

Global lessons from country case studies on Health-promoting Schools

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In 2018, WHO and UNESCO launched the global initiative to 'Make Every School a Health-promoting School.' More than 25 years since the original inception of the concept, both international organisations committed to supporting the development of Global Standards and Indicators, and an associated Implementation Guidance designed to support educators, policy makers and health professionals to implement health promoting schools through a whole-school approach.

We undertook a systematic review of peer-reviewed evidence and a policy review in mid-2020 which, among other findings, demonstrated little evidence in resource poor countries. This led to the development of eight case studies of low and middle-income countries (LMIC), and an invitation to develop the Global Standards and Indicators for Health-promoting Schools and an Implementation Guidance.

The case studies were designed to identify **lessons from implementing** health-promoting schools in LMIC settings. We investigated:

- Collaboration between government departments, health and education sectors, schools and local municipal organisations;
- Governance, monitoring, accountability and resourcing allocation for health promotion in schools;
- Relationships and roles between government departments, health and education sectors, and schools.

With country choice informed by UNESCO and WHO, eight descriptive case studies of Senegal, Tunisia, Indonesia, the Philippines, the Ukraine, Paraguay and South Africa were built from interviews with key informants holding positions in education or health government departments, analysis of health-education policy and/or curricular documents.

Despite significant variation in education and health systems, and diverse experience of health promotion in schools across the eight countries, many common enablers and barriers were found, most of which are supported by current educational evidence about the implementation of sustained whole-school approaches focusing on school improvement.

In this presentation, we will detail these findings in relation to the Australian context, particularly reflecting on how they could support schools to continue to be learning communities where the health and wellbeing of students, staff and the local community is also promoted, even during the pandemic.

The essential role schools embody as settings for learning and supporting health and wellbeing has been powerfully reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Pleasingly, increased resource allocation to support student wellbeing includes many complex, whole-school approaches. However, given the evidence around difficulties sustaining whole-school approaches in the face of common challenges like staff and leadership turnover, let alone interruptions to face-to-face learning across the pandemic, investing in capacity building is important, along with educational research to understand local sustainability drivers.