

# Health Promoting Schools Evidence of Effectiveness

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We all have dreams and some  
come true.....







# Good news.....

- In some countries education policy makers are starting to see health promotion in schools as part of the agenda on quality improvement in schools.
- Can this can provide an opportunity for health promotion to integrate its objectives and indicators with education in a kind of symbiotic relationship?

# Educational Attainment and Health

- It is now more understood that educational attainment is inextricably linked to the health promotion agenda.
- Research tends to show that young people who are more engaged in the life of a school, are in turn less likely to be involved in high risk behaviours.

# The interaction of Education and Health

The evidence suggests that:

- healthy young people are more likely to learn more effectively;
- Health promotion can help schools to meet their social aims and to improve educational attainment;
- young people that attend school have a better chance of good health;
- young people that feel good about their school and who are connected to school and significant adults are less likely to undertake high risk behaviours and are likely to have better learning outcomes;
- Schools are work places for all of the staff and are settings that can practice and model workplace health promotion.

# Interactions of Education and Health

- The research literature reveals many interactions between education and health and although all the causal links are not yet fully understood (Cutler and Lleras-Muney, 2007) we have sufficient evidence to justify action.
- Many government education ministries have not yet fully invested in what they may perceive as a health-related initiative and yet it is now clear there are potentially huge benefits in educational terms for the education sector to consider. (Young, 2013)

# Interaction of Education and Health Promotion

- Simovska and colleagues suggest that health promotion in schools would do well to reconnect with the traditions of educational theory and to develop innovative forms of educational practices and interventions in the face of complex societal challenges concerning health and health promotion.

Simovska V, (2012) What do health-promoting schools promote? Processes and outcomes in school health promotion. Health Education, Vol. 112

# Schools and Health Promotion

- Research indicates that students **most engaged** in school (enjoy school and are progressing academically), are more likely to succeed academically and to display positive health behaviours
- students who are **most alienated** (least like school and are academically achieving less well) are more likely to engage in risk behaviours
- Nutbeam et al, 1993, Jnl . Paed. Child Health, 29. s25-30

# Evidence of Effectiveness in Health Promoting Schools

- Stewart-Brown, S. (2006). “What is the evidence on school health promotion in improving school health or preventing disease and specifically what is the effectiveness of the health promoting schools approach?” Copenhagen: World Health Organization.

## Review by Stewart-Brown (2006)

- interventions that promoted **healthy eating and physical activity** were effective. These programmes were among the most sophisticated, and the ones that were effective were more likely to involve changes to the environment of the school and involvement of parents. In this area, as well as in **mental health** programmes, a range of different types of programmes proved effective.

## Review by Stewart-Brown (2006)

- The school health promotion programmes that were effective in changing young people's health or health-related behaviour were more likely to be complex, multifactorial;
- involve activity in more than one domain (curriculum, school environment and community).
- These are features of the health promoting schools approach, and to this extent these findings endorse such approaches.
- The findings of the synthesis also support intensive interventions of long duration.

# Review by Stewart-Brown (2006)

- Further research on promoting health in schools is needed. Such research should include a wide range of methodologies, to establish what works and what does not.
- Research should use outcomes appropriate to the population being studied (universal or targeted), should consider issues of implementation.
- where possible, should include evaluations of cost-effectiveness

## IUHPE paper: Promoting Health in Schools: from evidence to action: (St Leger and Young, 2010)

- Who is it for?  
*It is for those who create policy and implement the actions that flow from policy*
- What does it set out to do?  
*It sets out to explain how and why the promotion of health in schools is important and provides evidence in support of this.*
- Content – *Conceptual basis; Reasons for giving this area priority; Links between education and health; Relationship of topics and the whole; Evidence of Effectiveness.*

## SHE Factsheet 2 (2014, In Preparation)

- Working title –

*Health Promotion in Schools –  
evidence for effective action.*

# Factors influencing success of new programmes in schools?

- Working in pairs or threes, I would like you to list the factors which you think could influence the success or failure of a health promoting school initiative in an individual school.
- After 10 to 15 minutes we will scope these out, without going in to great detail about each.
- As a large group we will comment on the list and what may or may not be on the list and we will flesh out what the research suggests is important.
- Total time 20-30 minutes

# Factors influencing success of new school initiatives

- Socio-political context
- School context and ownership
- Capacity and resources
- The nature and fit of the initiative
- The nature of the research
- Individual teachers
- Parental and community issues

# Quality parental involvement

- “What Parents do with their children at home through the age range, is much more significant than any other factor open to educational influence”

Desforges and Abouchar, *The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievements and Adjustment: A Literature Review* 2003. Dept for Education and Skills, Research Report RR433

# Change in Education systems

- The research suggests that teachers must feel ownership of any major change in their way of working in the system and Fullan uses the term *moral purpose*, defined as making a difference in the lives of students, as a critical motivator in addressing and sustaining complex reform.
- there is also a pre-requisite for leadership and ownership at the school level as well as
- political and practical support at regional and national level.

# Working with complexity

- There is understanding in the social science literature of complex systems and barriers to disseminating and scaling up good ideas
  - (Wandersman et al 2008), (Emshoff, 2008)
- They are developing models to understand the needs, barriers, and resources of different systems, as well as a structure for summarising existing research and for prioritising areas for new research and action.

Emshoff, J. (2008). Researchers, practitioners, and funders: Using the framework to get us on the same page. *Am. Journal of Community Psychology*. Wandersman A, Duffy J, Flaspohler P, Noonan R, Lubell K, Stillman L, Blachman M, Dunville R, Saul J, The Interactive Systems Framework for Dissemination and Implementation *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 41.

# Outcomes from Systematic Reviews on topics -Mental health

- Mental Health Promotion in schools can improve young peoples' social and emotional functioning and educational attainment.

Barry, Clarke, Jenkins and Patel (2013)  
A systematic review of the effectiveness of mental health promotion interventions for young people in schools in low and middle income countries. BMC Public Health 13:835

# Which type of programmes are most effective?

- Comprehensive programmes that target multiple health outcomes in the context of a whole-school approach are the most likely to be effective
- Focus on positive mental health
- Teaching of skills and competencies
- Taking a whole school approach

Conclusions of Prof M Barry from the review of programmes – see previous slide

# Mental health promotion in school

- Improved attitudes towards school, better sense of community (Schaps et al, 2004);
- Higher motivation (Johnson and Johnson, 2004)
- Fewer absences and suspensions (Christenson and Havsy, 2004)
- Reductions in aggression and interpersonal violence. (Greenberg et al, 2004)
- Improved outcomes on non attendance and school dropout rates (Wilson, Godfriedson and Najaka, 2001)

# Evidence of improved Educational Attainment

- Improved Mathematics and language performance (Brown et al, 2004)
- Better problem solving (Greenberg et al, 2004)
- Review of effect sizes from 207 social and emotional learning programmes (Durlak et al, 2011)
  - 11% improvement in achievement tests
  - 25% improvement in social and emotional skills
  - 10% decrease in classroom misbehaviour, anxiety and depression

# CASEL Technical report on the impact of social and emotional learning (Payton et al, 2008)

- Three scientific reviews -317 studies involving over 300,00 schoolchildren aged 5 to 13 years
- Positive support for social and emotional learning programmes offered by teaching staff
- Effective in school and after - school settings
- Effects can be sustainable.

# Schools are key settings for promoting physical activity and physical education



# Physical activity has positive effects on educational attainment

- A systematic review of physical activity and academic performance concluded that participation in physical activity is positively related to academic performance in children.
- The study also suggested that there is a need for more work to be done to tease out the mechanisms and any possible dose relationships between activity and educational attainment.
- Singh A et al (2012) Physical Activity and performance at school: A systematic review of the literature

## Nature of these programmes. -Some thoughts

- Discrete programmes lend themselves to experimental research designs, therefore much of the research is on these discrete interventions rather than complex health promoting school programmes.
- Health promoting school research also needs to look at the school as a complex social or ecological system.
- Other disciplines such as educational sociology.
- Is *intervention* the appropriate term?
- The need for practice-based evidence as well as evidence-based practice

# Continuous Challenges

- At a country and global level we need to support better collaboration between the health and education sectors in planning, implementing and evaluating school health promotion;
- Improve the dissemination of evidence of effectiveness;
- Continue to work with politicians even when we have suffered past failures;
- Continue to build the evidence base, particularly in low income countries.

# Partnerships

- It has become evident that partnerships between two sectors require time, understanding, commitment and persistence to become effective as they involve:
  - the building of trust;
  - the development of mutual understanding on language, concepts and values;
  - reaching agreement on budget commitments and responsibilities;
  - accepting challenges to traditional professional roles.

# Stages towards sustainable Partnerships?

- In the development of partnership working in Scotland, it is clear that in the 1980's and early 1990's early development work in health promoting schools was initiated by the health sector in an 'Initial Experimental Phase' (Young, 2005).
- This may be followed by a strategic development phase where the education sector perceives the benefits of health promoting schools in meeting social and educational needs in their schools.
- A third 'Establishment phase' may be reached where the innovations become embedded in the normal ways of working of the school (Table 1).

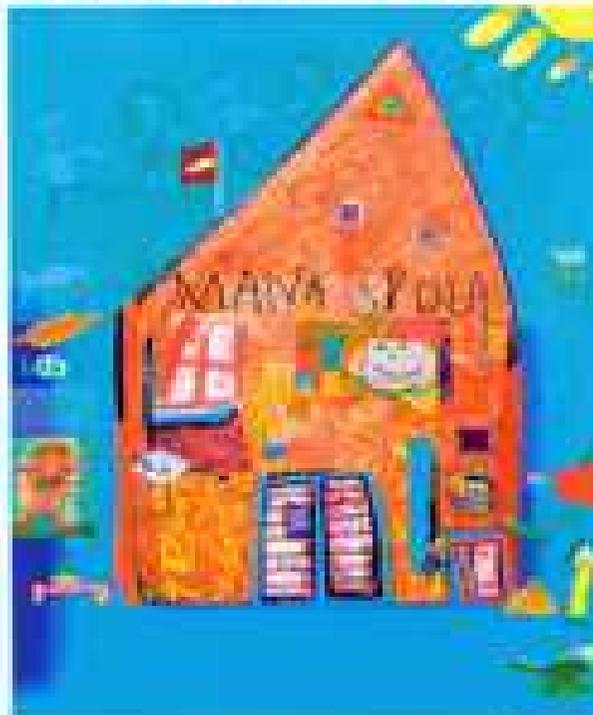


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## Global school health promotion



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Health Santé Salud

# Translating good ideas into practice

## - “If you build it....”

- “If you build it”
- ....they may never know about it
- ...they may not understand what it is
- ...they won't know how to get there
- ...they won't think it fits
- ...they'll think they already have it
- ...they'll see it as competition
- ...they'll decide they should build their own
- ...they'll adapt it into something unrecognizable
- ...they'll only use the pieces of it they like

# If you build it...

OR.....

- ...they WILL come, and love it.
- Then they'll want you to make ten more just like it in surrounding communities. Now.
- Emshoff, J. (2008). Researchers, practitioners, and funders: Using the framework to get us on the same page. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 41 (393-403).

# Future Possibilities Globally

- A *strength* is the state of development of HPS and its mainstream status in some countries.
- Another *strength* is our success at sharing good practice globally.
- A *weakness* is the fact that understanding of health promotion is variable across politicians in different countries.
- *Opportunity* to utilise funds for obesity prevention.
- *Opportunity* to link with education excellence agenda.
- Potential *threat* of vertical topic-based view by budget-holders.

# Summing up

- To summarise this development in countries such as Scotland over twenty years, the main strengths have been in coming to some understanding of:
  - the complexity of change and working with this;
  - overcoming the difficulties of partnership-working between the education and health sectors;
  - political opportunities and the need to recognise them and work with them;

# Summing up (continued)

- the importance of good research and its dissemination;
- expertise and good practice in other countries and learning from this;
- the need to listen to students and teachers- for example, in relation to a lack of capacity in the system and act on this;
- the need to be patient and persistent as many systemic changes take time.

Young I and Lee A. In Case studies in Global School Health Promotion. Vince Whitman and Aldinger, Eds pp 225 – 238.