



## Social Determinants of Health Discussion Paper 7

Contributing to the project, The Economics of Social Determinants of Health



# POSITION PAPER ON ECONOMIC ARGUMENTS FOR INTERSECTORAL INTERVENTIONS THAT IMPROVE THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH: MEXICO

DEBATES, **POLICY & PRACTICE**, CASE STUDIES



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ECONOMIC ARGUMENTS  
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**The Series:**

The Discussion Paper Series on Social Determinants of Health provides a forum for sharing knowledge on how to tackle the social determinants of health to improve health equity. Papers explore themes related to questions of strategy, governance, tools, and capacity building. They aim to review country experiences with an eye to understanding practice, innovations, and encouraging frank debate on the connections between health and the broader policy environment. Papers are all peer-reviewed.

**Background:**

The strong causal links between public policies and the social gradient in health were documented in the World Health Organization (WHO) Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH) report. Yet even when health and health equity are seen as important markers of development, expressing benefits of social determinants of health (SDH) interventions in health and health equity terms alone is not always sufficiently persuasive in policy settings where health is not a priority, or when trade-offs need to be made. Previous research has shown that increased attention on policies across sectors that improve health and health equity requires better preparation with regard to knowledge on the economic rationales for interventions, as well with regard to how intersectoral policies are developed and implemented. In recognition of the usefulness of intersectoral actions and the prior experience of Mexico, the Mexican Task Force worked with WHO on the project of the Economics of Social Determinants of Health to produce case studies of intersectoral policies and the use of economic rationales, and to provide input on the other project publication- a resource book on the economics of social determinants of health and health inequalities.

Mexico has been recognized for its work on social policies addressing key health determinants related to poverty and poor living conditions, including for programmes like Oportunidades [Opportunities].

The views presented in this report are those of the author and do not represent the decisions, policies or views of the World Health Organization..

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Diego González coordinated the Mexican Task Force and Nicole Valentine was responsible for overall project coordination.

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# Abbreviations

ANSA	National Agreement for Food Health
CENAPRA	National Center for Injury Prevention
HDI	Human Development Index
IMESEVI	Mexican Initiative for Road Safety/Mexican Road Safety Initiative
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PDHO	Human Development Programme – ‘Oportunidades’
PDZP	Programme for the Development of Priority Zones
PROGRESA	Education, Health and Nutrition Programme
SDH	Social determinants of health
WHO	World Health Organization

# Executive summary

**M**exico has made significant progress in the field of health in recent years, reflected in the increase in life expectancy at birth and reduced rates of maternal and infant mortality. However, health differences persist among regions, ethnic groups and socioeconomic groups. Mexico has launched various interventions in the area of health and social development to reduce health inequalities, but details of the implementation of intersectoral activities impacting on the social determinants of health (SDH), and what health and economic benefits these interventions have had has not previously been documented.

## Objectives and methods

The first objective of this study is to identify which of the intersectoral actions launched by the Government of Mexico to reduce health inequalities have impacted on the SDH. The second objective is to quantify, in terms of health and economics, the benefits of these interventions. Intersectoral interventions that impact on the SDH were identified in two ways: a) discussion and consensus by the national Working Group on Social Determinants of Health; and b) review of the Health Sector Programme 2007–2012 and the specific action programme of the Ministry of Health for 2007–2012, focusing only on programmes that explicitly mention the social determinants of health and the participation of sectors other than health (intersectoral horizontal action).

The benefits of intersectoral interventions impacting on the social determinants of health were identified through a systematic review of the literature using the PRISMA method (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses). This included original studies in Spanish or English published between 2000 and 2012. Scientific articles were retrieved from PubMed and the Cochrane Library. Grey literature was identified in POPLINE and on the Internet using the Google search engine. Study inclusion criteria were also used.

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