

## Social Determinants of Health (SDH)

### }A definition of SDH themes

- Health systems as SDH
- Early child development
- Gender
- Social exclusion
- Unhealthy environments – slums
- Employment settings
- Lack of social protection
- Countries in crisis

### Social determination of Health

The circumstances in which people are born, grow, work and age and the systems put in place to deal with illness.

The conditions in which people live and die are, in turn, shaped by political, social and economic forces.

“The social determinants of health refer to both specific features and pathways by which societal conditions affect health and that potentially can be altered by informed action.”

Source: Krieger N. A glossary for social epidemiology. J Epidemiol Community Health

### The Final report of the WHO Commission for Social determination of Health

Evidence is needed to guide action:

“Our children have dramatically different life chances depending on where they were born.”

In Japan or Sweden they can expect to live more than 80 years; in Brazil 72 years; India 63 Years.”

In countries at all levels of income, health and illness follow a social gradient: the lower the socioeconomic position, the worse the health.”

CSDH (2008) Closing the gap in a generation: health equity through action on the social determinants of health. Final

Report of CSDH. Geneva, World Health Organization. Executive Summary.

Two categories of social determinants:

structural – “fundamental structures of social hierarchy” – global determinants which, in turn affect countries and their ability to tackle SDH:

intermediate – “socially determined conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age” – local

Health system: Lack of universal primary health care; high rates of out of pocket health expenses

Challenges of early child development: physical, cognitive/ language, social/ emotional; going beyond controlling childhood diseases

Lack of education and empowerment of women – need for education, employment

Social exclusion

Socially determined lifestyles: obesity

Unhealthy environments – rapidly expanding “slums”

Employment settings – unemployment, informal sector employment

Lack of social protection in illness, for elderly, disabled persons

Countries in crisis

Major Social Determination

of Health

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Countries in crisis.

*We remain hopeful for good outcomes for the health of the  
people*