

# Intersectoral Approaches to Enabling Better Health

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# By the time you finish this session, you should be able to...

- Take a more holistic view of the factors that determine health and the range of measures *across* agencies that are needed to ensure better health
- Articulate the value of health impact assessments and how they are conducted
- Speak about a “health in all” perspective for government policymaking
- Note the most important policy measures that countries can take to address health through intersectoral approaches

# Vignette 1

*Juan is a 4-year-old boy in Guatemala. His family is poor, uneducated, and from a minority ethnic group. His family also lacks access to safe water and sanitation and he frequently gets infections. Juan is stunted—he is much too short for his age. It is also likely that Juan's full cognitive potential will never be realized because he has been undernourished for so long.*

- Why has Juan failed to get sufficient nourishment?
- Can the Ministry of Health alone adequately address the problem of undernutrition for children like Juan?

## Vignette 2

*Shahnaz is a 24-year-old woman in Pakistan. She has been sick for some time with coughing, night sweats, and weight loss. She fears that she has tuberculosis (TB). However, she will not seek treatment for her illness for fear of being forced from her home by her husband's family if she is found to have TB. The crowded conditions in which she lives are a risk factor for contracting TB. Gender norms in her country mitigate against her seeking and receiving appropriate care for TB.*

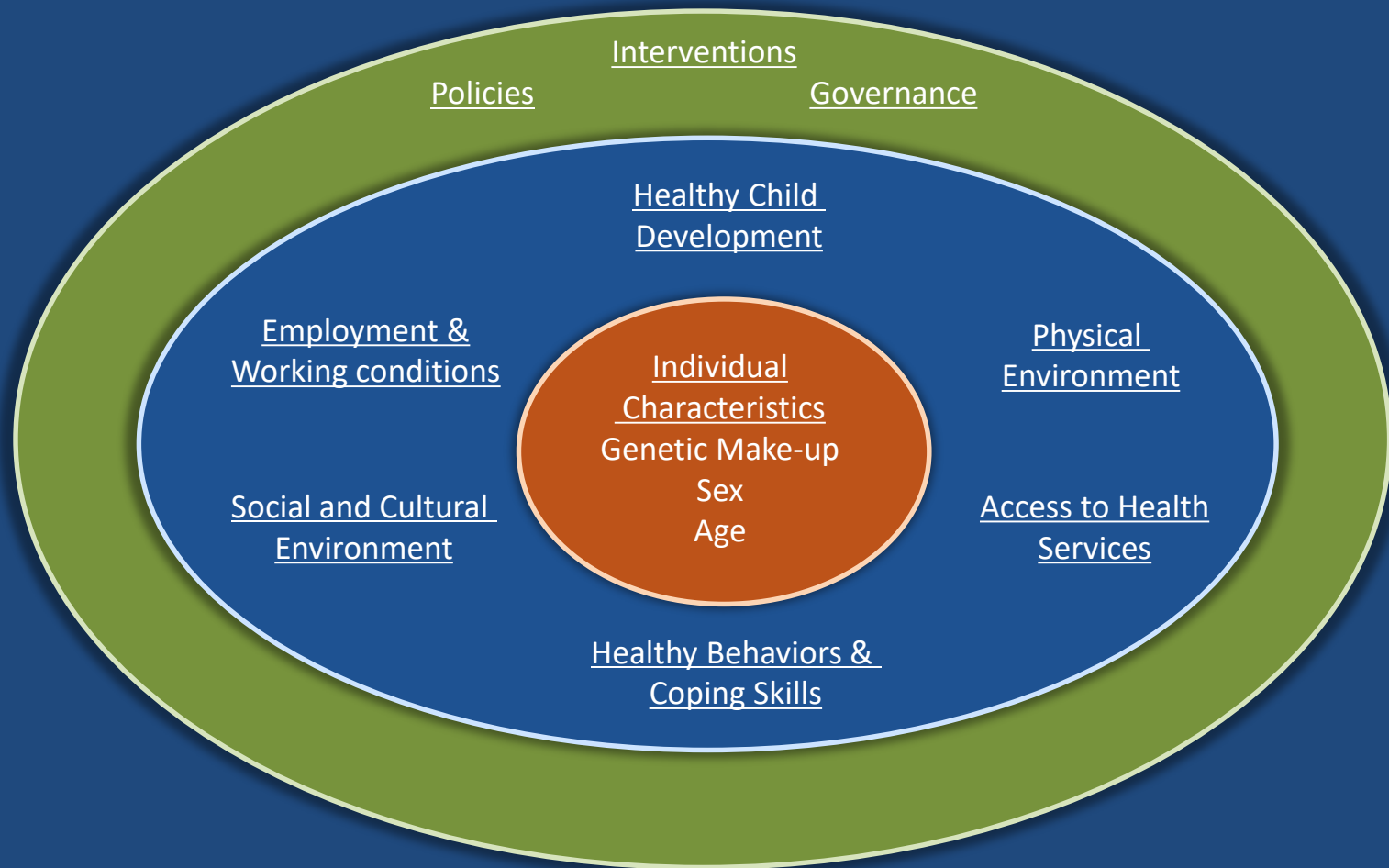
- What has led to Shahnaz' contracting TB?
- What has prevented her from seeking care?
- Can the Ministry of Health address these issues alone in the short- or medium-term?

## Vignette 3

*Josef is a heavy smoker of tobacco. He is aware of the health risks of smoking. However, he has smoked for many years, he does not feel like quitting, and he doubts, in any case, that he could quit. He has received information about the risks of smoking, been counseled on quitting, and received smoking cessation patches.*

- Are these measures enough to help Josef quit smoking?
- Will they be enough to keep young people from taking up smoking in the future?

# Determinants of Health



# Top 10 Risk Factors for DALYs, By Country Income Group, 2015

Rank	Low-Income Countries	Lower Middle-Income Countries	Upper Middle-Income Countries	High-Income Countries
1	Child growth failure	High blood pressure	High blood pressure	Smoking
2	Unsafe sex	Child growth failure	Smoking	High blood pressure
3	Household air pollution	High fasting plasma glucose	High fasting plasma glucose	High body-mass index
4	Unsafe water	Ambient particulate matter	High body-mass index	High fasting plasma glucose
5	Unsafe sanitation	Household air pollution	High sodium	High total cholesterol
6	Handwashing	Smoking	Alcohol use	Alcohol use
7	High blood pressure	Unsafe water	High total cholesterol	Low whole grains
8	Ambient particulate matter	High body-mass index	Ambient particulate matter	Low glomerular filtration
9	Suboptimal breastfeeding	High total cholesterol	Low whole grains	Low fruit
10	Iron deficiency	Low whole grains	Low fruit	Low physical activity

# Magnitude of the Impact of Top Environmental and Behavioral Risk Factors on Major Causes of Death

	Number of Deaths Globally in 2015	Proportion of Deaths Attributable to Behavioral or Environmental Risks	Top Risk Factors
<b>Communicable, maternal, perinatal, and nutritional conditions</b>	12 million	30%	Unsafe water, sanitation, and hand-washing; maternal and child nutritional risks; unsafe sex; air pollution; tobacco smoke
<b>Noncommunicable diseases</b>	40 million	24%	Dietary risks; tobacco smoke; air pollution; alcohol and drug use; low physical activity; occupational hazards
<b>Injuries</b>	5 million	20%	Alcohol and drug use



# Intrinsic and Developmental Risk Factors

## Intrinsic Risk Factors:

- Generally cannot be modified but have an important relationship with well-being (examples: age, sex, genetic make-up)
- Little to no role for agencies outside the health sector

## Developmental Risk Factors:

- Influence the development of the newborn
- Ministry of Agriculture influences nutritional policies
- Ministry of Education has a role in educational status of mother
- Tobacco/alcohol laws involve the Ministry of Finance and law enforcement agencies, among others

# Diseases as Risk Factors for Other Diseases

- Diseases themselves can be risk factors for other diseases (e.g. diabetes is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease)
- The “risk factor disease” may be addressed via action outside the health sector
- Example: promoting girls education to reduce unsafe sex, to prevent HPV infection, which prevents cervical cancer

# Environmental and Behavioral Risk Factors

- Tobacco
- Safe water and sanitation
- Outdoor air pollution

# “Whole of Government” Approach

- All ministries account for the health implications of their policies, plans, and programs
- May not be feasible in low-income countries
- If unrealistic, countries can selectively address high-impact health issues with an intersectoral approach (e.g. tobacco)

# Examples of “Whole of Government” Approach

- **Uganda:** intersectoral committees to deal with the health of internally displaced people during conflict
- **India:** intersectoral program to prevent infection of commercial sex workers with HIV through literacy and cultural programs, training in political advocacy, and microcredit schemes
- **Ecuador:** intersectoral health council from ministries of health and education to address maternal mortality, child mortality, and illiteracy

# Health Impact Assessments

- WHO definition: *"A combination of procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, program or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population."*
- Bring together wide range of stakeholders
- Examine social, economic, and environmental factors, among others
- Examine *whose* health is likely to be affected by the investment that is being assessed
- Provide policy makers with data-driven recommendations about how to minimize adverse effects and maximize health benefits

# Hypothetical Health Impact Assessments

## Example 1: Investments in roads

- Might produce economic benefits
- Construction might be associated with pooling water and an increase in mosquito-borne diseases or an increase in traffic injuries

## Example 2: Use of fertilizer and pesticides

- The use of fertilizer and pesticides can produce larger crop yields, which can help address undernutrition
- If not used properly, chemicals might lead to poisonings among some of the people who handle them

## Example 3: Building a new manufacturing plant

- Create job opportunities and other economic benefits
- Might also lead to increased air pollution or toxic industrial waste

# Typology of Intersectoral Policy Approaches

- Taxes and subsidies
- Regulation and related enforcement mechanisms
- Policies related to the built environment
- Policies concerning the provision of information



# An Intersectoral Policy Package (1/2)

Key Health Risk	Policy Instruments	Key Ministries to Engage
Air pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiscal measures and regulations to reduce carbon emissions</li> <li>• Subsidies and regulations to support cleaner household fuels</li> <li>• Building and strengthening affordable public transportation systems in urban areas</li> <li>• Implementing national monitoring systems that track all sources of air pollution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Energy</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Statistical services</li> </ul>
Tobacco smoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large excise taxes on tobacco products</li> <li>• Bans on smoking in public places and on advertising, promotion, and sponsorship, with adequate enforcement</li> <li>• Warning labels and plain packaging on tobacco products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Law enforcement</li> <li>• Industry</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Sports</li> <li>• Education</li> </ul>
Dietary risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fortification of food products with iron and folic acid</li> <li>• Iodization of salt products</li> <li>• Bans on trans fats and replacement with polyunsaturated fats</li> <li>• Actions to reduce salt in manufactured food products and discourage discretionary use</li> <li>• Product taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages</li> <li>• Actions to discourage consumption of unhealthy foods, including restrictions on marketing to children and sales in schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Industry</li> <li>• Education</li> </ul>

# An Intersectoral Policy Package (2/2)

Key Health Risk	Policy Instruments	Key Ministries to Engage
Injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excise taxes on alcohol products</li> <li>• Restrictions on access to retailed alcohol</li> <li>• Regulations on drunk driving, including enforcement of blood alcohol concentration limits</li> <li>• Legislation and enforcement of personal transport safety measures, including seatbelts in vehicles and helmets for motorcycle users</li> <li>• Setting and enforcement of speed limits on roads</li> <li>• Strict control and movement to selective bans on highly hazardous pesticides</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Industry</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Planning</li> </ul>
Other environmental risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National standards for safe drinking water and sanitation within and outside households</li> <li>• Legislation and enforcement of standards for hazardous waste disposal</li> <li>• Actions to reduce human exposure to lead, including bans on leaded fuels and phase-out of lead-based consumer products</li> <li>• Reduction and eventual phase-out of subtherapeutic antibiotic use in agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public works</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Industry</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Food and drug administration</li> </ul>

# Main Messages

- An important part of the burden of disease can only be addressed effectively through intersectoral approaches
- Intersectoral action in health can be taken through a “health in all” or “whole of government” approach
- Another valuable approach to engaging with multiple sectors on health issues is the health impact assessment
- There are a wide range of intersectoral actions that are essential to address an important share of the determinants of health
- Successfully addressing an important share of the burden of disease in today’s low- and middle-income countries requires a holistic approach to identify the determinants of disease, disability, and death

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