnessing potential mutual benefits:
- shared concepts, methods, experiences
- (potentially) increased recognition by providing the notion of an intersectoral alliance

“Avoidance” motivation:
- avoiding duplicate work, and waste of efforts
- avoiding unwelcome interference between IAs
Glancing at IA literature

Easily accessible sources on specific IAs:
- International Association of Impact Assessment (www.iaia.org): Sections on Health/HIA, Soc IA, SEA

Comparative literature:
- Slowly growing trend to take notice of “other” IAs
- Small number of (partial) comparative analyses
IA „cultures“

For the IAs, specific **infrastructures** have emerged, including (some of) the following items:

- manifestos, programmatic documents
- legal basis (for some IAs), political support
- guidelines, text books, journals / papers
- specific (information) tools
- meetings, training programs, legacy of experience
- newsletters, gateways, blogs, fora
- (EC funded) projects
- case study examples
## IA in the Internet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IA type</th>
<th>Yahoo® hits, April 2011</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EIA  Environmental IA</td>
<td>6,210,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEA  Strategic Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIA  Health IA</td>
<td>814,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIA (1) Social IA</td>
<td>651,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIA (2) Sustainability IA</td>
<td>94,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIA  Gender IA</td>
<td>49,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIA  Integrated IA</td>
<td>34,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEIA, HIIA Health (In)Equalities IA</td>
<td>11,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSIA Health Systems IA</td>
<td>641</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
IA commonalities; legal basis

Core task of IA: Integrating the diversity of data and information from multiple sources into a coherent, evidence-based prognosis (“what–if” scenarios) and assessing the impacts

Mix of methods:
- Systematic use of existing evidence, incl. published literature
- Public & stakeholder & expert involvement
- Range of tools, incl. checklists, indicator sets
- (Mathematical) modeling

Within the EU, several IAs have legal bases:
- EIA, SEA
- Integrated IA (EC-type IA)
2.1 Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

(= topic of this whole program / not be covered here in detail ...)
HIA typology (Harris-Roxas & Harris, 2010), by rationale:
- **Mandated** HIA: to meet a regulatory requirement; done within other IAs
- **Decision-support** HIAs: conducted voluntarily
- **Advocacy** HIAs: conducted by entities which are neither proponents nor decision-makers
- **Community-led** HIAs: conducted by potentially affected communities

HIA typology by **comprehensiveness**:
- Rapid (~ Desktop)
- Intermediate
- Comprehensive
Access to HIA “culture” (small selection)

**Gateways** providing access to methods and examples, espec.
- WHO Geneva, [www.who.int/hia](http://www.who.int/hia)

International HIA **conferences**, incl.
- Rotterdam 2009, [www.hia09.nl/default.cfm](http://www.hia09.nl/default.cfm)

**Other**
- Kemm J (forthcoming); O'Mullane M (forthcoming)
2.2 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

- **Worldwide spread**; legal (statutory) basis, incl. EC directives
- Community of practitioners, with **strong professional infrastructure**
- Established routines, often led by **EIA consultancies**
- **Systematic procedures** to identify, describe and assess project-related impacts, covering especially the *physical* environment; basic procedural scheme incl. screening, scoping
- Multitude of **tools** incl. checklists, matrices, scales; approaches for setting boundaries; for impact prediction; for determining impact significance; post-decision monitoring; public involvement
- Striving to consider **interactions** between factors, and to identify cumulative effects (additive, amplifying, irregular)
Access to EIA “culture” (small selection)

Books:

2.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- Europe-wide spread (and beyond); **legal (statutory) basis**, incl. EC directives: „impact on humans, incl. *human health*“
- Similar to EIA, but **upstream** orientation: policy / plan / program assessment, refers to “causes of causes”, i.e. “policy-related” instead of “project-related” decision-making
- Large **range of impacts** incl. secondary, cumulative, synergetic, short- and long-term, permanent or transient, positive and negative impacts
Example of „family“ approach: Health in SEA guidelines

Results:

- Existing wealth of SEA guidelines: 41 guideline documents, 12 online guidance webpages
- Health mentioned in almost all the guidelines
- Only few guidelines indicate *how* to assess health; *whom* to consult with; *when* to include health experts
- Guidelines focusing more on biophysical determinants of health, less on socio-economic determinants of health

Access to SEA „culture“ (small selection)


2.4 Social Impact Assessment (Soc IA, SIA)

- Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for SIA: SIA refers to „all social and cultural consequences ... of any public or private actions that alter the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organize to meet their needs, and generally cope ...“
- Focus: *Social* environment incl. social determinants of health, *equity* issues
- Participative vs. Analytical SIA
- Key concepts including: Social environment, Social change, Communities in transition, Community infrastructure, Minority group, Local knowledge, Social cohesion, Social networks, Cultural diversity, Gentrification, Marginalization; Real vs. perceived impacts
Access to Soc IA „culture“ (selection)


Burdge, RJ (1994): A conceptual approach to SIA. Collection of writings by RB Burdge and colleagues. Social Ecology Press, Middleton, WI, USA


Private website: www.socialimpactassessment.net/
2.5 Sustainability Impact Assessment (Sust IA, SIA)

(Trade) SIA: a policy tool for *ex ante* assessment of the economic, social and environmental implications of a trade negotiation ... is carried out during the underlying negotiation, and helps integrate sustainability into trade policy

- **Environmental** sustainability: refers to the ability of the functions of the environment to sustain the human ways of life
- **Socio-cultural** sustainability: objective is to secure people’s socio-cultural needs in an equitable way, with stability in human morality, relationships, and institutions

**Access:**


2.6 Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

- (Integrated) “Impact Assessment“ of the European Commission
- **Standardized, wide-ranging** and ambitious IA system for policy proposals within EC, striving to analyse both benefits and costs across all major societal sectors
- **Transparency**: all EC IAs and all opinions of the EC IA Board on their quality are published online
- **Highlights**: Routine procedure, **integration** of multiple dimensions, results **publicly** accessible

2.7 Health Systems Impact Assessment (HSIA)

- Acknowledging that policies may have unintended impacts on health systems, due to their large and complex structures.
- EC DG Health and Consumers‘ tool providing information about the objectives and health system functions that a proposal may impact on, either in a positive or negative way.

Access:
2.8 Other Impact Assessment

Subtypes of HIA
- (Integrated) Environmental Health IA (IEHIA)
- Mental Well-being IA (MWIA)
- Health (In)Equity IA, Health (In)Equalities IA (HIIA, HEIA)
- ...

Other types of IA
- Business IA (BIA)
- Gender IA (GIA)
- Peace and Conflict IA (PCIA)
- Regulatory IA (RIA)
- Socio-Economic IA (SEIA)
- ...

3. Interpretations

- While the list of IAs for which names have been coined is long (and growing), the number of IAs supported by specific “cultures“ is shorter, including especially EIA, SEA, Soc IA, and EC-type “integrated“ IA.

- The various IAs deserve to be thoroughly explored with respect to features potentially transferable among different types of IAs, incl. for the future development of HIA.

- In contrast, the issue of mutual interference of IAs and the related issue of integrated IAs seem hard to come by.
Potential inspirations for HIA

Substantive coverage:
cf. EIA, SEA especially for coverage of **physical** health determinants, incl. checklists / measurement scales
cf. SEA, Soc IA especially for coverage of **social** health determinants, incl. checklists / measurement scales

Methodological refinements:
cf. EIA, SEA, IIA for procedures, **institutionalization**
cf. IIA for **transparency** / public access to assessment reports

So far, these opportunities seem to be underutilized
Growth of IA family

From *HIA observer’s perspective*, the growth of the IA family can indicate, e.g.:
- increasing awareness of the need to anticipate impacts
- stronger intentions to move towards smarter policy-making
- growing insight into the complexity of today’s policy-making
- decreasing confidence in successful policy-making

From *HIA practitioner’s perspective*, the growth of the IA family can indicate, e.g.:
- increasing opportunity of methodological improvement & refinement
- easier acceptance of, and communication on, basic IA idea
- stronger competition among IAs (and „key“ topics)
- growing risk of „IA fatigue“ (policy-makers, public at large)
## Integration of IAs: yes or no? how?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option A: No integration</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pro:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Con:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Requires no “extra” effort</td>
<td>• Risk of duplication of efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strengths of existing IAs are maintained</td>
<td>• Risk of producing contradictory input into decision-making which could contribute to “IA fatigue”</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option B: “Partial” integration, integrate “health” into existing IAs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pro:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Con:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunity to involve stakeholders comprehensively and efficiently</td>
<td>• Difficult to establish “equal footing” of topics, disciplines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Results might be more easily communicated to decision-makers</td>
<td>• Risk to combine the deficits of both other options</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option C: “Full” integration, cf. EC “integrated approach”</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pro:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Con:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is “natural” approach since overall (not sectoral) impact is needed for policy-making</td>
<td>• Requires all-round expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Easiest to handle for stakeholders</td>
<td>• May be extremely demanding</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Alternatively: falling behind its potential</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Existing IA cultures could go extinct without being adequately replaced</td>
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4. Conclusions, perspectives

Beyond assessments and nomenclature: “health” is the issue
Examining the IAs in detail: motivation = extra benefit for health
From (Regional) Health Policy perspective: IAs incl. HIA = strategic topics, deserving attention and critical discussion
Beyond HIA, several other IAs provide opportunities for disease prevention, health protection & health promotion
Recommendations

- Seems indispensable to always „think“ integration of IAs, at least to be aware of the „family“, and to continue the exchange of information.
- Neither always feasible nor desirable to „do“ integration; this needs critical debate and evaluation.
- In HIA information hubs incl. publications / gateways / websites, chapters on other health-related IAs should be included.
- Emerging HIA development efforts, e.g. the HIA section of the European Public Health Association (EUPHA), should include the debate on IAs into their agenda.
Perspectives

HIA and other IAs
- Opportunity to improve existing approaches
- Opportunity to minimize risks of mutual interference

Still largely unresolved:
- How to deal with situations of multiple IAs
- Pro's and con's of integrated IAs

The issue would deserve to be explored comprehensively
-> collaborative project?
References


Credits; LZG.NRW prospects

Credits

- Odile Mekel (LZG.NRW)
- Marco Martuzzi, Julia Nowacki (WHO ECEH)
- Gabriel Gulis (USD)

LZG.NRW: HIA prospects

- Departmental health plans, on local / regional level
- Health impact quantification
- HIA development in German-speaking countries

Thanks.