



## SHE strategic plan 2013-2016

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*The SHE strategic plan was discussed and ratified during the SHE assembly meeting on 10 October 2013.*



a **TNO** company

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## Introduction

The Schools for Health in Europe (SHE) network focuses on making school health promotion an integral part of policy development in the health and education sector in EU member states. The network encourages each member country to develop and implement a national policy on school health promotion, building on the experiences within the country, within Europe and globally.

CBO, located in Utrecht, the Netherlands, is the organisation responsible for the daily management of the SHE network. CBO acts as a WHO Collaborating Centre for School Health Promotion. The SHE network has representatives in 43 European countries, including all EU member states. The SHE research group has 65 members from 25 European countries.

A **'health promoting school'** is a school that implements a structured and systematic plan for the health, well-being and the development of social capital of all pupils and of teaching and non-teaching staff. The whole school environment is viewed as an important area for promotion of health and for learning about health.

The members of the SHE network use a positive concept of health and well-being and acknowledge the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. They recognize the whole school approach to health and active participation of all members of the school community. Health promoting schools support schools in achieving their educational and social goals. Healthy students learn better, healthy teachers work better. They are active agents in all European countries for strengthening social capital and health literacy.

On the European level, the following core values and pillars were adopted in 2008 by the SHE Network, that underpin the health promoting school approach:

### SHE core values

- **Equity.** Equal access for all to education and health
- **Sustainability.** Health, education and development are linked. Activities and programmes are implemented in a systematic way over a prolonged period
- **Inclusion.** Diversity is celebrated. Schools are communities of learning, where all feel trusted and respected
- **Empowerment.** All members of the school community are actively involved
- **Democracy.** Health promoting schools are based on democratic values

### SHE pillars

- **Whole school approach to health.** Combine health education in the classroom with development of school policies, the school environment, life competencies and involving the whole school community
- **Participation.** A sense of ownership by student, staff and parent
- **School quality.** Health promoting schools create better teaching and learning processes and outcomes. Healthy pupils learn better, healthy staff work better
- **Evidence.** Development of new approaches and practices based on existing and emerging research
- **School and community.** Schools are seen as active agents for community development

The further development and strategic positioning of health promoting schools in the WHO European region and the role of the SHE network is described in the SHE strategic plan 2013-2016. A continuously changing political and economic context on the European level and in the SHE member countries, as well as on the world-wide level, requires ongoing critical assessment and creativity to maintain and further expand the ideas and experiences concerning the health promoting school approach. Based on the Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion (1986) the health promoting school approach still strongly stands and has demonstrated its contribution to improving the health and wellbeing of the young citizens of Europe. Even more so the shift in focus on how to include health in education and learning has created new perspectives.

The SHE strategic plan 2013-2016 builds on the work carried out under the first SHE strategic plan covering the period 2008-2012. An overview of milestones from this period are presented in Annex 1. Chapter 2 describes the context for school health promotion in Europe and how this is related to the WHO Health 2020 strategy and other relevant policies that impact the health and well-being of children and young people. In Chapter 3 the main objectives of the SHE network are described, followed by some strategy considerations for the SHE network.

## **Chapter 1: Context for school health promotion in Europe**

There are around 200 million children and young people up to the age of 18 in the WHO European region. All countries provide universal access to primary education, and most have universal systems for secondary education. Including health into the school system is seen as an effective tool to reach the broadest range of children and young people, specially in poorer countries. By ensuring that children have the best start in life this will provide a solid base for good health and well-being in their future lives, which is central in the WHO Health 2020 policy framework. This framework is adopted by all 53 WHO Member States in the European region.

There is a wide consensus that health promoting schools contribute positively to the health and well-being of students and school staff. Health promoting schools help to reduce the burden of disease and improve the resilience of students and schools staff as well as their communities. There is also growing evidence that health promoting schools contribute to better learning achievements of students and higher job satisfaction of school staff. Health promoting schools therefore support school improvement. So, a continuous effort to further involve the education sector and the (public) health sector is required for the future development and implementation of health promoting schools in the European region.

The further development and implementation of health promoting schools in Europe will be guided by the WHO 2020 policy framework. The WHO vision is that all people are enabled and supported in achieving their full health potential and well-being, and in which countries, individually and jointly, work towards reducing inequalities in health within the European region.

In Europe the new EU programme for public health (the Third Health Programme 2014 – 2020), the new EU education programme (Erasmus+, period 2014-2020), and the EU research programme (Horizon 2020) offer highly relevant opportunities to help realize the further development, implementation and research of health promoting schools. Also other EU funding instruments (including DG Justice, DG Inclusion, DG structural funds, European regional development funds) may be relevant for health promoting schools, with a focus on equity, social inclusion and combating child poverty.

## **Trends and topics for the SHE network 2013–2016**

Most relevant topics for health promoting schools for the period 2013-2016 are related to the WHO Health 2020 aims and to priority areas in EU policies that have an impact on children and young people:

### **1. Tackling the health divide**

#### ***a) Reducing health inequalities and promoting equity through the health promoting school approach***

There is a need to further strengthen the evidence base on how health promoting schools can help reducing health inequalities and reducing the gradient in attainment outcomes. Health2020 provides a framework for the health and well-being for all children and young people in the European region to reduce health inequalities.

#### ***b) Supporting children's rights and the prevention of violence in the school setting***

There is high priority in the European region to promote the rights of the child and to prevent violence. This includes promoting child-friendly services and systems; eliminating all forms of violence against children; guaranteeing the rights of children in vulnerable situations; promoting child participation.

#### ***c) Social inclusion***

The Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth sets targets to lift at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion and to increase employment of the population aged 20-64 to 75%. Health promoting schools can play an important role in help realising these ambitions.

#### ***d) Focus on vocational education and training (VET) and adult education (Life long learning)***

The vital and health promoting VET approach is central in the EU Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme. It focuses on excellence in VET and on engaging with the world of employment.

### **2. Investing in making people healthier, empowering citizens and creating resilient communities**

#### ***a) Including early childhood education and care***

A 'life course approach' starting early in life as promoted by WHO Health 2020 will be most effective in improving children's health and well-being. The health promoting school approach can be further developed for early childhood education and care. This issue is also a major topic in the EU Educational Policy as described in the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme.

#### ***b) The impact of health promoting schools on early school leaving***

The Europe 2020 target to reduce the share of early school leavers from 14% to less than 10% offers an interesting challenge to further investigate the impact of health promoting school approach.

***c) Active student involvement and participation***

Active student involvement and participation are central in the health promoting school approach and one of its key values. The EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018) wants to provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and the labour market, and to encourage young people to be active citizens and participate in society. The health promoting school approach can play an important role in helping realize these objectives.

**3. Tackling Europe's major diseases**

***a) Preventing non-communicable and communicable diseases through the health promoting school approach***

Health promoting schools are an ideal setting for preventing non-communicable as well as communicable diseases, which is one of the on-going leading issues in the Health2020 strategy. HPS will help to address the major burden of illness.

***b) Mental health promotion and well-being in schools***

Mental health and well-being, prevention of mental disorders and the improvement of care and social inclusion of people with mental disorders in Europe are high on the political agenda in Europe. The number of diagnoses of mental disorders is rising. Mental health is a human right and a key resource for the success. The promotion of mental health and well-being of children and young people is central to the health promoting school approach.

***c) Improving school feeding and nutrition***

Promoting healthy eating and physical activity is a key topic in health promoting school development. School feeding provides educational and health benefits to the most vulnerable children.

**4. Creating healthy and supportive environments for health and well-being**

***a) Schools as health promoting work places***

In a health promoting school the health and well-being of school staff is one of the key factors for success. The workplace is one of the priority settings for health promotion in the 21st century.

***b) Focusing on whole school approach and educational change***

Education and health are interrelated. Whole school approaches for health and well-being lead to educational improvement and higher academic achievement. The contribution of health promoting schools in this area needs further research.

**5. Promoting and adopting 'health in all policies', whole of government and whole of societies approaches**

***a) Quality of teaching and employability***

Teacher education and training are a crucial factor in implementing health promoting schools. Both initial and in-service training of teachers is relevant. By positively influencing the health and well-being of school staff a health promoting school helps reducing sick leave and economic loss. A higher quality of teaching contributes to a new generation of employees with better competences. It contributes to a healthy workforce.

***b) Sustainable development and health promoting schools***

Health promoting schools are closely linked with the education for sustainable development. This offers a window of opportunities for promoting and adopting health in all policies and whole of societies approaches.

## Chapter 2: Main objectives SHE network

The main **aim** of the Schools for Health in Europe (SHE) network is to support organisations and professionals to further develop and sustain school health promotion in each country by providing **the** European platform for school health promotion. The strategic plan 2013-2016 is the guiding document for the SHE network.

The main objectives 2013-2016 are:

- a) Contribute to help realize the WHO Health 2020 and the Europe 2020 policy
- b) Share good practices, expertise and skills on school health promotion.
- c) Identify areas for research and lobby for the development and implementation of research (evaluation/ evidence) on school health promotion.
- d) Maintain and further expand the SHE network to a leading international network and community for school health promotion.
- e) Provide ongoing technical support in member states, with an emphasis on the member countries in Eastern Europe and the Central Asia (EECA countries).
- f) Create and maintain active collaboration between the health sector and the education sector and other relevant sectors (youth care, youth welfare sector, social care, environment and sustainable development) on a European and global level.

The main **focus** of the Schools for Health in Europe network for 2013-2016 will be to:

- identify and share relevant information on school health promotion;
- share good practice, expertise and skills;
- encourage research;
- act as advocates for school health promotion.

The annual SHE workplan is based on the strategic objectives and will be developed by CBO with the consent of the SHE planning committee.

## **Chapter 3: Strategic developments SHE network**

### **Sustainability of the SHE network**

CBO as a WHO Collaborating Centre for School Health Promotion, hosts the SHE secretariat as a main project, therefore CBO is responsible for the project management of the SHE network. It will see to it that there is continued fundraising in order to maintain its secretariat function. Options for creating a legal entity of the SHE network that can support the sustainability of the SHE network in the future will be explored during this period.

### **Membership of the SHE network**

The SHE network is owned by its members. Membership of the network is restricted to the SHE national coordinators who have a voting right and to members of the SHE research group. A strong asset is the support from both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education of the SHE national coordinator. From 2013 regional and sub-national health promoting school networks are invited to join the SHE network in an observer role. The SHE terms of reference 1.2 describe the SHE structure in full detail.

### **Decentralization of the SHE network activities**

Possibilities for setting up a SHE office in the Russian Federation as part of the decentralization of the SHE activities, that can help facilitate SHE activities in the Eastern European and Central Asian (Russian speaking) member countries will be further explored.

### **Strategic partnerships**

Strategic development is one of the key actions of the SHE secretariat. CBO as host of the SHE secretariat maintains contacts with many strategic partners operating on a national, European and global level. This is expected to lead to strategic partnerships with a broad range of partners over the next period 2013-2016. CBO together with the SHE advisory board and SHE planning committee, will consider setting up a SHE Strategy Group where strategic partners can be better linked to the health promoting school development in the European region.

### **Services for schools**

The main target groups of the SHE network are professionals, researchers and organisations that support schools in the introduction and implementation of the health promoting school approach. In the coming period direct interaction between schools in the European region will be facilitated by the SHE secretariat. The SHE online school manual will be implemented via the SHE website. SHE national coordinators will be encouraged to translate the manual in their own language and make a cultural adaptation. The SHE website will be improved to be more accessible for schools. A service that will be offered by the SHE secretariat is to create the possibility for schools to link with other schools that have similar interests.

## **Annex 1: Summary activities SHE network 2008-2012**

### **Maintain and expand the SHE network**

- The SHE network has sustained membership in 43 European countries - SHE member states.
- In seven Eastern European and Central Asian countries - Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and the Russian Federation - national health promoting school (HPS) networks were initiated and capacity building activities organized.
- The SHE research group is chaired by the Department of Education, Aarhus University in Denmark and was founded in 2008. Since 2010 the research group is a special interest group of the European Educational Research Association (EERA). Currently the SHE research group counts 65 members from 27 European countries.
- In 2009 the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Health Promoting Schools was held in Lithuania with more than 300 participants, including a group of young people. The 'Vilnius resolution' as the outcome of the conference was translated into 16 languages. As a policy and advocacy tool it has contributed to the further development and implementation of health promoting schools in the European countries.
- In order to stimulate professional development training events for professionals in school health promotion were organized: the 1<sup>st</sup> SHE summer school took place in 2010 and the SHE autumn school was held in 2011.
- Among the SHE national coordinators in 2010 a SHE needs assessment was held, which provides the foundation for the SHE strategic plan 2013-2016.
- In 2009 a statement was developed on the policy on public private funding for the SHE network, called the 'SHE ethical code' which is available on the SHE website.
- An review article about the SHE network was published in the European Journal of Education in December 2009.

### **Development and implementation of health promoting schools**

- From 2008 to 2011 the EU co-funded HEPS project was carried out, with a focus on promoting healthy eating and physical activity in schools. The project used the health promoting school approach and supported the further development of the SHE network. The outcomes of the HEPS project can be found on the SHE website [www.schoolsforhealth.eu](http://www.schoolsforhealth.eu)
- In 2009 a shared set of SHE core values and SHE pillars were accepted by the SHE assembly and are available on the SHE website.
- In 2009 the position paper of the SHE research group was published and is available on SHE website.

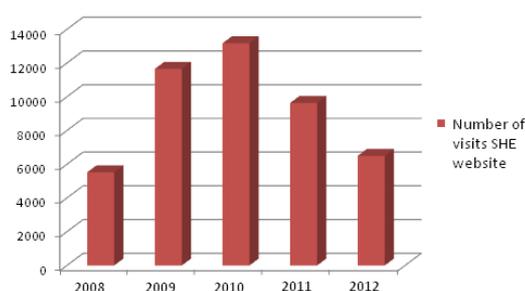
- In July 2010 the international symposium on health, equity and sustainable development for the school setting in Geneva was organized by the Swiss network of Health Promoting Schools in collaboration with the SHE network and the International School Health network (ISHN).
- In 2011 a review was carried out on the links between reducing health inequalities and school health promotion (NIGZ, 2011).
- In 2011 the support by the SHE secretariat to the EECA countries 2008-2011 was evaluated and an evaluation report was issued (NIGZ, 2011).

### Technical support EECA countries

- Four annual capacity building workshops were organized by the SHE secretariat for SHE national coordinators in the EECA countries (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011).
- During this period several SHE and HEPS deliverables were also translated into the Russian language and are available via the SHE secretariat and on the SHE website.
- Several country visits were made to six EECA countries by the SHE secretariat (Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation) to support the development of a national HPS strategy and programme.
- Four HPS training and capacity building sessions were organized and delivered by the SHE secretariat in 3 EECA countries (Armenia, Georgia, Russian Federation).

### Communication

- In 2010 the renewed SHE website [www.schoolsforhealth.eu](http://www.schoolsforhealth.eu) was launched, including an e-learning module.
- Number of visits SHE website in the period 2008-2012:



- In 2011 there were 600 subscriptions to the electronic SHE newsletter. In 2012 this has increased to 671.