



School Health Matters Beyond 2015

World Education Forum

Incheon - South Korea 2015

Focusing Resources on Effective School Health

A joint statement from the Coordinating Group of the professionals and organizations involved in promoting school health and development through the global framework FRESH.

History of School Health and FRESH

The concept of promoting health and social development through schools is not new; school-based and school-linked programs to promote health, nutrition and hygiene has a documented history of at least 130 years. These efforts emphasized that schools should use every means at their disposal to address the health needs of students, staff, and families and include instruction, services, and a healthy environment. The importance of involving teachers, parents, and communities in defining the issues to be addressed and developing a targeted response were also stressed.

A critical moment in the current global school health movement came in April 2000, at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, where the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank jointly organized a strategy session aimed at raising the education sector's awareness of the value of implementing an effective school health, hygiene and nutrition program as part of its major strategies to achieve Education for All. The agencies reasoned that children must be healthy and well-nourished in order to fully participate in education and that education of good quality can lead to better health and nutrition outcomes for children. As part of this session, they jointly launched Focusing Resources on Effective School Health: a FRESH Start to Enhancing the Quality and Equity of Education.

The FRESH framework is a starting point for developing effective school health policies, programmes and services. It consists of four pillars: (1) health-related school policies, (2) safe learning environment, (3) skills-based health education, and (4) school-based health and nutrition services. The

framework represents evidence-based consensus of good practice that can be contextualized to any given setting.

FRESH Partners' Achievements since 2000

The FRESH initiative was soon joined by more professionals and organizations, referred to as "FRESH partners." The partners work together to good effect at global, regional and country level, not only in sending a unified message to government and practitioners on what works and what should be done, but also in empowering them with tools and capacity building. The FRESH framework and partners have helped raise awareness on the need for multi-sectoral policies that involves education, healthcare, water, sanitation, agriculture, and food security among others.

This advocacy has contributed to governments allocating budgets, setting up steering committees and conducting situation analyses to determine the health needs of school age children and assessing implementation capacities of multi-sectoral teams. Schools are being provided with water and sanitation facilities and the quality of these basic services are being improved. Skills-based health education is becoming a critical part of the core curriculum in many jurisdictions and participatory approaches are encouraged to promote the adoption of healthy behaviours. The provision of basic health services such as deworming and malaria treatment is being scaled-up. Social support, in the form of school safety policies and practices, parent involvement and child and youth engagement, forms an integral part of many school health and development programs.

Based on a need identifying in 2008, a coordinating group of FRESH partners, developed Monitoring and Evaluation Guidance for School Health Programs that are being used by decision-makers and practitioners in governments and partner organizations to self-assess, develop, and monitor and evaluate their school health interventions. The contribution that school health and nutrition programs can make to education and achieving the Education For All (EFA) goals

has been recognized in a number of different fora and statements including the [Addis Ababa Declaration](#) made at the Ninth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All in February 2010.

School Health and FRESH matter beyond 2015

Although much has been achieved since 2000, the persistent gaps in access to education and learning outcomes indicate that there is much more to be done for sustainable, inclusive and equitable access to quality education and school health programs. To achieve this requires strong government leadership, an integrated approach and continued coordinated support by partners. Education is better received in communities when paired with health interventions. Similarly, improving the health of school-aged children improves education indicators, such as attendance rates. The provision from early childhood to adolescence of school-based health education and services—for example, water, sanitation and nutrition programs, environmental education, oral health programs, substance use prevention, sexual and reproductive health and education and HIV awareness campaigns—promotes not only healthy behaviour but also school attainment and increases the likelihood children will receive basic medical care. Likewise, educated parents are more likely to effectively disseminate health messages to their children and to the wider communities in which they live.

UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report planned for 2016 will review the strong links between education and health and the impact on broader transformations in

society: capacity building, gender empowerment, economic growth, and civic participation, which represent key building blocks for [sustainable development](#). Inter-sectoral work is challenging but the history of school health demonstrates that it is necessary and the FRESH partners have a proven track record in the collaboration required.

Call for Action

It is vital that school health be part of the follow-up to the World Education Forum 2015:

- *A concern for health needs to be part of a broad view of the purposes of education that recognizes that the whole child, not just their intellect, is fundamental to their learning.*
- *Students need to learn the skills, knowledge, norms, attitudes and coping mechanisms that are essential to their success at school and in life.*
- *School health needs to be mainstreamed in budgeted education sector plans.*

*Education partners need to continue to work on this in the future, using tools such as the FRESH Framework to support the work being done around the world. As the international community begins to recognize the paramount nature of the link between Education and Health; we the FRESH partners hope that countries will pay attention to the **essential nature of school health** in achieving quality education that is sustainable, inclusive and equitable.*



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



WORLD BANK



Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
Internacional de la Educación



World Food Programme



World Health Organization



The Partnership for Child Development



AIR®



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



国際学校保健コンソーシアム

Japan Consortium for Global School Health Research



Save the Children®



Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



For further information visit: www.unesco.org/new/health-education / www.schoolsandhealth.org/fresh