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Schools for Health in Europe

## Minutes

### SHE Assembly meeting 02<sup>nd</sup>-03<sup>rd</sup> Juni 2021

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**Participants:** 42 participants (SHE members 34, Presenters including WHO members 3, Secretariat and evaluator 5)

In addition:

Azerbaijan, Armenia, Bulgaria, Belarus, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy (Lombardy region), Italy (Piedmont region) (1 day), Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Moldova, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Spain, Scotland, Slovenia, Sweden, Poland (1 day), Portugal, The Russian Federation, Turkey, Wales

**Keeper of Minutes:**

Caroline Moos (CM, SHE secretariat)

### Minutes from 03<sup>rd</sup> Juni 2021

#### Welcome

The participants were welcomed to the Assembly by Nina Grieg Viig (NGV) (Norwegian national coordinator and host of the meeting). NGV introduced participants to the city of Bergen and Western Norway's University of Applied Sciences. Despite the online format, a cultural experience opened the meeting with a Norwegian version of the well known song 'What a Wonderful World'.

Ulla Pedersen (UP), SHE secretariat, introduced participants to the two-day program, and the agenda.

**Chairperson:** The board suggested NGV as chairperson of the Assembly with the subsequent approval of SHE members.

**Keeper of minutes:** The board suggested CM as keeper of minutes with the subsequent approval of the SHE members.

**Opening of meeting:** With no objections to the notice sent before the SHE assembly (March 2021), the meeting was legally set. There were no additional comments to the preplanned agenda (sent to participants 5<sup>th</sup> May), and the Assembly was approved and opened by NGV.

**Group photo:** After the formal opening of the Assembly, an online group photo was taken. Everyone present agreed that the photo could be used on SHE's website and social media platforms.



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## International coordinators report

### SHE activities in 2021

Anette Schultz (AS), SHE secretariat, presented her reflections, the 2020 evaluation and SHE activities for 2021.

The main tasks for SHE in 2020 included:

- Materials for teachers on school health inequality
- SHE Factsheet 6 on health literacy and a video animation, based on the factsheet
- Piloting of the European health promoting school standards and indicators version 1.
- SHE Monitoring report 2020
- Translation of SHE materials
- COVID-19 material

Members are welcome to contact the secretariat for a copy of the piloting of Standards and Indicators report. This report will be the basis of the development of Standards and Indicators version 2 (SHE activity 2021).

AS chose to expand particularly on the three last mainpoints in her presentation.

*SHE monitoring report 2020* - Twenty-four countries participated in the monitoring report resulting in 24 individual reports available on the SHE website and an overall summary (<https://www.schoolsforhealth.org/resources/materials-and-tools/mapping-she>).

*Translation of SHE materials* - During the pandemic, SHE has focused on increasing the number of translations of materials. The SHE manual is now available in 7 different languages, Teachers materials (2019) is available in 5 languages, Standards and Indicators version 1 is available in 3 languages.

*COVID19-Material* - SHE is part of a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on schooling during the time of COVID-19. The group has made a recommendation to WHO that schools use the health promoting school network to support education and prepare for future outbreaks. SHE has prepared materials for schools during the corona pandemic by making available case stories and materials and reports from different organisations in relation to schooling during COVID-19 (<https://www.schoolsforhealth.org/resources/covid-19>).

AS summarized the 2020 Evaluation of SHE with 14 operational objectives completely fulfilled and 2 nearly fulfilled from a total of 16 operational objectives.

AS presented the 2021 SHE workplan which includes

- General activities such as SHE website, helpdesk, electronic newsletter, social media, online glossary, leaflet and twinning. Note: The secretariat has a new colleague responsible for twinning - Lisbeth Burich.
- Meeting and conference activities 2021 such as the 2021 Assembly meeting, research group meeting, and capacity building workshops for (i) coordinators and (ii) researchers, consultancy visits, SHE academy and international conferences. Some of these activities are already completed. Note: Coordinators are welcome to take contact to the SHE secretariat to arrange a consultancy visit in the latter part of the year
- Joint work – this includes collaboration with 4 main allies – WHO, UNESCO Chair of Global Health and Education, SHE Moscow Centre, FRESH (UN agencies and NGOs)



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- Materials and reports such as material on COVID-19, materials for teachers on Health literacy, Factsheet no. 7 on mental health and parallel video animation, report on the facilitators and barriers regarding implementation of school health promotion and standards and indicators version 2

The corona pandemic has resulted in a substantial reduction in travel costs and a re-allocation of resources for translations. SHE recognizes the importance of having materials available in languages other than English.

AS summarized her report by reporting on statistics from the SHE website. SHE requests an active contribution from members and colleagues to sign up for the monthly newsletter and/or to follow SHE on social media platforms.

Points of action after questions and answers:

- AS will initiate discussions (initially with the German national coordinator) on the quality and official descriptions of the SHE factsheets. Focal point (i) renaming and focusing on different stages of becoming a health promoting school (ii) Degree of evidence, use of references in the factsheets.
- AS will explore the possibility of the Moscow office funding of additional translations of SHE material into EECA languages

## **SHE Research Group (RG)**

Marjorita Sormunen (MS), chair of the RG, presented the research group report. The presentation was prerecorded. The Assembly was introduced to facts about the SHE research group such as its main aim and objectives. The chair and co-chair of the RG are responsible for the administration of the SHE RG and are supported by a steering group. MS highlighted the usefulness of the SHE website and the new 'profile' section about each RG member. SHE members are welcome to contact a researcher for collaboration or participation in a seminar or similar activities. MS summarized the key activities of the RG in 2021 including the launch of SHE webinars on the 11<sup>th</sup> June with a warm welcome to those interested in participating. To date the SHE RG has 106 members.

The Assembly send greetings and thankyou to MS for the presentation.

Points of action after questions and answers:

- Can the RG consider the level of collaboration and link between the national coordinators and the researchers? Could this collaboration be evaluated? Could this collaboration be improved? These points could be considered as part of the new program.

## **News from WHO**

Martin Weber (MW), programme manager in WHO Regional Office for Europe, provided a prerecorded presentation of "Health Promoting Schools and Schooling in the WHO European Region in the time of COVID-19".

MW highlighted the strong representation of SHE (4 members) expertise on the WHO Technical Advisory Group and the recommendations this group has made in relation to making schooling better and maintaining schools as long as possible during the pandemic.

WHO will have a high level meeting in early July 2021 for Ministries of Health and Education with input from this TAG indicating the importance of taking better action over the summer holidays to ensure schooling in the autumn is improved compared to the summer of 2020.



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MW updated SHE members about the continuation of activities by distance in the EECA countries. MW recently visited Tajikistan for a workshop on the ongoing SHE activities. This work is supported by the SHE Moscow centre and partially funded by the Russian Federation. This support enables WHO to expand upon the European health promotion activities into the eastern countries of this WHO region and hopefully into Balkan countries. MW praised the Moscow centre for its proactivity in translating the SHE materials into Russian.

WHO is supporting the Global standards for health promoting schools which builds on the European standards and global standards for school health services. The HBSC network (Health Behaviour in School-aged Children) is meeting next week for its spring meeting. MW encouraged SHE to participate in a joint meeting with HBSC in 2022 for ensure synergy.

WHO is also involved in the distribution of a questionnaire at school level about the facilities available in schools to build further on SHEs previous work.

The Assembly send greetings and thankyou to MS for his update.

### **Information about the financial statement for 2020**

AS presented briefly information about the SHE finances and accounts explaining that the SHE board had elected NGV to oversee the 2020 financial accounts. Deviations between 2020 financial statement and the 2020 budget have been documented and accounted. These deviations are primarily due to the inability to travel in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic – for example the Assembly meeting, the research group meeting, and country visits were held as online instead of physical events.. An external accountant formally approved SHE's 2020 financial statement. The SHE assembly approved the 2020 financial statement.

### **Information about the budget 2021 and application for future funding**

In 2021 the corona pandemic still gives obstacles regarding travelling between countries. Therefore, money not used for travel has been prioritized for activities beneficial to the SHE network such as additional translations of SHE materials. More translations of SHE materials have been a heartfelt wish from member countries for a long time. AS showed the distribution of funds that in 2021 will be transferred to the operation of the secretariat and to activities carried out by member countries, respectively.

The current funding program will end in December 2021. SHE is awaiting the EU launch of a new health program and its overall objectives, in particularly if there are relevant operating grants for NGOs. It is important that SHE in the future finds sustainability regarding funding. A single suggestion from Assembly participants was to consider a higher prioritization of the RG in future funding rounds.

### **Presentation of reelected board members and new substitute**

The SHE board consists of 6 members and a substitute member. Each year a SHE board is selected. In 2021, a call was sent out in April for candidates for the 2 available seats and the substitute seat. Nina Grieg Viig and Tineke Vansteenkiste were reelected without competition and Gemma Cox (Wales) was elected as a substitute member. The SHE board wishes to formally thanks Susanne Hargreaves (Scotland) for her work as a substitute member in the years from 2017-21 and wish her well.



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## Health promoting schools in the time of COVID-19

Veronica Velasco (VV) (SHE board, SHE RG member and SHE regional coordinator for the Lombardy Region in Italy) presented health promoting schools in the times of the COVID-19 crisis.

VV summarized the challenges that the pandemic has had on schools and homes highlighting challenges especially with learning, mental health and social well-being.

VV highlighted the good news of the establishment of the WHO TAG group and its affirmation that the principles of health promoting schools are even more important in a pandemic. Despite the recommendation, schools have often expressed doubt about how to react during the pandemic. To help schools in the ongoing pandemic, SHE is about to publish a document about the role of the health-promoting school in the time of a COVID-19 pandemic. The document has three sections (i) Evidence about schooling and COVID-19 (ii) School health promotion (iii) Implementing health promoting schools at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

VV presentation focused on specific strategies and adaption of strategies that can be implemented during the pandemic. The question and answer discussion after VV's presentation highlighted the importance of inviting children, parents and the wider community to participate in planning and creating health-promoting activities.

## Subscription to the SHE newsletter

Annamária Somhegyi (AM), national coordinator from Hungary, presented the innovative approach of using the SHE newsletter as an opportunity to improve English skills.

In 2012 Hungary passed a law to ensure that teachers promoted health in their daily tasks. In Hungary 'Better health = Better academic achievement'. Annamária asked English teachers to subscribe to the newsletter to improve their own English. A subscription to the newsletter could provide material to improve skills in English and health. Teachers were encouraged to allow children to read selected parts of the newsletter for their English lessons.

SHE would like its newsletter to reach a broader population. There was a short brainstorm on how to increase the number of newsletter subscribers. Member countries are invited to share innovative solutions such as that described from Hungary.

- National/Regional coordinators are requested to ask teachers to write case stories for the SHE newsletter, a strategy very successful in Slovenia and Lithuania.
- The SHE secretariat explore the possibility of a pop up box for visitors of the SHE website.
- National/Regional coordinators and researchers are requested to commit to finding 5-10 new members to subscribe to the newsletter each

## AOB

No other business was introduced and NGV closed the meeting for the day.

Nina Grieg Viig,  
Chairperson,  
28.06.2021

Caroline Moos,  
Keeper of minutes  
25.06.2021

Anette Schultz  
SHE manager  
30.06.2021



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## Minutes from SHE capacity building workshop 04<sup>th</sup> Juni 2021 (part of the SHE Assembly meeting 2021)

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**Participants:** 48 (SHE members 34, Presenters and WHO 9, Secretariat and evaluator 5).

Theme of the day: Capacity building workshop on mental health and psychological wellbeing.

**Keeper of Minutes:**

Caroline Moos (CM, SHE secretariat)

### Welcome

**Introduction:** Ulla Pedersen (UP) welcomed participants to the Capacity Building workshop and outlined the day's program and thanking members of the planning committee: Nina Grieg Viig (National coordinator, Norway), Peter Paulus (National coordinator, Germany), Suzanne Hargreaves (National coordinator, Scotland) and Branka Dukic (Regional coordinator, Slovenia). UP encouraged members to visit the SHE website to access more information on different member countries approach to mental health – this material can be assessed here (<https://www.schoolsforhealth.org/about-us/member-countries/she-assembly>)

### Presentation 1: SHE factsheet - School-based mental health promotion: An overview of the current state-of-the-art

Catriona O'Toole (Ireland) and Emily Darling (France), members of SHE research group

These researchers responsible for the Factsheet in 2021 on school-based mental health promotion presented themselves to the participants of the capacity building workshop. They outlined the focus of the rapid, realist review on evidence in relation to whole-school, settings-based approaches to mental health promotion. The review aims to address the following questions:

- What is the state-of-the art in mental health promotion in contemporary education?
- What types of whole-school interventions, programmes, frameworks, models, and tools, are currently being used in schools and how do these align with the health promoting school framework?
- What is the impact (short-term and long-term) of school mental health promotion activities on student wellbeing?
- What are the characteristics of successful school mental health promotion initiatives?
- What are the barriers and facilitators to the implementation of school mental health promotion initiatives, and
- How and to what extent is children's participation in school mental health initiatives facilitated?

The factsheet will examine different approaches to mental health promotion, the characteristics of the successful approaches, barriers and facilitators to mental health promotion in schools and gaps and future directions. It will be published in the early autumn 2021.



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## **Presentation 2: This is me – prevention programme from Slovenia**

Domen Kralj, Psychologist from the National Institute of Public Health, Slovenia

Domen presented the Slovenian universal prevention program for adolescents aimed at improving mental health in schools. The program consists of two components. The first is a web-based counselling service run by volunteers and supported by experts. The second is a school prevention programme with a 10 different preventive workshops adjusted according to age or class. Both parts of the program are aimed at inspiring adolescents to develop health personalities.

## **Presentation 3: Happiness triangle in education from Belgium**

Eline De Decker, senior staff member of the mental well-being from the Flemish Institute of Healthy living, Belgium

Eline explained the project goal of supporting teachers in enhancing the mental wellbeing of students with ready-to-use materials, background information and tips. An additional goal of the project is to create a class context where students and teachers can feel happy and achieve personal growth. This project works with an educational model known as 'The Happiness Triangle'. The happiness triangle incorporates three parts (i) being yourself (ii) feeling good, and (iii) feeling connected.

## **Presentation 4: Children explore mental health and wellbeing at school**

Colin Morrison, co-founder and co-director of the Scottish Children's Parliament

The Scottish Children's Parliament is committed to ensuring that children grow up loved, safe and respected so they can realise their full potential. The Scottish Children's Parliament has played an important role in ensuring the United Nation's Convention Rights of the Child is introduced into Scottish law. Colin summarized the parliament's work over the past year speaking with children about the impact of the pandemic on them. He described findings that lock down has simply exacerbated or exposed preexisting problems for children. Colin described the working definition of mental health when working with children. Colin was then joined by four members of the Scottish Children Parliament and 1 adult support worker (Katie Reid). They discussed their experiences of schooling during the pandemic and their opinions on mental health promotion in their own schools. Colin concluded with the vision that Scottish schooling could provide a mixture of school and home based learning post pandemic.

## **Presentation 5: Children's needs and thoughts about mental health schools**

Two children from 7<sup>th</sup> grade from Slovenia described in a prerecording what was required to achieve their goals and to have happiness.

## **Presentation 6: Children's needs and thoughts about school environment**

Val Stankovic Pangerc, an adolescent from Slovenia

Val shared his thoughts about what the school should be. He wanted more focus on basic class etiquette. He described that often adolescents need an answer to the question of why they need to study. Val described being motivated by collaborative project work and real world problems particularly a need for financial literacy skills. Val emphasized that student and teacher relationships are a vital part of the learning environment.

## **Group discussions**

This part of the program allows for reflection

- The voices of the pupils and mental health
- How to support focus on mental health when corona is finished?



The notes from the 7 groups' discussions were documented on an electronic padlet (<https://www.schoolsforhealth.org/sites/default/files/editor/assembly/padlet-group-discussions-03.06.21.pdf>)

## Plenary session

Peter Paulaus (PP) hosted the plenary session on sharing experiences of mental health promotion in a school context. PP based his summary from written comments on padlets written from the different group discussions. PP observed that there were many different experiences described per country and in these discussions and by structuring these impressions in a plenary session such as this one we can learn more about improving mental well-being.

The plenary session involved discussion on the following themes:

- *Respect.* Respect between people and rights of the child are important. It is important to listen to school environment to take action. There is also a role of how to express emotion and verbalise feelings and emotions in a public environment. If students can express emotions then they can verbalise opinions more easily when invited to participate in health promoting activities. A large part of good mental health is self expression. The plenary discussed the difference between rights and responsibilities of children.
- *Support structures* - Building supporting structures can support mental health of people in school. These structures may be change of curriculum to include mental health. Many groups talked about projects in the SHE member countries and the need for these programs to be evaluated and degree of evidence of effect reported. A parliament for children is an ideal opportunity to hear the voices of children. Other support structures could include teacher training, political support and a more positive culture.
- *Outdoor learning* This has been a positive consequence of the pandemic and schools have shown great innovation and interest in adapting and using the outdoors for a wide range of topics. There is a need for a more widespread training about utilising the outdoors for learning.
- *Time for action* The Investigation—Visions—Action- Change (IVAC) model (developed by Bjarne Bruun Jensen) to develop children's health action competencies often meets barriers at the action stage. There is often little space or teaching time allocated for children develop an action plan. This barrier is worthwhile discussing further.
- *Health promotion as part of a teacher's daily duties* - Hungary has changed the daily life of teachers using legislation to ensure health promotion is an active part of their daily day.
- *Other comments* – Shorter discussion points during the plenary session included a reminder that school member's health included all school members not only children and teachers. There were also comments about how important it is that mental health is part of an add-in approach (integrated in current curriculum and activities) and not an add-on approach (an independent activity). Teacher training, altering curriculum, protocols and guidelines could be possible solutions.

## Closing of the SHE Assembly meeting

Anette Schulz, Manager SHE closed the Assembly meeting with special thanks to Ulla and Nina for organisation of the Assembly. Sharing research, opinions, initiatives at a regional level is important for SHE. Selecting and translating national initiatives to international initiatives would be useful step forward. We hope to meet together face-to-face in 2022.

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