

Réseau canadien sur la santé dans toutes les politiques (RCSdTP)

The Canadian Network for Health in All Policies (CNHiAP)

Café du RCSdTP, 12 décembre 2025 / CNHiAP café, December 12, 2025

Évaluation d'Impact sur la Santé (EIS)

Health Impact Assessment (HIA)



Centre de collaboration nationale
sur les politiques publiques et la santé

National Collaborating Centre
for Healthy Public Policy

**Institut national
de santé publique**
Québec



Reconnaissance territoriale

Land Acknowledgment



Nous reconnaissons que nous sommes sur un territoire autochtone millénaire, lieu de rencontres et de diplomatie entre les peuples et lieu de la signature du Traité de la grande paix.

We acknowledge that we are on an age-old Indigenous territory, a place of meeting and diplomacy between peoples and the site of the signing of the Great Peace treaty.

Nous remercions la nation Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) de son hospitalité sur ce territoire non cédé.

We thank the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) nation for their hospitality on this unceded territory.



Image: © iStockphoto.com / Ilvlagic

Café du RCSdTP/ CNHiAP café

Évaluation d'Impact sur la Santé (EIS) / Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

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Un café informel / An Informal Café



- ❖ Bienvenu et présentations
- ❖ La mise en œuvre de l'EIS à différents niveaux : présentations
- ❖ Discussion

- ❖ Welcome and introductions
- ❖ HIA's implementation at different levels: presentations
- ❖ Discussion



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Présentations/ Presentations



I. Introduction and HIA at the provincial/territorial level -
Ontario's Ministry of Health

Stephanie Simpson

II. HiAP at the federal level- Public Health Agency of Canada
(PHAC)

Nassim Khatibsemnani and Albert Kwan

III. HIAP at the municipal level- Ottawa Public Health

Inge Roosendaal



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“Strong personalities and fossilized bureaucracies”: Exploring 20 years of momentum and inertia surrounding Health Impact Assessment (HIA) within Ontario’s Ministry of Health

Stephanie Simpson, PhD

NAO

North American Observatory
on Health Systems and Policies

Background & Research Problem

Health Impact Assessment



The Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) exert greater impact on population health than genetics, lifestyle, or healthcare.¹

‘Non-health’ sector policies that directly shape the SDoH thus have both positive and negative health potential.

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| 1. Screen | 4. Report |
| 2. Scope | 5. Monitor |
| 3. Assess | 6. Evaluate |

HIA identifies & promotes the health benefits of public policies while also mitigating negative health consequences.² Ministries of Health are often formally

designated as HIA ‘stewards’ (i.e., leads or facilitators).³

Ten years of ‘momentum and inertia’ surrounding a provincial HIA (or adjacent) strategy in Ontario

- 2008** – Public Health Ontario (PHO) established
- 2010** – CMOH calls for government-wide ‘health lens’
- 2011** – MOHLTC review on Health in All Policies (HiAP) strategy
- 2012** – Health Equity Impact Assessment tool developed
- 2013** – PHO & Cancer Care Ontario call for provincial HIA legislation
- 2014** – Ontario Public Health Association calls for HiAP legislation
- 2017** – RNAO calls for provincial HiAP approach
- 2020** – HEIA ‘refresh’ initiative (including a CoP led by MoH, CAMH)

Research Aims

1. Explore collaborative policy development between health and ‘non-health’ Ministries of the Ontario government.
2. Account for why governments are more or less receptive to certain approaches to health promotion & protection.

Research Questions

1. How do individual-and organization-level determinants shape routine inter-ministerial policy development?
2. What existing structures, processes and mechanisms enable or impede HIA implementation?

Study Design

Methodology

Case study of inter-ministerial policy development within Ontario’s MOHLTC between 2003-2018.

Sample

Senior-level MOHLTC policy staff (N=20).

Methods

Semi-structured interviews triangulated with policy & process documents (N=77).

Theoretical Framework

Meso-level: Normative Institutionalism (formal & informal norms, rules, values and routines embedded within an organization)⁷



Micro-level: Bounded Rationality (heuristics, trade-offs, and satisficing to account for constrained decision capacity)⁸

Key Findings)

Participants agreed on a strong culture of inter-ministerial collaboration, the nature and scope of which has traditionally entailed the provision of joint program and services.

Several ‘entrenched’ institutions have shaped this approach, as well as predominant policy staff understandings of:

- The MOHLTC’s policy purview (‘boundaries’ of action);
- Roles and responsibilities (division of labour); and
- ‘Health’ and its determinants.



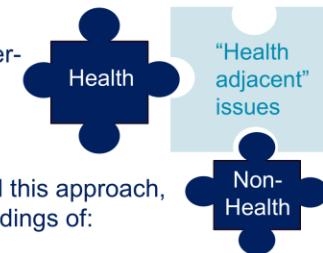
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|------------------------------------|--|
| • Public Health Legislation | ✓ PH System Purview; Lifestyle Drift |
| • Structure & Mandates | ✓ Attention Allocation; Issue Prioritization |
| • Bureaucratic Hierarchy | ✓ Decision Authority; Management Style |
| • Cabinet Committees | ✓ ‘Health Adjacent’ Issues |
| • Cabinet Submissions | ✓ Policy & Collaboration ‘template’ |

Conclusions

Inter-ministerial policy development has traditionally aligned with HIA’s health promotion component, but with notable caveats.

Critically, the above circumstances have limited the nature and scope of collaboration necessary to mitigate the potential unintended negative health impacts of non-health sector policies.

Given their perceived functionalism, HIA proponents are encouraged to build upon these entrenched institutions as existing entry points for a provincial HIA protocol.



1. de Leeuw, E., & Clavier, C. (2011). Healthy public in all policies. *Health Promotion International*, 26(2), ii273-ii244.
2. World Health Organization. (2014) *The Helsinki Statement on Health in All Policies*. Helsinki, Finland: World Health Organization.
3. Kickbusch, I., & Buckett, K. (2010). Health in All Policies. The Evolution. *Implementing Health in All Policies, Adelaide, 2010*.
4. Lysyk, B. (2019). *Annual report: Follow-up report on audit recommendations*. Office of the Auditor General of Ontario.

Health Impact Assessment at the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)

Canadian Network for Health in All Policies Café

December 12, 2025



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada 

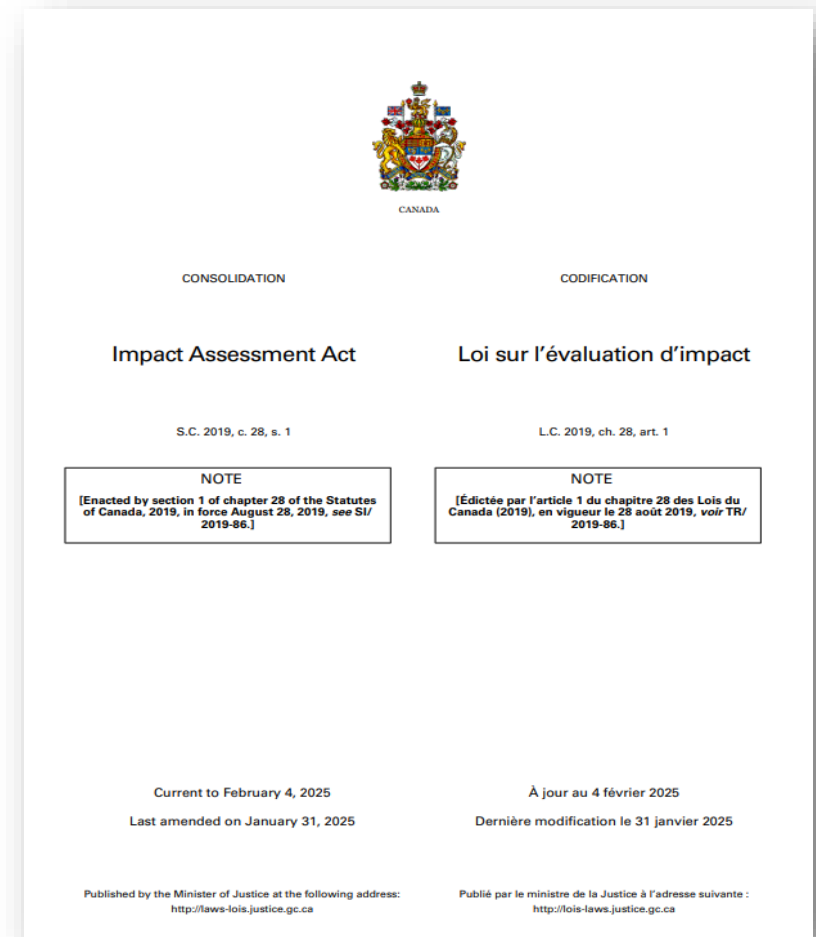
Impact Assessment (IA) at the Government of Canada

Impact Assessment Act, 2019

Environmental, **health**, social, and economic impacts

IA is a planning tool for examining positive and negative effects of proposed major projects

Led by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada



The image shows the cover page of the Impact Assessment Act, 2019, presented in a bilingual format. At the top center is the Canadian coat of arms with the word "CANADA" below it. The page is divided into two columns: "CONSOLIDATION" on the left and "CODIFICATION" on the right. The left column lists "Impact Assessment Act" with the reference "S.C. 2019, c. 28, s. 1". The right column lists "Loi sur l'évaluation d'impact" with the reference "L.C. 2019, ch. 28, art. 1". Below each title is a "NOTE" box containing information about the act's enactment and its force in effect. At the bottom, the page is updated to February 4, 2025, and published by the Minister of Justice.

CONSOLIDATION	CODIFICATION
Impact Assessment Act	Loi sur l'évaluation d'impact
S.C. 2019, c. 28, s. 1	L.C. 2019, ch. 28, art. 1
NOTE [Enacted by section 1 of chapter 28 of the Statutes of Canada, 2019, in force August 28, 2019, see SI/2019-86.]	NOTE [Édictée par l'article 1 du chapitre 28 des Lois du Canada (2019), en vigueur le 28 août 2019, voir TR/2019-86.]
Current to February 4, 2025 Last amended on January 31, 2025	À jour au 4 février 2025 Dernière modification le 31 janvier 2025
Published by the Minister of Justice at the following address: http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca	Publié par le ministre de la Justice à l'adresse suivante : http://lois-laws.justice.gc.ca

Role of Federal Departments in IA



Participate in engagement, consultation, assessment, and monitoring of activities



Participate in project reviews, including technical meetings with proponents



Provide input and expert advice on key documents and recommendations

PHAC and Impact Assessment

New federal authority as of 2023/24

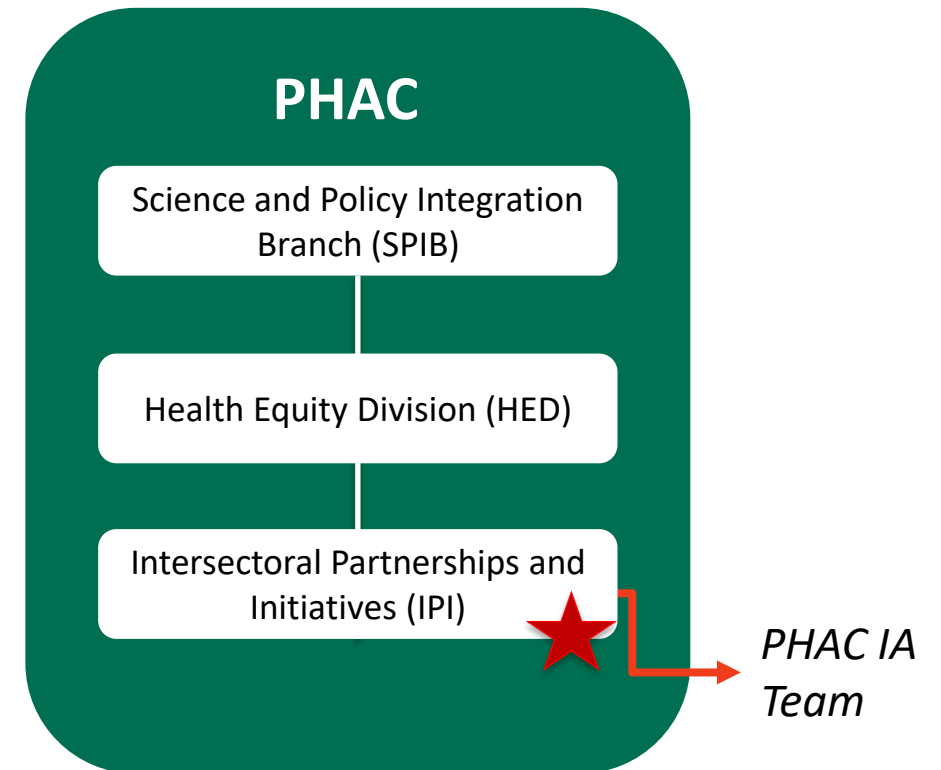
Provides expertise to support the assessment of health effects in IA, related to 3 key areas:

Social determinants of health

Health equity

Mental health

Work through Health Canada as the GoC leads for health effects (including Health Impact Assessment methodology)



PHAC's Role in Impact Assessment

- PHAC supports a very specific aspect of Impact Assessment
- Our work is scoped accordingly to focus on:



Project Reviews: analysis and input on technical project documents to strengthen considerations for health and wellbeing



Additional activities (where capacity allows):

- Co-Chair an interdepartmental working group on Social Determinants of Health in Impact Assessment
- Support guidance development linked to PHAC's areas of expertise

Reflections

HIA at the GoC setting:

Whole-of-government approach

Focus on major projects and economic development

Meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples

Alignment with WHO's 4 Pillars Model for HiAP

Differences in practice from the literature and theory:

Complexity, scale, and technicality

Real-world challenges (legislation, governments, processes, relationships)

Canadian Health in all Policies Network Virtual Café: Health Impact Assessment

Inge Roosendaal, MCIP RPP
Senior Planner, Healthy Communities
December 12, 2025

The Power of Municipal HIAs

What it means for me to do HIAs in my setting

The power of the process:

HIAs provide a structured approach to assess health, equity, well-being

Goals:

Inform decisions, enhance positives, mitigate negatives

Engage in deliberation of trade-offs

Municipal leverage points:

Official Plan, Secondary Plans, Design Guidelines, Zoning, Development review



Ottawa's Approach: Real-Time HIAs

Shared Staffing Model:

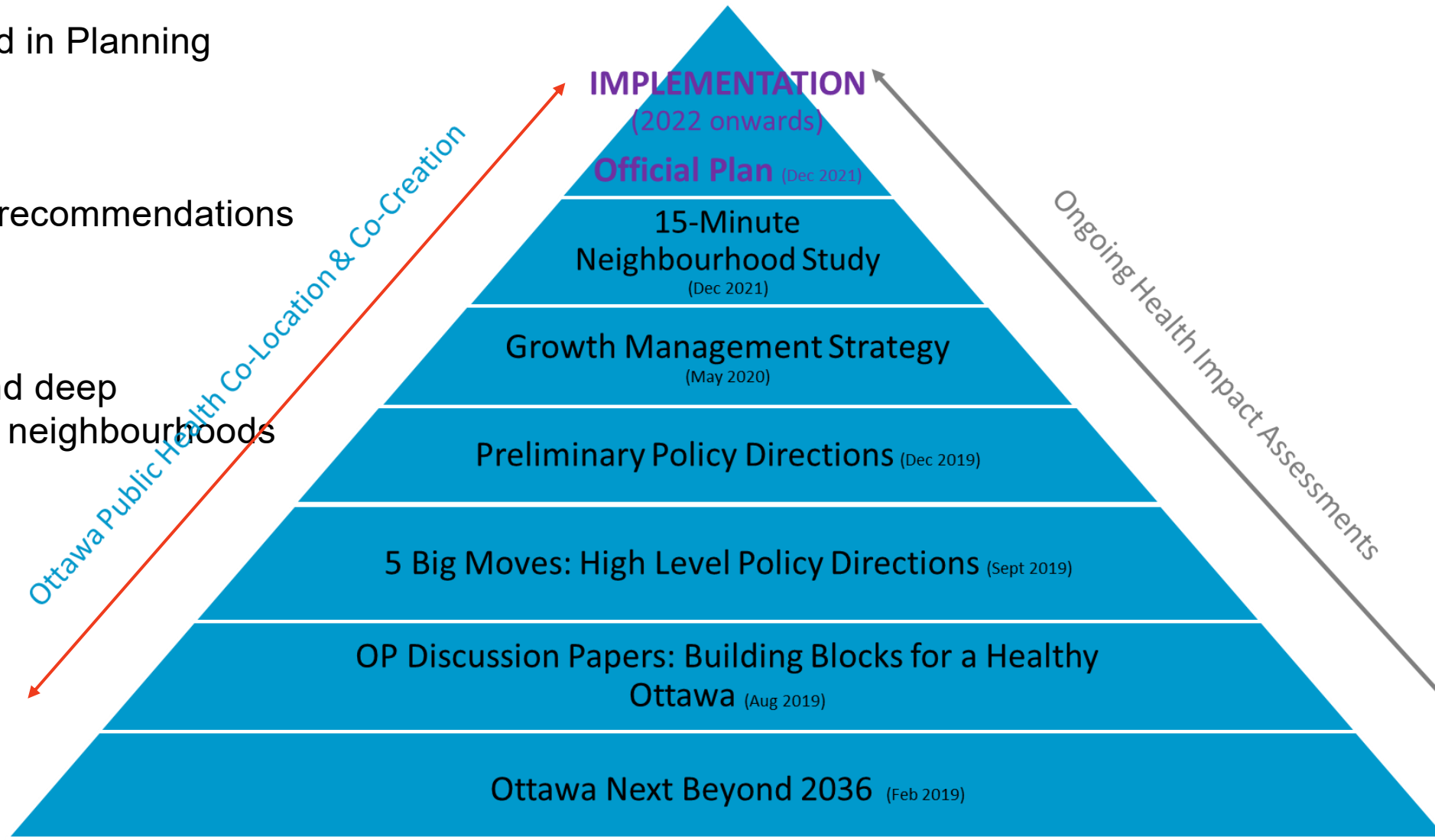
= co-creation (OPH embedded in Planning Dept.)

Continuous HIA lens:

screening, scoping, analysis, recommendations at multiple stages

New Official Plan:

stand-alone health policies and deep integration through 15-minute neighbourhoods



Practical Tools for Supporting Real-Time HIAs

Reference documents

Checklists: from grey literature & custom made

Spatial analysis:

GIS overlays

Health and exposure datasets

Ottawa Neighbourhood Equity Index



Maximize positive health effects.



Minimize negative health effects.

HIA Reflections from Municipal Practice

How does practice differ from what's described in the academic literature?

Learn your context

Grab opportunities

Collaborate creatively

Partnerships and evidence

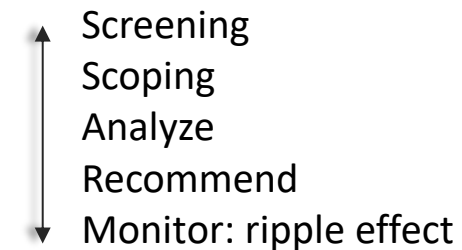
Deliberative Dialogue vs Reports

Speak partner's language

Get in on the ground floor



**Translating HIAs into Planning Processes,
Carried out in “real-time”:**



Looking Ahead: Scaling HIAs and Embracing Complexity

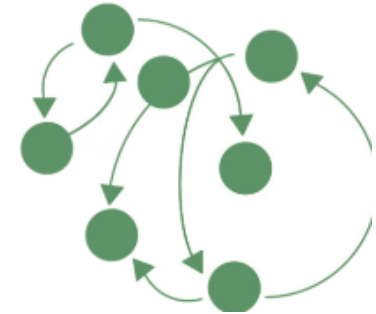
How do theoretical approaches translate into real-world applications?

Recognize & embrace complexity:
solutions require systems thinking.

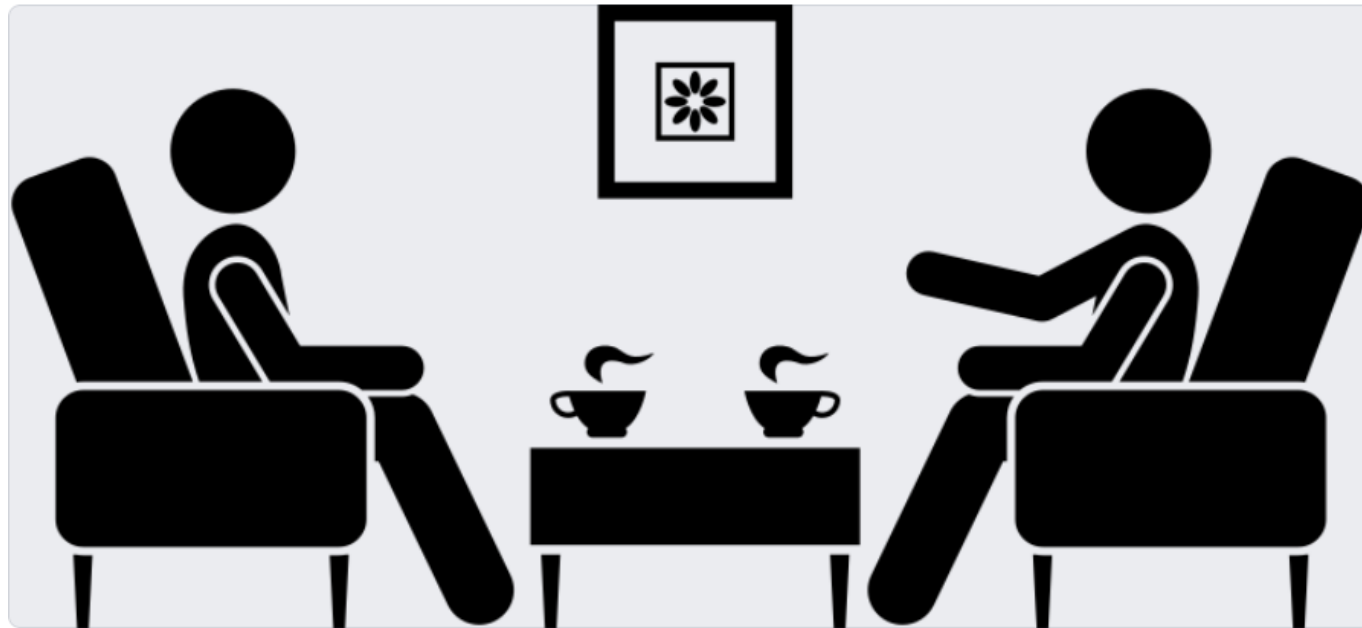
HIAs as a platform for innovation
across sectors and silos

Adapt and iterate

Analytic Thinking vs Systems Thinking



Café Discussion



Discussion Questions / Questions de discussion

- What does it mean for you to be doing HIA in your setting?
- How does practice differ from what's described in the academic literature?
- How do theoretical approaches translate (or not) into real-world applications?
- Que signifie pour vous réaliser une ÉIS dans votre contexte ?
- En quoi la pratique diffère-t-elle de ce qui est décrit dans la littérature académique ?
- Comment les approches théoriques se traduisent-elles (ou non) dans des applications concrètes sur le terrain ?





Merci!
Thank you!

Commentaires ou questions?
Questions or comments?

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