

Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Health and Urban Planning. Attempts at Disciplinary Integration and Innovation

- **Format:**

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- **Abstract (300 words):**

This paper presents the results of research on the role of urban planning in promoting actions to improve the health/well-being of inhabitants from the perspective of a new alliance between health and urban planning. Based on the WHO's definition of health and some experiences within the European Healthy Cities movement, the paper focuses on the conflicts/reasons for the success/failure of operational and evaluation tools (HIA). Even with the awareness that data/parameters can provide interesting indications for urban planning can be sought within assessment tools, they do not seem to promote effective integration between the themes of health/well-being and urban-planning tools.

The method based on critical comparison of case studies, shows a state of the art as a panorama where assessment processes act like black boxes because they use highly

specialized language that exacerbates the gap between citizens and experts in different disciplines. The efficacy of the assessment tool is clear and strong only when the data and determinants of health are really part of the urban-planning design process. In this view, it is possible to refer to conditions and opportunities to create integrated paths between health and urban planning based on aspects of social awareness: to control its balances, to invest in the quality of living spaces, to favour decreasing local health expenses, to take the opportunity for a new local welfare capable of influencing the living conditions of inhabitants.

The main questions to discuss the new alliance *health/urban planning* occur with respect to two main aspects: a) attention to an integrated and shared knowledge of the city, its critical and needs in terms of health and well-being, as an opportunity to forge alliances and to empower institutions, experts from different disciplines, citizens; b) the transition to an approach of needs /performance in design/ regeneration of cities and living spaces.

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