

The Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion

Overview

Health is a human right

One of the fundamental rights of every human being, without distinction of race, gender, age, religion, political belief, culture, economic or social condition, is the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health.

Health is the "state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".

Principles

Health promotion is based on the following principles:

- Social justice and health equity
 - Respect for diversity, dignity and human rights
-

Aims

The Bangkok Charter aims to:

- Engage and provide guidance to the many stakeholders in all countries
 - Reaffirm health promotion as the process of enabling people to increase control over their health and its determinants and thereby improve their physical and mental health
-

Determinants of health

Health promotion is a core component of public health and targets the full range of modifiable determinants of health.

Background

The Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion in a globalized world highlights the new challenges that need to be met and the commitments that need to be made by a broad range of stakeholders .

The Bangkok Charter endorses the Ottawa Charter of 1986 which laid out the values, principles and purposes of health promotion. The Bangkok Charter builds on the five action areas of the Ottawa Charter to:

- Build healthy public policy
- Create supportive environments
- Develop community action
- Develop personal skills
- Reorient health services

It also builds on the recommendations of the subsequent international health promotion conferences: Adelaide, Australia (1988); Sundsvall, Sweden (1991); Jakarta, Indonesia (1997); and Mexico City, Mexico (2000).

Challenges

Global challenges

Globalization, environmental change, urbanization, political and demographic transitions, the disease burden, advances in science and information technology, and the role of the state have all evolved since the Ottawa Charter. Health inequalities remain a grave concern, as does the limited health promotion capacity in many countries.

Active participation required

To address these issues effectively, health promotion requires active participation from a wide range of partners including:

- The health sector
 - All governments
 - International organizations
 - The private sector
 - Nongovernmental organizations and civil society
 - The wider community
-

Health promotion in a globalizing world

Globalization opens up new avenues for cooperation. However, it can also:

- weaken governmental control over a growing number of health determinants
- subject individuals and communities, in all countries, to rapid social change

Globalization also demonstrates the central importance of health for poverty reduction and the economic and social development of nations as emphasized by the importance given to health in the *Millennium Development Goals*.

Globalization offers new opportunities for the promotion of health in diverse sectors, with a widening variety of stakeholders whose commitment and action are critical for health promotion in an increasingly interdependent world.

Health promotion works

There is a wide body of evidence to show that health promotion works and in particular:

- Interventions that use the five Ottawa Action Areas are the most effective
 - Settings such as schools, workplaces, communities and cities offer practical opportunities for the implementation of comprehensive strategies
 - Participation, especially by the community, is essential for the sustainability of health promotion efforts
 - Access to education and information is critical to achieving a high level of health literacy, effective participation and the empowerment of individuals and communities
 - Health education and life skills training, when properly planned and implemented, encourage positive behavioural changes
 - Political leadership, good governance and supportive policies are key ingredients of success
-

New Commitments

Four commitments

To meet the wide range of existing, emerging and potential future opportunities and challenges, commitment is required by the full range of stakeholders to ensure that:

- Globalization becomes more health friendly
 - Health promotion is a core responsibility of all governments
 - Health is a key to good corporate practices
 - Environments empower individuals and communities to improve their health
-

Make globalization health friendly

The task of ensuring that health becomes central to the global agenda requires actions by all concerned stakeholders to:

- Promote dialogue and cooperation among civil society, the private sector, government and intergovernmental bodies to coordinate action on public health
 - Balance the benefits of globalization with the benefits of local action so that the assets of culture are preserved and cultural diversity is enhanced
 - Make public health an integral part of foreign and domestic policy and international relations including in times of conflict
 - Support national government actions and intergovernmental alliances that protect people from the potentially harmful effects of products, services and marketing strategies
 - Address the brain drain from developing countries
-

Make health promotion a core responsibility of all governments

To ensure that health promotion is an integral part of socioeconomic and political development, governments should use the whole of government approach to:

- Tackle the social and economic causes of poverty, poor health and inequalities
 - Ensure that the health implications of all government policies and legislation are taken into consideration
 - Ensure that investments outside the health sector contribute to the achievement of health outcomes
 - Strengthen health promotion in all sectors, including the adoption of the whole-of-government approach
 - Develop appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks to promote public-private and inter-sectoral collaboration
 - Improve surveillance and tracking of emerging global health threats
 - Invest in health promotion research and its application to practice
-

Make health a key to good corporate practices

The business sector is a key stakeholder in the achievement of population health. This sector needs to:

- Invest in health and safety in the workplace
 - Ensure that production processes, products and marketing strategies do not undermine health
 - Foster public-private partnerships and multinational alliances to enhance health through greater corporate social responsibilities
 - Undertake collaborative efforts with public sector health care providers to enhance access to basic, good quality health care services
-

New Commitments, continue**Make environments to empower individuals and communities**

This commitment will include actions that:

- Provide policy environments which enable communities to engage in self-determined health promotion action
 - Establish networks and partnerships, particularly with nongovernmental organizations that strengthen community actions for tackling local, national and global health issues
 - Support evidence-based traditional and complementary approaches to health.
 - Make health-promoting information available to every individual and engage in efforts to ensure high levels of health literacy
 - Assist communities to engage in activities that promote mental health especially when they are undergoing rapid transition
-

Making it Happen**Making it happen**

The Bangkok Charter is an important step in strengthening action-oriented health promotion. Making it happen will require:

- Adopting integrated strategies in different settings across different age groups.
 - Acknowledging the importance of partnerships for health
 - Recognizing the urgent need to strengthen health promotion capacity at all levels in all countries
 - Affirming the adoption of the evidence-based approach to policy development and practice
-

Implementation strategies

To ensure continuing progress on health promotion, the following five implementation are required:

#	Action	Requirement
1	Invest	Achieve adequate and sustainable financing for investment in actions that tackle the determinants of health and in health systems that are appropriate, affordable and accessible
2	Advocate	Advocate for evidence-based policies, resources and practices that support and protect health by engaging the political system at all levels, and by working with nongovernmental and community organizations
3	Build Capacity	Build capacity to promote health, particularly in the areas of policy development and practice, health literacy, community actions, leadership, workforce and research
4	Enable and mobilize	Enable and mobilize individuals and communities to overcome structural barriers to health, to enhance social support, and to reinforce social norms conducive to health, in particular through information and communication technology
5	Form partnerships	Form partnerships with public, private and nongovernmental organizations to create sustainable actions across sectors to address the determinants of health

Benchmarks for Measuring Progress

Health promotion is result oriented

To measure progress on implementation of the Bangkok Charter, the World Health Organization, in collaboration with other partners, will encourage, and work with, Member States to develop appropriate indicators, processes and mechanisms.

Benchmarks for measuring progress

The following benchmarks, against which progress can be measured, will enable countries and communities to report on progress in 2009 and at regular intervals:

- Capacity and structure for health promotion
 - Investment in health promotion
 - Health concerns in international trade agreements
 - Policies focusing on health determinants in all sectors
 - Stakeholder participation in policy formulation, planning and implementation in health promotion
-

A Global Pledge

A global pledge

This Bangkok Charter urges all stakeholders to work together in a worldwide health promotion partnership to undertake the commitments and strategies outlined above for the health and well-being of all.

We, the participants of the 6th Global Conference on Health Promotion in Bangkok, Thailand, have discussed the draft Charter prepared and developed through a process in which a wide range of organizations, networks, groups and individuals from many countries have contributed, and strongly support the principles, commitments, actions and implementation strategies outlined in this Charter.